

Report to	Chippenham Area Board
Date of Meeting	5th July 2010
Title of Report	Wiltshire Local Development Framework – Wiltshire 2026 Consultation Feedback

Purpose of Report

To ask Councillors to note the following:

1. Feedback on the Wiltshire 2026 Core Strategy consultation which ran from 30 October until 31 December 2009
2. Issues raised in the Chippenham Community Area and the proposed actions to respond to the issues raised.
3. Next Steps for the Core Strategy.

1. Background

1.1. The Wiltshire 2026 consultation formed an important step towards the development of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The strategy will eventually replace elements of the existing local plans which planning decisions are currently set against.

1.2. The Wiltshire 2026 consultation, launched during October 2009, outlined:

- a vision for Wiltshire
- the opportunities and issues within each community area
- proposals for how that area will change over time, including
- an outline of the suggested scale and location of housing and employment development where identified.

1.3. The consultation ran from 30 October until 31st December 2009 and was publicised widely throughout the period. Public exhibitions were held in each community area.

1.4. The consultation material was available for consideration on the council's website, within libraries and council offices. Workshops were also held with community representatives and organisations.

1.5. Over 2,000 comments from more than 600 individuals and organisations were made. The overarching opinion was:

- The vision demonstrated sound underlying principles, however it was felt that it should be more locally distinctive rather than just delivering central government objectives.
- The level of growth, set regionally, was highlighted as a concern and was felt to be unnecessary by many.
- Infrastructure delivery was seen as a key concern, especially in terms of its timely delivery at the point of development rather than later on in the plan period.

A full report on the consultation outcome will be available shortly to view on the council's website and in its offices.

2. Chippenham Community Area Feedback

2.1. The responses showed there is a lot of concern about the proposals for Chippenham and the role it should play over the next twenty years. In particular there was considerable opposition both to the level of development proposed for Chippenham and the preferred site to the north and east of the town. The general feelings about the preferred option were highlighted in a petition signed by 2009 individuals objecting to:

- The effect on the flora and fauna of Birds Marsh and the Avon and Marden Valleys.
- The detrimental impact on Chippenham of 3,430 houses and over 15,000 extra people.
- The increased risk of flooding due to paving over the land that is slowing down the rate of run-off water into the river at the moment.
- The capital and on-going maintenance cost of the new road that will include new

rail and river bridges.

2.2. Other responses highlighted similar concerns. These included comments from local residents groups who said:

- The people of Chippenham are calling for a reduction in the housing burden being placed on Chippenham alone;
- A proper consultation of outlying towns and villages should be carried out to ascertain their new housing and requirement needs;
- There should be no building whatsoever on Birds Marsh, surrounding fields or ecosystem to the North of Chippenham;
- Housing targets for Chippenham should be for sustainable growth not rapid urbanisation to reach a government dictate;

2.3. New evidence was also submitted to suggest that development should take place to the south of the town. The Chippenham Vision Board felt strongly that:

- The alternative options, particularly the option of a southern expansion of the town, are comparable to, if not better than the preferred option to the North and East of the town, in terms of its overall sustainability and viability.
- The four principal constraints identified in the south (the extent of the Rowden Conservation Area; presence of a Minerals Safeguarding Area; the presence of Grade 1 agricultural land; and flood plain issues) have not been adequately considered and that they could be addressed as easily as the constraints in the Eastern Option.
- The Eastern Option does offer a number of potentially strong points, although there are significant constraints to be overcome on this site too, not least that this option relies entirely on the provision of a significant road link and rail crossing. This infrastructure would need to be provided prior to any development taking place and could have considerable effect on its viability.

2.4. Other comments received included the proposal that a geographically distributed option be considered in more detail.

2.5. Comments were also received concerning the villages and rural areas outside of Chippenham. They included:

- Although a number of smaller settlements have a limited range of services, such rural communities often share the resources of a number of nearby villages. It is unrealistic to allow for only modest levels of growth in a relatively few number of Wiltshire villages.
- It is not fully explained why only 4 villages are identified as only having capacity to accommodate modest levels of development to deliver local housing need to support rural services which will increase those villages self-containment.

Next Steps

2.6. The next steps for the Core Strategy include:

- Production of a draft core strategy – further consultation and developing the evidence base.
- The draft Core Strategy will then be formally submitted to the secretary of state for consideration – Exact date to be confirmed following the abolition of the RSS. .
- The submission will be followed by an examination in public for independent scrutiny by a planning inspector.

2.7. At the Council's Cabinet Meeting on 24th April 2010, a report was presented which set out the next steps in the preparation of a draft Core Strategy for Wiltshire. Taking into account the responses concerning Chippenham, including the petition, the Cabinet endorsed to undertake a further public consultation exercise on the future development options for Chippenham.

2.8. Officers are currently working on the form and nature of the further consultation. However it is the case that:

- The forthcoming public consultation will be targeted at certain groups, such as the Area Board, business representatives, environmental groups and local residents and is likely to take the form of a series of workshops
- Independent third party facilitation will be used to ensure the objectivity of the process.
- The key objective will be to build consensus, not simply based on what numbers of housing should go where, but also to establish the community aspirations for the character, role and function of Chippenham in the long term.

2.9. In preparation for the public consultation, officers are currently undertaking further work to review the site options for Chippenham including a finer grain analysis of the evidence gathered so far. This is addressing the following issues which were raised as part of the previous consultation:

- Examine the significance of the four constraints identified to the South of Chippenham i.e. Rowden Conservation Area; Minerals Safeguarding Area; Grade 1 Agricultural Land and the Flood Zone Area;
- Consider the impact of the current preferred option to the North of Chippenham on the designated Birds Marsh Wood;
- Examine the potential for flooding and surface water run-off as a result of the current preferred option to the north and east of Chippenham.
- Examine the sustainable traffic solutions for the town; the need and location for a new road including railway and river crossing to the east of the town;; Improvements to the existing network particularly within the town centre.
- Explore the level of housing and employment growth appropriate for Chippenham.

The exact timetable for the public consultation is still to be finalised, but will be

conveyed as soon as possible to the Area Board.

2.9 In respect of the wider Chippenham Community Area, the key issues to be addressed as part of the Core Strategy work are:

- Consider how the community area can aid in the delivery, and the provision of more affordable housing within the area.
- Explore the level of employment provision, and type, required within the community area.
- Investigate the relationship between groups of settlements within the community area.

3. Environmental & Community Implications

3.1. The purpose of further consultation is to build a consensus between Community, elected representatives, key statutory consultees and the Council over how the Core Strategy should manage growth pressures in Chippenham and which strategic site allocations should best serve the long term interests of the town.

4. Financial Implications

4.1. There are no specific financial implications related to this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1. There are no specific Legal implications related to this report

6. HR Implications

6.1. There are no specific HR implications related to this report.

7. Equality and Inclusion Implications

7.1. There are no specific Equality and Inclusion implications related to this report. .

8. Officer recommendations

8.1. None. This report is for information.

No unpublished documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report.

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