# WEST WILTSHIRE Economic Profile 2003

Compiled by the
Economic Development Division of

GREAT WESTERN ENTERPRISE
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On behalf of

WEST WILTSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

This economic profile has been compiled by Great Western Enterprise Economic Development Division on behalf of the West Wiltshire Economic Partnership. The aim of the report is to provide a resource for use by the Partnership. It provides an analysis of economic factors within West Wiltshire by consulting a range of indicators. Where possible, it considers this data through comparisons between local towns and community areas, the four districts in Wiltshire, and on a national and regional scale.

This report can be downloaded from the West Wiltshire District Council web site http://www.westwiltshire.gov.uk/index.php or can be obtained by contacting:

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***Executive Summary***

***Location***
The West Wiltshire District covers an area of 517sq km, which is 15.8% of the Wiltshire area. The district can be divided into five market towns together with their surrounding villages. These are known as **Community Areas.**

***Population***
West Wiltshire is the most densely populated district in the county (118,150 people) and had the second highest population growth rate from1991 to 2001. This district also had the highest **migrational net gain** in Wiltshire. There are now more people over 60 than there are children, and women outnumber men by 2.4%. **House prices** in West Wiltshire are below the county and regional averages although this district has experienced the highest percentage rise in the county in the period from 2001/2002.

***Business Competitiveness***
West Wiltshire has the second highest **economic activity rate** in the county. It also had the slowest employment growth (by workplace) in the period 1996-2001. Distribution, hotels & restaurants, public administration, education & health, banking, finance & insurance and manufacturing employ the majority of people in West Wiltshire. The biggest decline in employment between 1996-2001 has been in manufacturing. **Average yearly earnings** in West Wiltshire were £22,443 in 2002, which is lower than the Great Britain average of £24,164.4. However, it was also the district with the highest average wage percentage increase in Wiltshire from 2001-2002 (18.2%) **Unemployment** in the district stood at a rate of 1.1%, compared to a county rate of 1.1%, a regional rate of 1.6% and a United Kingdom rate of 2.5%. In 2001 there were 4342 **firms** operating in West Wiltshire, 96.20% of which employed 50 people or less. Net VAT registrations totalled 65 in 2001.The industries with the largest number of business units were distribution, hotels & restaurants and banking finance & insurance. The majority of the demand for **commercial property** was for smaller units

**Skills & Education**
West Wiltshire students performed on a par with the county at **GCSE/GNVQ** with 54% of students gaining 5+ A-C passes in 2001. The majority (75%) of 16 year olds in West Wiltshire opted to stay in full time education. West Wiltshire also has a higher percentage of working age people who have reached **NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3** as well as a higher percentage of people with trade apprenticeships. However, the district has the highest proportion of adults lacking **basic skills** in the county. Wiltshire has a higher level of hard-to-fill and skill-shortage vacancies than most other South West counties.

**Agriculture**
14.3% of total agricultural land and 17% share of agricultural holdings in Wiltshire can be found in West Wiltshire. Farms tend to be smaller and the majority of holdings are classified as cattle & sheep, dairy and cereals.

***Deprivation***
Wiltshire and Swindon are considered to be relatively prosperous although there are pockets of deprivation that are often hidden in official statistics. There are, in fact, some wards in West Wiltshire that are amongst the most deprived in the county.

## *1. Location and Communications*

### 1.1 Location

The local authority district of West Wiltshire covers an area of 517 sq km along the western edge of the county of Wiltshire. The district is home to the five market towns of Bradford on Avon, Melksham, Trowbridge, Warminster and Westbury, as well as numerous villages. Each of these towns acts as a commercial centre to the surrounding rural communities, thus forming Community Areas (see Section 1.3), and offers unique characteristics that shape the area. The district is characterised by a gently undulating landscape between downs and plains, with unique villages, county houses and a rich farming landscape. Furthermore, the West Wiltshire Downs is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### 1.2 Transport and Communications Infrastructure

West Wiltshire is served by direct rail connections to London, Bristol, Bath and Salisbury. The A350 trunk road runs north to the M4 motorway and south to the Dorset coast. The A36 trunk road links to Bath in the east and Salisbury in the South West. Indeed, both the A350 and the A36 are recognised as important communication and development corridors. The nearest international airport is located approximately 25 miles away in Bristol and the major London airports of Heathrow and Gatwick are accessible in around 2-2 ½ hours.

*Wiltshire Transport Issues*

The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan has identified three economic issues that impact upon Wiltshire's transport policy: growth in commuting to large employment centres; pockets of deprivation; and urban regeneration. An added factor is the movement of goods, which is fundamental to maintaining a prosperous economy. The biggest generators of HGVs in Wiltshire are in the areas around Melksham, Trowbridge, Westbury and Swindon. These HGV movements reflect the concentration of manufacturing and distribution in the area.

The key travel demand pressures that have been identified in Wiltshire are increasing lengths of journeys to work, increased car use and lack of transport alternatives. Some of the roads in Wiltshire are not suitable enough to sustain the volume and weight of the traffic and because of the reliance on the A350 and A36, West Wiltshire has been identified as being particularly susceptible to the effects of unreliable journey times, reactive road maintenance and congestion.

Public transport in Wiltshire accounts for 6% of journeys to work. Some of the infrastructure problems relating to bus services are: rural accessibility to destinations outside the town main centres; poor evening and Sunday services; relatively infrequent 'commuter' services to work; image issues; high bus fares and shortage of bus drivers. The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan also cites the development area of West Wiltshire as being inadequately served by the service frequencies of north-south route rail journeys.

*A36/A46*
As a result of Government's decision to detrunk the A36/A46, the GOSW, the Highways Agency and the relevant highway authorities commissioned a study of the route in May 2002. The main objective of the study was to recommend a strategy and

an implementation plan. Consultation is proposed in the form of workshops, a citizen's panel, newsletters and a website. Updated information can be found at http://www.bb2scstudy.org.uk.

*Westbury by-pass*
Decisions regarding Westbury Bypass road scheme proposal have not yet been finalised.

### 1.3 The Five Towns

For purposes of analysis, West Wiltshire can be divided up into its five market towns and their surrounding rural hinterland. These are known as  Community Areas . The boundaries of the Community Areas are determined by factors such as geographical distance, shopping & school catchment areas and delivery areas of police & other service providers.  In this report, they provide a useful means of analysing the economy of West Wiltshire. A more detailed explanation and historical analysis of Community Areas in Wiltshire can be found in *A Sense of Belonging* by John Chandler (1998).

