



Wiltshire sustainability appraisal report

Non technical summary

October 2009

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www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire2026.htm

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1 Overview

- 1.1.1 The planning system relies on policy to guide how future development is managed, and Wiltshire Council is currently producing a document, known as a Core Strategy, to help with this process. This document will set the framework for future development across Wiltshire.
- 1.1.2 As part of the process of producing a Core Strategy, UK and European legislation requires that an assessment is undertaken to test if the emerging Core Strategy will deliver sustainable development. These processes are referred to as Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). It is usual to combine these two processes so the SA incorporates the SEA. However, the processes are usually known simply as 'SA'.
- 1.1.3 The Sustainability Appraisal Report demonstrates how the SA assessment is being undertaken. The report sets out how the assessment is being conducted and what effect this is having on the production of the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy. The report only refers to the East, North and West areas of Wiltshire. An SA relating to South Wiltshire is being conducted separately.

2 Description of the Local Development Framework Process

- 2.1.1 The term Local Development Framework (LDF) refers to a folder of documents each containing policies and proposals to guide future development.
- 2.1.2 The most important document within the LDF is the Core Strategy. This will set out the vision for the Council area and identifies objectives for how this vision can be delivered. The Wiltshire Core Strategy will contain a strategy for the area; core policies covering key topics such as housing or employment, and will also identify key locations suitable for large scale development.

3 Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Process

Stage A: Scoping

- 3.1.1 The SA process is designed to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic factors into planning documents.
- 3.1.2 The process consists of several stages which are illustrated by Figure 1. The first stage of the SA process, Stage A, is referred to as the Scoping Stage and this has been completed. The Scoping Stage sets out the baseline and the scope of the SA work. This is set out in the *Wiltshire Scoping Report* which was consulted on by the Council in January 2009.