**Bradford–on-Avon**
Bradford-on-Avon is a small Saxon town with a conservation area that remains largely unchanged since the early 1900s. Like Melksham and Trowbridge, Bradford on Avon was established on a rich cloth making industry. Wealth from the cloth trade combined with the local quarrying of limestone produced a legacy of rich and varied architecture.  As a result, Georgian mansions contrast with weavers' cottages and gabled houses. Today the economy is largely based on retail and tourism with predominantly independent traders focusing on antiques and gifts. The town's centre is the main location for a range of office and retail premises. There are also retail outlets and arts & crafts studios at the Tithe Barn workshops that are located approximately a third of a mile away from the town centre. Further office and industrial premises can be found in the Treenwood/Elms Cross Industrial Estate.

**Melksham**
Melksham once formed part of the large royal forest, extending as far as Chippenham. During the 17$^{th}$ century, Melksham was also one of the great weaving towns of Wiltshire and the town's character was further shaped by industrial development in the 19$^{th}$ century.  Legacies of the town's industrial heritage can be found in the weaver's cottages and the woollen mills now converted to other industrial uses. Its location makes it an ideal base from which to visit the nearby historic houses of Chalfield Manor, Lacock Abbey, as well as the historic village of Lacock itself. The town centre offers a variety of retail and office premises. Retail facilities include some independent traders and national chains, as well as a large out-of-town department store. There is also an extensive range of office and industrial premises dispersed across town, which includes Bowerhill Industrial Estate. Bowerhill contains a thriving business community with a mixture of service, light industrial, manufacturing, distribution and engineering companies. Other business parks include: Avonside Business Park; Lancaster Business Park; Melksham Business Park; Hampton Business Park; Upside Avon Business Park.

**Trowbridge**
Trowbridge is Wiltshire's county town. It is the administrative centre of the county, being home to both the County Council and District Council offices. It is the economic and commercial centre for the area. During the 14$^{th}$ century the town was known for cloth manufacturing and weaving. Today, Trowbridge offers a good range of local

and national retail outlets, indoor market, two shopping centres and a large Civic Hall. The business parks and trading estates are scattered across the town and include The White Horse Business Park, Bryer Ash Business Park, Canal Road Industrial Estate, River Way and Yeoman Way. The local economy is based on manufacturing, food processing and services.

*Vision for Trowbridge*
West Wiltshire District Council, in partnership with the County Council, The Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Trowbridge 20/20, the Development Partnership and the Civic Society, is currently a leading regeneration exercise to revitalise Trowbridge. The aim of the partnership is to develop and realise a master plan for Trowbridge that recognises the potential contribution that this town can make to the social, economic, and environmental well being of the district and county.

**Warminster**
Warminster is one of the important military bases in England and is home to the beautiful Tudor stately home, Longleat House. It is also ideally located for visiting some well-known landmarks such as Stonehenge. In the Middle Ages, Warminster established itself as one of England's largest centres for the corn market, as well as an important cloth and wool town. Its success as a market town was attributed to its ideal location on two main roads. It is now a prime location for manufacturing and service businesses, with a growing market in antiques. The centre of the town provides a selection of mainly small retail and office opportunities. Out-of-town office or light industrial premises can be found on the Crusader and Warminster Business Park. Further industrial premises can be found on the following estates: Bath Road Business Park; Copheap Lane; Fairfield Road/Northlands Industrial Estate; Woodcock Road Industrial Estate.

**Westbury**
Westbury is home to the famous Westbury White Horse, which is scored into the chalk of Salisbury Plain's western slope. This town is a significant industrial and commercial centre and for more than 600 years its prosperity was built on weaving, cloth making and the manufacture of gloves. Georgian houses surround the market square in the town centre and the town also boasts some fine Victorian buildings. The present day economy is based on cement production, light engineering and distribution services. The town centre provides a range of mainly small retail premises and offices. There are also ample opportunities for office and industrial uses on various trading estates: West Wilts Trading Estate, Northacre Industrial Park, Brook Lane/Station Road, Lakeside Business Park, and Woodland Trading Estate.

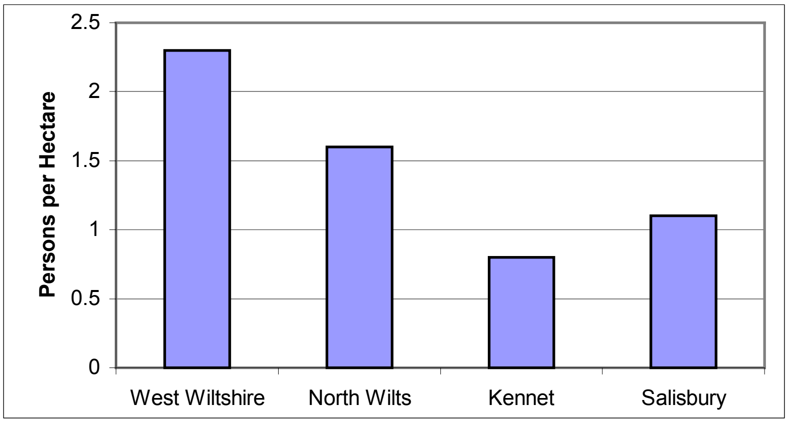
## *2.Population (Census 2001)*

The following section contains the latest population data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), who released the Key Statistics for local Authorities in February.

### *2.1 Population Density*

West Wiltshire has a population of 118,150 and it is the most densely populated district in Wiltshire with 2.3 people per hectare. The density of this district is higher than the county and regional levels, which are 1.3 and 2.1 respectively (Figure 2.1).

*Fig 2.1: Population Density of Wiltshire Districts 2001*

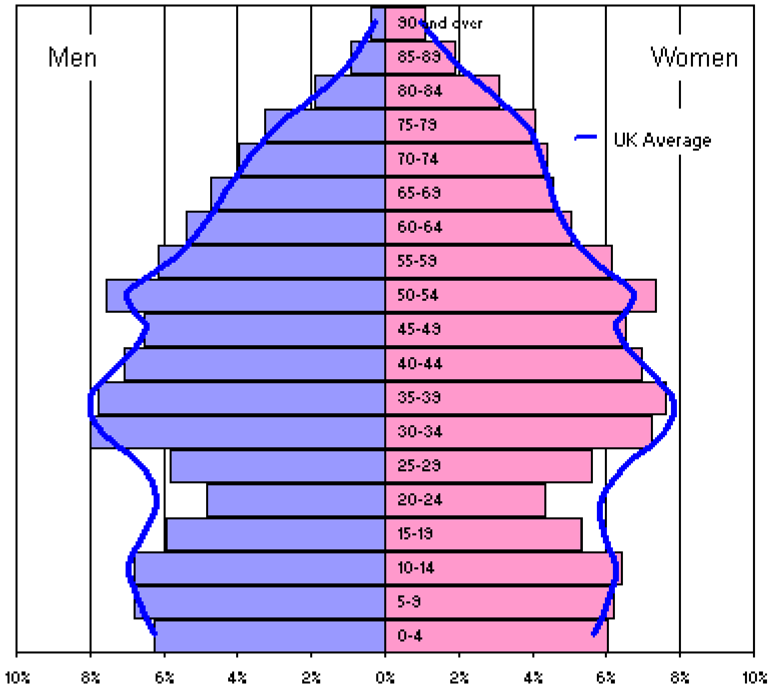



Source: Census Data, 2001

### 2.2 Population Structure

The age structure of West Wiltshire is not significantly different to that of the United Kingdom average except for the 20-24 age group that has lower numbers overall (Figure 2.2). This anomaly could be attributed to the fact that Wiltshire does not have a university and the United Kingdom population calculation has included university students counted at their term time addresses.

*Figure 2.2: Population (West Wiltshire)*




Source: Census Data, 2001

Table 2.1 shows that West Wiltshire has a slightly lower percentage of working age people than Wiltshire and the United Kingdom. The percentage number of children in West Wiltshire is on a par with Wiltshire and slightly higher than the South West and the United Kingdom.

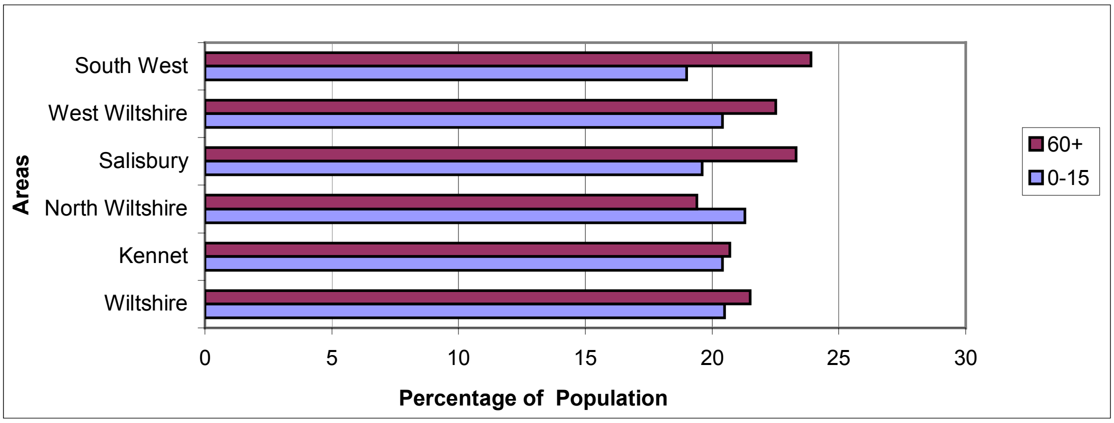
*Table 2.1: Population Profile of Local Authority Districts, 2001 (%)*

| Area | All Ages | Under 16 | 16-Pension Age | Pension Age+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wiltshire | 432,973 | 20.5 | 60.5 | 19 |
| Kennet | 74,838 | 20.4 | 61.4 | 18.2 |
| North Wiltshire | 125,372 | 21.3 | 61.6 | 17.1 |
| Salisbury | 114,613 | 19.6 | 59.6 | 20.8 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **118,150** | **20.44** | **59.8** | **19.8** |
| South West | 4,928,434 | 19.0 | 59.7 | 21.3 |
| United Kingdom | 58,800,000 | 20.2 | 61.4 | 18.4 |

Source: Census Data, 2001

If we examine the population age groups further we can see that a significant population profile change has taken place in West Wiltshire: for the first time there are more people over 60 than there are children (Figure 2.3). This trend is also reflected at county (except for North Wiltshire), regional, and national levels. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), this ageing population reflects longer life expectancy and improvements in living standards and health care.

*Figure 2.3: Ageing Population (%)*




Source: Census Data, 2001

This age shift will have significant economic and social implications. The Department of Trade & Industry have outlined a number of drivers and trends that will shape and be shaped by these demographic changes. These include:

- Increasingly flexible patterns of work, retirement and lifelong learning.
- The impact on financial services such as investments and pensions.
- New opportunities for leisure and retailing.
- The need for preventative and information-technology based healthcare.
- The implications for the design of products, public transport systems and 'smart-wired homes, that will help to maintain independent life.
- Other new applications for communications technologies

The labour market pool will contract as numbers in the 0-15 age group decline and people live longer. Although there are no current plans to raise the retirement age the concept of 'working age' will need to be redefined in order to help overcome possible workforce shortages. However, incentives for later retirement might be required in order to maintain an older, skilled workforce. These could include flexible working arrangements and investment in training and development.

The age shift will also bring with it substantial new market and product opportunities for businesses, for example, financial services (advising and facilitating pensions & savings investment provision) and health & social care (supplying care services & support). Businesses operating in sectors such as leisure and retailing will also need to acknowledge the buying power of older people and the scope for product and services development.

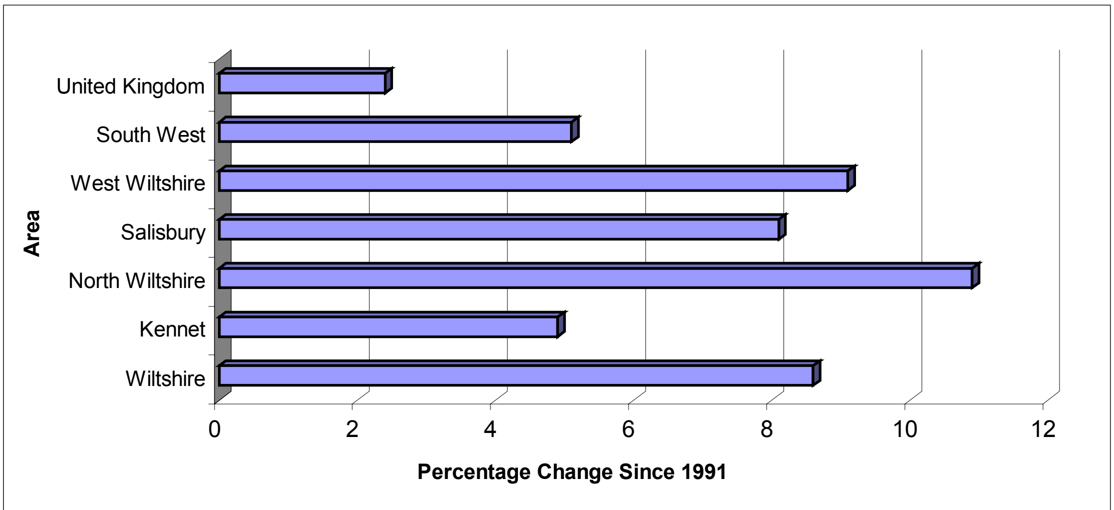
Differences in the ability of older people to finance their old age will increase with the lack of adequate provision being a critical factor. Some people will have made financial provisions for longer retirement lives but others with less adequate pension and savings arrangements will run a greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. Dependency on state provision will therefore become of increasing importance especially in terms of financial aid, specific types of health care, housing, and social care services.