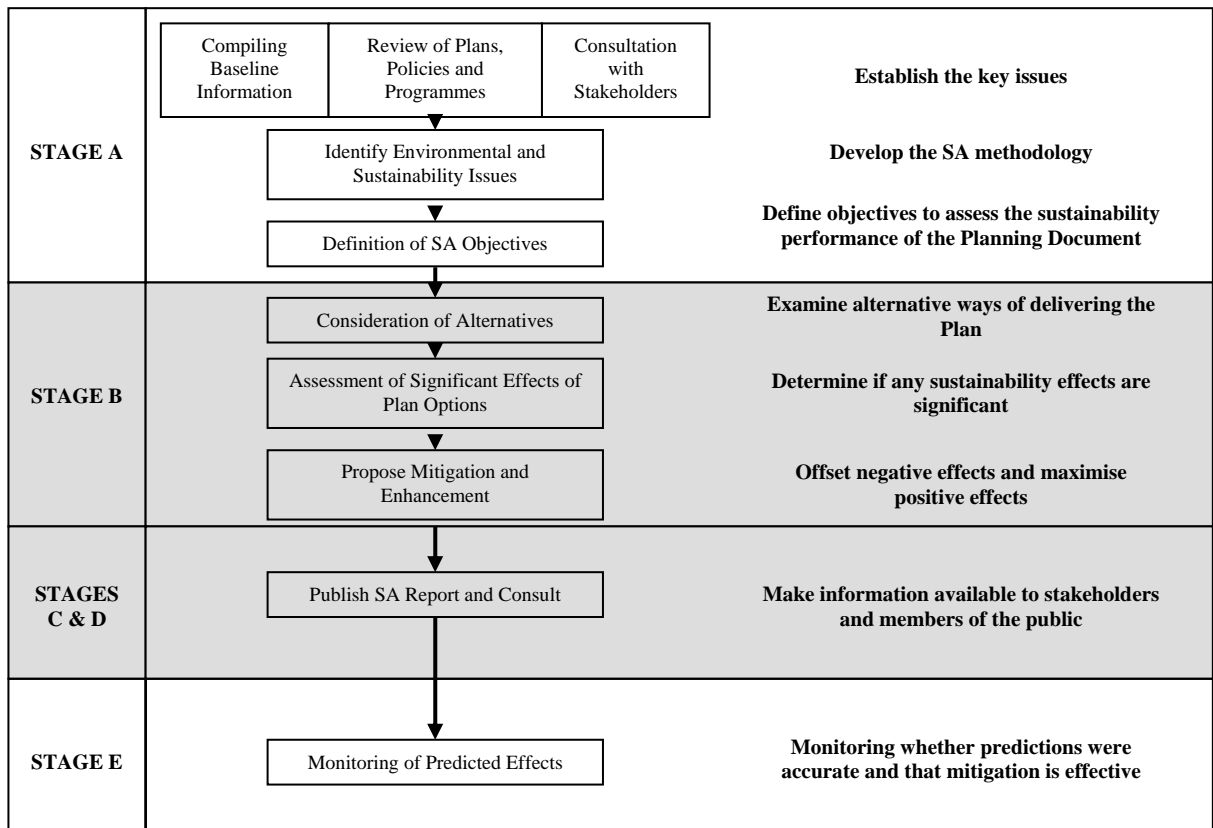


Figure 1: Illustration of the main stages of the SA process. The assessment and SA Report stages are denoted by shading

3.1.3 An important part of the scoping stage is to identify suitable environmental and sustainability objectives which are used during the assessment process to test options. The Wiltshire SA objectives are:

1. Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features;
2. Ensure the more efficient use of land and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings;
3. Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste;
4. Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner;
5. Reduce the risk of flooding to existing developments and ensure there is no risk to new developments;
6. Improve air quality throughout Wiltshire and minimise and/or mitigate against all sources of environmental pollution;
7. Minimise our impacts on climate change and reduce our vulnerability to future climate change effects;
8. Protect, maintain and enhance the historic environment and archaeological assets;
9. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Wiltshire's rural and urban landscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place;
10. Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwellings sizes, types and tenures within their communities;
11. Provide a safe and healthy environment in which to live;
12. Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities;

13. Improve equality of access to, and engagement in local, high quality community services and facilities;
14. Raise educational attainment levels across the authority and provide opportunities for people to improve their workplace skills;
15. Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable transport choices;
16. Encourage a vibrant, diversified and sustainable economy based on efficient resource use and offering opportunities and prosperity for all;
17. Ensure adequate provision of high quality employment land and diverse employment opportunities in appropriate locations to meet the needs of local business, a changing workforce and the environment.

Stage B: Assessment

- 3.1.4 The SA Report covers the main assessment stage of the SA process, which is referred to as Stage B (Figure 1).
- 3.1.5 The SA work has been conducted by a number of officers within the Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning Team. External guidance and quality control has been provided by a dedicated SEA Officer at Swindon Borough Council. A Sustainability Working Group (SWG) has also been consulted during the process to provide stakeholder engagement.
- 3.1.6 The assessment work itself has been based on testing options against the SA objectives as above. The options being tested relate to the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives, the Core Strategy Spatial Strategy and the identification of Strategic Sites for delivering future housing and employment land. These are described in more detail below.
- 3.1.7 The SA process is ongoing during plan preparation. The SA assessment outlined in this report may need to be reviewed in the light of consultation comments received. A new version of the SA Report will be published alongside each significant stage of producing the Core Strategy. In this way, Stages B, C and D of the SA process will be undertaken more than once, and will be subject to review throughout the production of the Core Strategy.

4 Statement of the Likely Significant Effects

4.1 Core Strategy Spatial Vision and Objectives

- 4.1.1 The Spatial Vision provides a clear overarching direction for how future development should take place within Wiltshire. The Strategic Objectives provide more specific direction and will be used to help guide the preparation of plan policies and deliver the Spatial Vision.
- 4.1.2 The Vision and Objectives have been tested against the SA objectives. Overall the SA score is favourable. This is because the Vision and Objectives have been produced with close reference to the SA objectives and have been designed to be consistent with the need to deliver sustainable development. Further details can be found within the main SA Report.

4.2 Spatial Strategy

- 4.2.1 The Spatial Strategy will set out how development will be distributed across the different settlements of Wiltshire. This work has been informed by consultation undertaken by the former District Councils of Kennet, North and West Wiltshire during 2007 and 2008. This consultation was undertaken during the Issues and Options stage of the plan making

process. Options were developed which considered the distribution of development across the main settlements within each of the former district areas.

4.2.2 These options have been assessed using the SA process. Some likely significant negative and positive effects have been identified. Broadly the distribution of growth across a wider range of large settlements and a narrower range of small settlements is favoured. This approach would maximise the benefit associated with improving services across different towns whilst reducing the need to travel to smaller villages. A summary of the identified preferred options are shown by Table 1. Further details can be found within the main SA Report.