Some of the possible consequence of an ageing population can be influenced by initiatives and policies created at county/district level, however, others will require regional level or national level intervention.

**2.3 Population Change**

Wiltshire has seen one of the United Kingdom's fastest rates of population growth since 1991 (Figure 2.4). North Wiltshire experienced the highest population growth rate with an increase of 10.9%, with Kennet being the lowest at 4.9%. The district of West Wiltshire now has 9,900 more people living within its boundaries than it did in 1991.

*Figure 2.4: Population Growth Since 1991 (%)*




Source: Census Data, 2001

As a result of United Kingdom internal migration movements, Kennet and North Wiltshire experienced small population losses of 297 and 207 respectively. (Table 2.2). Salisbury gained 322 people but it is in West Wiltshire that the most significant migrational population gain took place with an increase of 1,396.

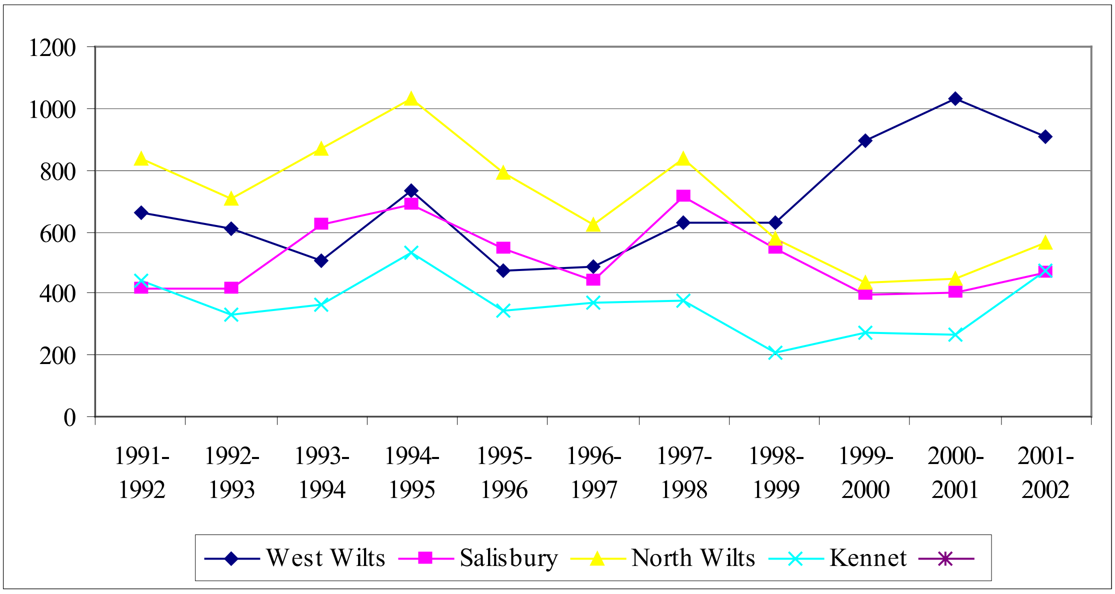
*Table 2.2: Migration, 2001*

| | % Of all people who are migrants | % Of all people who have moved into area within UK | % Of people who have moved out of area |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wiltshire | 13.0 | # | # |
| Kennet | 13.4 | 6.7 | 7.1 |
| North Wiltshire | 12.2 | 5.5 | 5.7 |
| Salisbury | 14.0 | 5.7 | 5.4 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **13.0** | **4.9** | **3.7** |

Source: Census Data, 2001
# The Office of National Statistics has only released limited migration data. Not all numbers for counties can be extracted by addition of numbers for smaller areas.

Internal migration levels are influenced by semi-permanent migration movements such as Armed Forces personnel (and their families) transferring to some parts of Wiltshire. The scale of housing development will also influence the level of migration in an area. The Wiltshire Structure Plan allocated 14,000 new dwellings to be constructed in West Wiltshire between 1991 and 2001. An examination of figure 2.5 reveals that the level of dwelling completions was much higher in West Wiltshire than in any other district in the year leading up to the census**.** Constructions in West Wiltshire reached a peak of 1034 in 2000/2001. Since 1999, the area has achieved over twice as many dwelling completions as any other district in the County.

*Figure 2.5: Dwelling Completions**




Source: HHCR Number of Dwelling Completions (extracted from Wiltshire & Swindon Intelligence Network, Wiltshire County Council 2002)
*The data presented here covers self-contained dwelling units created from all sources eg new houses and flats, conversion of existing buildings and replacement dwellings

## 2.4 House Prices

Generally, house prices continued to rise throughout the district as they did throughout most of the United Kingdom (Table 2.3). Cambridge Econometrics (July 2002) claim that the house price inflation in the United Kingdom has been the highest for 12 years and continues rising in the South West at a pace exceeding the national average. The region has experienced double-digit year-on-year growth for almost every quarter since July 1999. The general consensus is that a high level of consumer confidence and low interest rates drives this house price boom.

Although West Wiltshire has the lowest average house price in the county, it has experienced the highest house price percentage rise in comparison to the other districts in Wiltshire. This housing price increase in West Wiltshire has been fuelled by the aforementioned macroeconomic influences, however, the level of planned housing development has also contributed to this rise.

*Table 2.3: Price of an Average* House, July-September 2002*

| Location | Average Price Jul-Sept 2002 | % Increase since July/Sept 2001 |
|---|---|---|
| Kennet | 201,454 | 17.7 |
| Salisbury | 188,150 | 10.6 |
| North Wiltshire | 177,327 | 15.6 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **141,615** | **19.00** |
| Wiltshire | 159,370 | 15.7 |
| South West | 152,391 | 22.1 |
| England | 148,946 | 17.6 |
| Bradford on Avon | 207,790 | 27.9 |
| Warminster | 144,598 | 17.2 |
| Melksham | 143,437 | 23.4 |
| Trowbridge | 136,392 | 22.6 |
| Westbury | 128,877 | 28.5 |

Source: www.proviser.com

*Average price of all properties that are detached, semi-detached, terraced, flat or maisonette.

### *Population: Key Points*

- West Wiltshire is the most densely populated of all Wiltshire districts at 2.3 people per hectare.
- Population in 2001 was 118,150.
- There are now more people over 60 than there are children.
- West Wiltshire had the second highest population growth rate (1991-2001) in Wiltshire.
- West Wiltshire had the highest migration net gain in Wiltshire.
- House prices in West Wiltshire are below county and regional averages although it experienced the highest percentage rise in the county in the period 2001/2002 (latest available data).
- West Wiltshire saw over twice as many dwelling completions as any other district in the county since 1999.

## *3. Business Competitiveness*

The following section outlines the main characteristics of West Wiltshire as a business location in a competitive business environment. Whilst differences can be observed between the county as a whole and the district of Wiltshire, overall key indicators point towards a sustained competitive business environment.

### 3.1 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

GDP is the value of everything produced in the economy for the year. Regional GDP can be calculated on a residence or a workplace basis. Residence based GDP allocates the incomes of commuters to their place of residence whilst workplace GDP allocates their incomes to their place of work. The GDP statistics in Table 3.1 have been calculated on a workplace basis.

*Table 3.1: GDP in the South West Region 1998 Ranked by Index( NUTS 1,2 and 3)*

| **Area** | £m 1998 | £ per head 1998 | £ per head UK=100 1998 | £ per head UK=100 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Swindon | 3,241 | 18,129 | 144 | 150 |
| City of Bristol | 6,224 | 15,472 | 123 | 121 |
| Gloucestershire | 7,143 | 12,772 | 102 | 104 |
| *United Kingdom* | *743,314* | *12,548* | *100* | *100* |
| Bournemouth & Poole | 3,670 | 12,078 | 96 | 96 |
| North & North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire | 6,980 | 11,730 | 93 | 92 |
| **Wiltshire** | **4,974** | **11,708** | **93** | **101** |
| *South West* | *56,064* | *11,447* | *91* | *93* |
| Plymouth | 2,888 | 11,437 | 91 | 98 |
| Somerset | 5,318 | 10,877 | 87 | 89 |
| Dorset | 3,874 | 10,016 | 80 | 79 |
| Devon | 6,654 | 9,636 | 79 | 77 |
| Cornwall & Isles of Scilly | 4,009 | 8,185 | 65 | 64 |
| Torbay | 1,066 | 6,655 | 69 | 69 |

Source: Regional Trends, 2002

Table 3.1 shows that there was a significant variation in GDP per head (1998) within the South West. This level of sub-regional variation can be attributed to the nature of economic activity within the region, with the north and east attract high value industries like advanced manufacturing, financial and business services. Wiltshire reported GDP per head to be just under the figure for the United Kingdom as a whole, and marginally above the regional average. The Wiltshire figures are similar to those found in other rural counties to the north and east of the South West region. In absolute terms, GDP has risen in Wiltshire over the past few years. However, this growth has slowed down and is increasing at a slower rate than the South West and the United Kingdom average. Indeed, Wiltshire’s total GDP only increased by 0.5% between 1997 and 1998, compared to an average 6.1% increase for the United Kingdom and, in relative terms, GDP fell between 1995 and 1998.

## 3.2 Workforce Profile

The following section builds a profile of the Wiltshire workforce by looking at employment characteristics, average earnings and employment levels.

### *3.2.1 Employment and Economic Activity Rates*

The number of people in employment refers to those people who have done at least one hour of paid work in the week prior to the collection of data or those who have a job from which they are temporarily away. The employment rate refers to the number of employed people expressed as a percentage of the relevant population, and the economic activity rate is the number of people who are in employment, or unemployed (ILO definition) expressed as a percentage of the relevant population.

Both Wiltshire and Swindon continue to enjoy higher economic activity and employment rates than the South West as a whole. Salisbury and West Wiltshire have one of the highest economic activity rates and employment rates in the county, whilst North Wiltshire has the lowest (Table 3.2).

*Table 3.2: Employment Rate and Economic activity, 2001-2002*

| **Area** | Total Employed (000) | Employment Rate % | Economically Activity Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| South West | 2,457,000 | 79.3 | 82.4 |
| **Swindon** | 99,000 | 84.2 | 86.6 |
| Wiltshire | 231,000 | 84.2 | 86.6 |
| Kennet | 41,000 | 83.4 | 85.3 |
| West Wiltshire | 62,000 | 86.2 | 87.7 |
| Salisbury | 63,000 | 86.4 | 89.4 |
| North Wiltshire | 65,000 | 81.0 | 83.8 |

Source: ONS, 2003

An examination of the percentage number of persons who are employed demonstrates that Wiltshire has a higher incidence of self-employment than Great Britain (Table 3.3). Although some of the self-employed data from the LFS is unavailable at district level, we can estimate approximately that Salisbury has the highest percentage of self-employed persons in Wiltshire and West Wiltshire has the lowest.

*Table 3.3: Employees & self-employed, (persons aged 16+ in Employment) 2001*

| Area | Employees as % of all in employment* | Self employed as % of all in employment* |
|---|---|---|
| Great Britain | 87.8 | 11.4 |
| South West | 85.3 | 13.8 |
| Wiltshire *of which:* | 87.4 | 12.1 |
| Kennet | 87.8 | # |
| North Wiltshire | 87.7 | 12.3 |
| Salisbury | 84.1 | 15.9 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **90.3** | **#** |

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001 (NOMIS 2002)
# statistically unreliable *Percentages do not add up to 100% for each geographic type

Total employment increased by 10.4% in West Wiltshire between 1996-2001, equalling that of Great Britain but falling below regional and county levels (Table 3.4). North Wiltshire had the most significant percentage increases in the county.

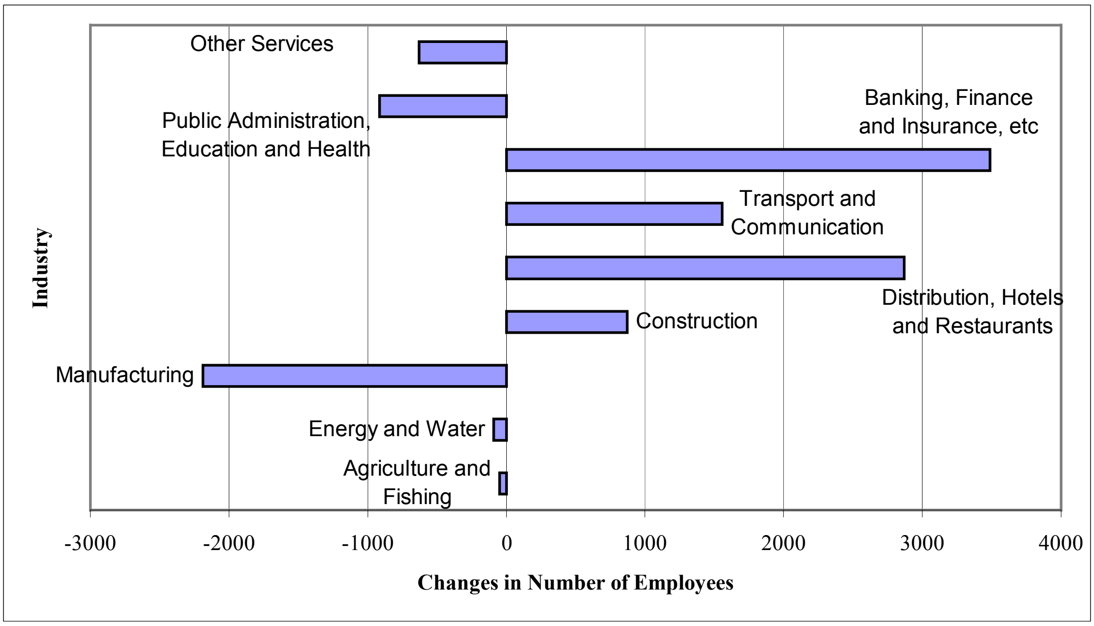
*Table 3.4: Change in Employment by Workplace, 1996-2001*