Table 1: Identified Spatial Strategy Preferred Options

| Area | Option Number | Option Description |
|-----------------|---------------|---|
| East Wiltshire | 1c | Development directed to Devizes, Marlborough and Tidworth/Ludgershall |
| | 2b | Small scale development to meet local needs directed to Pewsey, Market Lavington and selected larger villages. These are to include: Aldbourne; Bromham; Burgage; Great Bedwyn; Netheravon; Potterne; Ramsbury; Rowde; Upavon; and Urchfont. |
| North Wiltshire | 3 | Tier 1 – Chippenham Tier 2 – Calne, Corsham, Malmesbury and Wotton Bassett Tier 3 – Ashton Keynes, Box, Colerne, Cricklade, Derry Hill, Hullavington, Lyneham, Purton and Sherston. |
| West Wiltshire | 3 | Development Policy A – Trowbridge Development Policy B – Melksham, Warminster Development Policy C – Bradford on Avon, Westbury, Bratton, Broughton Gifford, Codford, Dilton Marsh, Heytesbury, Hilperton, Holt, Southwick, Westwood and Winsley. |
| | 3 | Identify one or two strategic employment sites at Trowbridge but seek to meet the remaining need through other sites located within the town’s commute to work area – i.e. well located sites at nearby towns. |

4.3 Strategic Sites

4.3.1 The Core Strategy will identify suitable sites for delivering the amount of new housing and employment land required in Wiltshire, up to 2026. These are referred to as Strategic Sites.

4.3.2 A number of strategic site options have been assessed through the SA process for each settlement. A number of likely significant negative or positive effects have been identified for different options across the different settlements. For the most part any effects vary from site to site. Details are set out in the assessment tables within Appendix 5 of the main SA Report. Appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures have also been identified. A summary of the identified preferred options are shown by Table 2. Further details can be found within the main SA Report.

Table 2: Identified Strategic Sites Preferred Options

| Area | Option Number | Option Description |
|--------------------------|---------------|--|
| Chippenham | 1 | Northern urban extension; Eastern urban extension; Town Centre regeneration sites and employment sites located to the south of the town. |
| Trowbridge | 1 | A group of sites located to the south east of Trowbridge, including Land North and also South of Ashton Road. |
| Bradford on Avon | 1 | Moulton Estate. |
| Calne | 1 | Land North East of Calne. |
| Corsham | 3 | A component of option 3 has been identified as the preferred option and consists of the eastern part of the site Land at Rudloe. |
| Devizes | 1,2,4 | The preferred option consists of parts of Options 1, 2 and 4. The sites are referred to as: Land off A342, Land South of Roundway Park and Bureau West/ Land off Laywood. |
| Malmesbury | 2 | A group of sites to the east of the town including Land North West of Reeds Farm Estate. |
| Marlborough | 1 | Land West and East of Chopping Knife Lane. |
| Melksham | 2 | A number of sites to the east of Melksham, including Land North and East of The Spa. |
| Tidworth and Ludgershall | 1,2 | Parts of Options 1 and 2 have been identified as preferred. The sites identified are: the Former MSA Depot and the MOD Ludgershall Site 3/ Land South of Granby Gardens. |
| Warminster | 2,3 | Parts of Options 2 and 3 have been identified as preferred. The sites include: Land West of Bath Road and South of Cold Harbour Lane and sites to the south and west of Warminster including Land at Bugley Barton Farm. |
| Westbury | 1 | Land at Matravers School and land at Redland Lane. |
| Wootton Bassett | 1 | A group of sites to the south of the town, including Lower Woodshaw. |
| West of Swindon | PO | Land at Pry Farm, Ridgeway Farm and Moredon Bridge. |

5 Statement on the Difference the Process has Made

- 5.1.1 The assessment work has been based on the best information available. Although some degree of judgement is required in the assessment process, every effort has been made to support predictions with evidence. Any uncertainties in relation to the likelihood of outcomes have been reflected in the assessment findings. Overall the assessment has proved to be successful in identifying likely significant effects.
- 5.1.2 The SA assessment has been used to inform the formulation of the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives and the selection of preferred options relating to the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Sites.
- 5.1.3 As the Core Strategy is developed, a more detailed SA assessment can be undertaken, particularly in relation to the strategic site preferred options. At that stage, more detailed mitigation and enhancement measures can be identified to ensure development meets the requirements of sustainability.

5.1.4 The SA Framework has been used to help develop the Core Strategy Spatial Vision and Objectives. The SA assessment has been used to help identify a preferred Spatial Strategy and to help inform the process of identifying suitable preferred options for the Strategic Sites.