| Area | Change in Numbers | % Change |
|---|---|---|
| Kennet | 2,739 | 10.9 |
| North Wiltshire | 7,936 | 19.3 |
| Salisbury | 5,971 | 14.1 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **4,912** | **10.4** |
| Wiltshire | 21,559 | 13.8 |
| South West | 225,014 | 12.2 |
| Great Britain | 2,371,953 | 10.4 |

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001 & Rescaled Annual Employment Survey 1996 (NOMIS 2002)

Figure 3.1 presents the change in employment by broad industry group. The largest decline in West Wiltshire, which can be seen in manufacturing, echoes a nationwide trend. In 2002 Britain's manufacturing industry reported its worst fall in output in more than ten years and is now reported to be shedding jobs at a national rate of 10,000 a month. However, some care is needed when interpreting the level of job losses in manufacturing because although most of these losses are attributed to the downturn in trade, some of the decline in manufacturing employment can be accounted for by outsourcing. Catering, maintenance and distribution in manufacturing firms used to be part of manufacturing employment, therefore since many of these functions have been outsourced (in an effort to reduce costs), those employment figures have transferred to the services sector. Employment numbers in public administration, education & health and other services, energy & water and agriculture & fishing also decreased but in less significant numbers. In comparison, banking, finance & insurance enjoyed considerable growth in employment. According to the ONS, financial and business services now account for about one in five jobs in the UK, compared with about one in ten in 1981. This sector has seen the largest increase in jobs since 1981, part of the post-war growth in the service industries. Employment in distribution, hotels & restaurants, and transport & communication also grew. Construction had a more modest rise.

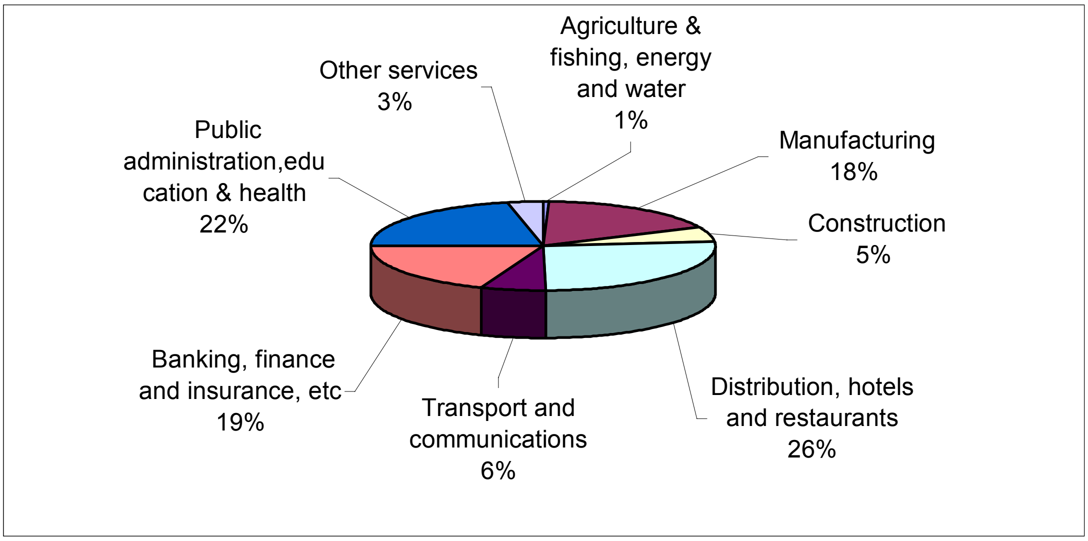
*Figure 3.1: Change in Employment by Industry1996-2001 ( West Wiltshire)*




Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001 & Rescaled Annual Employment Survey 1996, (NOMIS 2002)

Figure 3.2 illustrates the employment profile of West Wiltshire. Distribution, hotels and restaurants account for the largest percentage of employment in West Wiltshire, followed by public administration, education & health. Banking, finance & insurance, as well as manufacturing, are also significant in terms of employment. These four industry groups account for 84.8% of total employment in West Wiltshire.

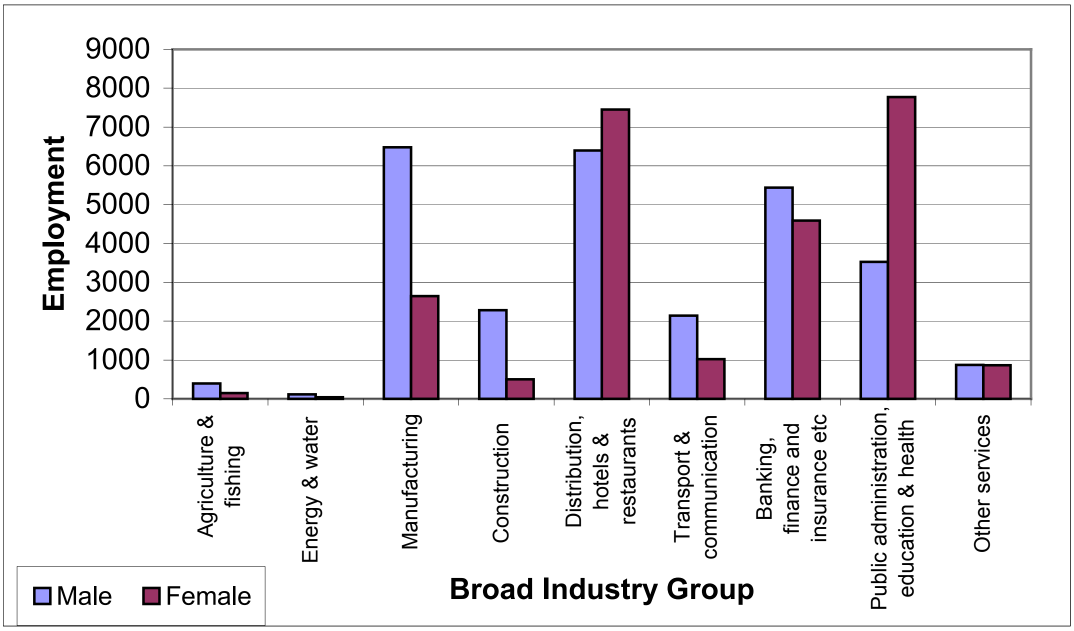
*Figure 3.2: Employment profile of West Wiltshire 2001*




Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001 (NOMIS 2002)

The male/female division by broad industry group (Figure 3.3) shows that females outnumber males in groups such as public administration, education & health as well as distribution and hotels & restaurants (i.e. the service sector).

*Figure 3.3: Employment Profile of West Wiltshire by Gender, 2001*




Source: Annual Business Inquiry, 2001 (Nomis 2002)

The division of labour by gender has the potential to alter the employment profile of West Wiltshire if there are future changes in the pattern for demand of labour. If, for example, a substantial number of people are made redundant from a declining industry that traditionally attracts more men than women (or vice versa), and lack the appropriate skills and/or experience to enter a growing industry, the employment profile of West Wiltshire could change significantly.

For example, the manufacturing sector in West Wiltshire employs more men than women and the reverse applies to the several sectors of the services industry, therefore a continued decline in manufacturing and a sustained growth in some service industries could change the employment/unemployment gender profile in this district. However, supply side policies like retraining and regeneration, as well as regional policies (e.g. RDA funded initiatives aimed at encouraging new business to the region and the development of existing business) can be used to minimise some of the impact of structural unemployment.

### *3.2.2 Earnings*

Kennet* has the lowest average gross yearly earnings in the county, followed in ascending order by Salisbury, North Wiltshire and West Wiltshire (Table 3.5). Earnings in West Wiltshire are also higher than both the county and regional average, although lower than the Great Britain average. West Wiltshire is the district with the highest percentage increase from 2000-2002 (18.2%). The percentage increase is also greater than in the South West and Great Britain.

*Table 3.5: Average Gross Yearly Earnings# (Full Time) Employees (£), April 2002*

| Area | Gross Yearly Earnings | 10% earned less than | 10% earned more than | 2000-2002 % Increase |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kennet | *20,453.1 | *10,535.2 | *32,561.9 | 10.1 |
| North Wiltshire | 22,271.6 | 11,315.2 | 34,565.6 | 8.8 |
| Salisbury | 21,268 | 10,940.8 | 33,872.8 | 11.7 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **22,443.2** | **10,795.2** | **38,282.4** | **18.2** |
| Wiltshire | 21,736 | 10,821.2 | 34,387.6 | 12.5 |
| South West | 21,928.4 | 10,920 | 35,479.6 | 10.8 |
| Great Britain | 24,164.4 | 11,211.2 | 39,124.8 | 10.7 |

Source: Labour Market New Earnings Survey, 2002
*Statistically unreliable
# Workplace-Based Data

If the average hourly rate (excluding overtime) is examined, West Wiltshire again ranks as the district with the highest average hourly rate (£10.74 per hour). This is higher than the hourly rates for Wiltshire and the South West, which is £10.40, and £10.60 respectively.

The 'New Earnings Survey' hourly earnings data shows that men in West Wiltshire earn approximately 23% more than women. Research has suggested that this difference could be attributed to the fact that:

- Men and women tend to gravitate towards different types of jobs. Female employment tends to be concentrated in generally lower paid occupations such as retail, cleaning and clerical posts. The largest concentration of male employment can be found in management jobs involving sales, production and maintenance and in jobs involving goods handling and storage, which tend to command higher levels of pay.

- The widest pay gap exists in occupations such as company financial managers and treasurers and at its narrowest amongst checkout operators.

However, occupational wage rates may not be the only reason why women earn less than men. Table 3.6 displays the average wage rates of a selection of occupations and shows that either women still earn less than men for doing the same type of work, or else men get promoted and trained faster than women (bearing in mind that there will be different status levels within each occupation). Either way, pay differentials between men and women probably depend on much wider factors than the labour market in isolation.

*Table 3.6: 'South West' Average Weekly Earnings (full time excluding overtime) 2002*

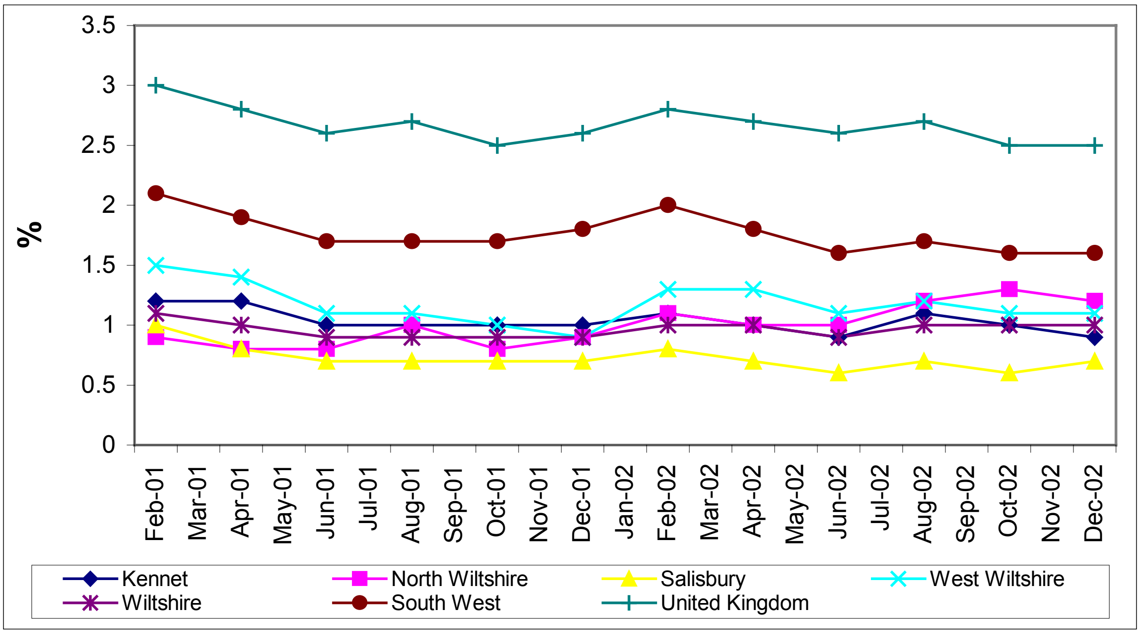
| Occupational Classification | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| Managers/Administrators | 656.6 | 466.4 |
| Professional Occupations | 603.2 | 523.1 |
| Associate Professional/Technical | 486.6 | 415.3 |
| Clerical/Secretarial Occupations | 297.5 | 274.8 |
| Craft/Related Occupations | 339.8 | 261.3 |
| Sales Occupations | 348.8 | 251.3 |
| Plant/Machine Operatives | 313.1 | 256.2 |

Source: 'New Earnings Survey', Nomis 2002

### *3.3.3 Unemployment*

Unemployment in West Wiltshire dropped to only 752 people (1.1%) in December 2002. This unemployment rate is consistent with the general fall in unemployment throughout the county (Figure 3.4). In December 2002 West Wiltshire's 1.1% unemployment rate was below the regional rate of 1.6% and the UK rate of 2.5%. It was the same as the county rate of 1.1%.

*Figure 3.4: Unemployment Rates % based on Residence Based Figures*




Source: Claimant Count (NOMIS 2002)

An examination of the duration of employment in West Wiltshire in December 2002 (Table 3.7) shows that although at that point in time it was the Wiltshire district with the highest rate of long-term unemployment, this only amounted to 21 people. In a period of high employment there are only a very small proportion of claimants who are experiencing difficulties in returning to the workplace.

Surprisingly, job losses in eg manufacturing, public administration, energy & water, have so far not resulted in a significant overall shedding of labour. The claimant count unemployment rate has continued static to marginally lower movement. Nevertheless, these tight labour market conditions are creating recruitment difficulties for some employers in Wiltshire who reported a number of hard to fill and skill shortage vacancies in 2001.

*Table 3.7: Duration of Unemployment by %, Dec 2002*

| Area | Under 6 months | 6 – 12 months | 1 – 2 years | Over 2 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kennet | 80.4 | 13.1 | 4.8 | 1.7 |
| North Wiltshire | 82.4 | 11.4 | 4.6 | 1.6 |
| Salisbury | 86.9 | 9.2 | 3.3 | 0.7 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **79.4** | **11.6** | **6.1** | **2.8** |
| Wiltshire | 82 | 11.3 | 4.9 | 1.8 |
| South West | 75.2 | 13.1 | 7.8 | 3.9 |
| United Kingdom | 68.3 | 16 | 10.1 | 5.6 |

Source: Claimant Count – Age & Duration (NOMIS 2002)

## 3.3 Business Profile

### *3.3.1 Businesses*

In 2001 across Wiltshire 17,821 firms employed 177,550 people. Nearly a quarter of firms and 29.4% of people were in West Wiltshire (Table 3.8) In West Wiltshire there were 4,342 firms employing 52,251 people (the highest employment number of all the districts). This represents an increase of 27 firms and 4192 employees since 2000. The average firm size is also larger in West Wiltshire than in North Wiltshire, Salisbury and Kennet.

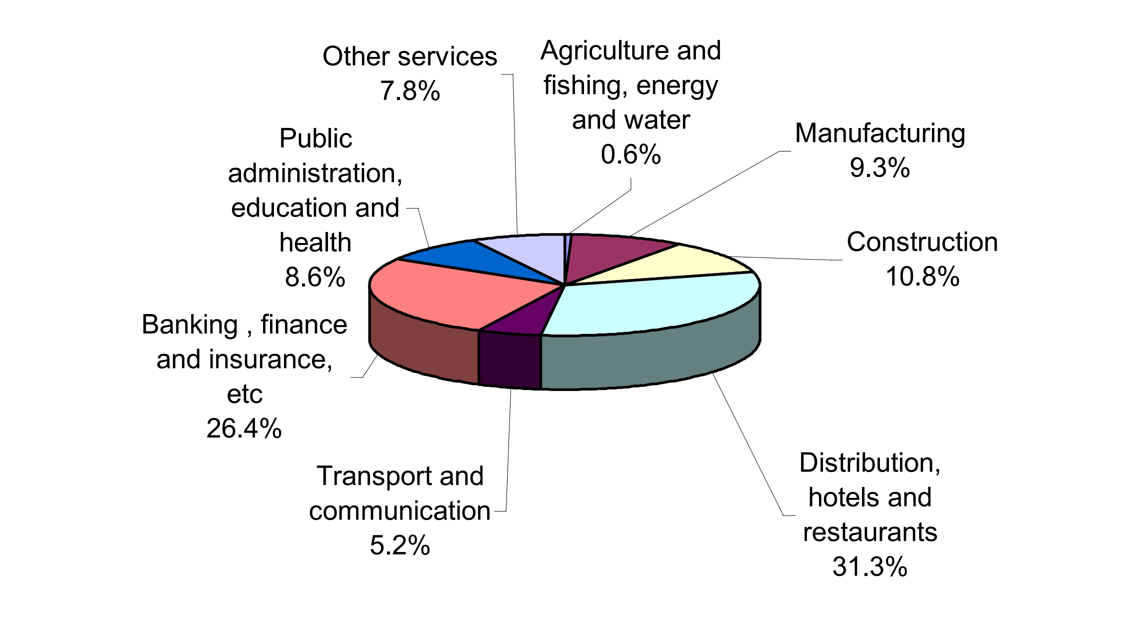
*Table 3.8: Business Enterprises and Employment by Location 2001.*

| Area | Number of Firms | % Total | Number of employees | % of Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wiltshire *of which*: | 17821 | 100.1 | 177550 | 100.1 |
| Kennet | 3220 | 18.1 | 27799 | 15.7 |
| North Wiltshire | 5310 | 29.8 | 49109 | 27.7 |
| Salisbury | 4949 | 27.8 | 48391 | 27.3 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **4342** | **24.4** | **52251** | **29.4** |

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001 Workplace (NOMIS 2002)

Figure 3.5 further divides these firms by ‘broad industrial group’ (Standard Industrial Codes). It is evident that banking, finance & insurance together with distribution, hotels & restaurants continue to have the largest concentration of business enterprises. Together they account for 57.7% of all business enterprises in West Wiltshire.

*Figure 3.5: Business Enterprises by Sector in West Wiltshire 2001*




Source: Annual Business Inquiry Workplace 2001 (NOMIS2002)

Businesses can also be classified by employment size (Table 3.9). In West Wiltshire 96.2% of all firms are small businesses with an employment share of 45.3%. Small and medium sized businesses account for 99.3% of all firms in West Wiltshire with an employment share of 67.5%. This profile is similar to the county where 97.10% of firms are small businesses and 99.5% are SMEs. SME's contribute significantly to the economy at district, county, regional and national levels. They account for over 99% of UK businesses, and account for 50% of UK business turnover.

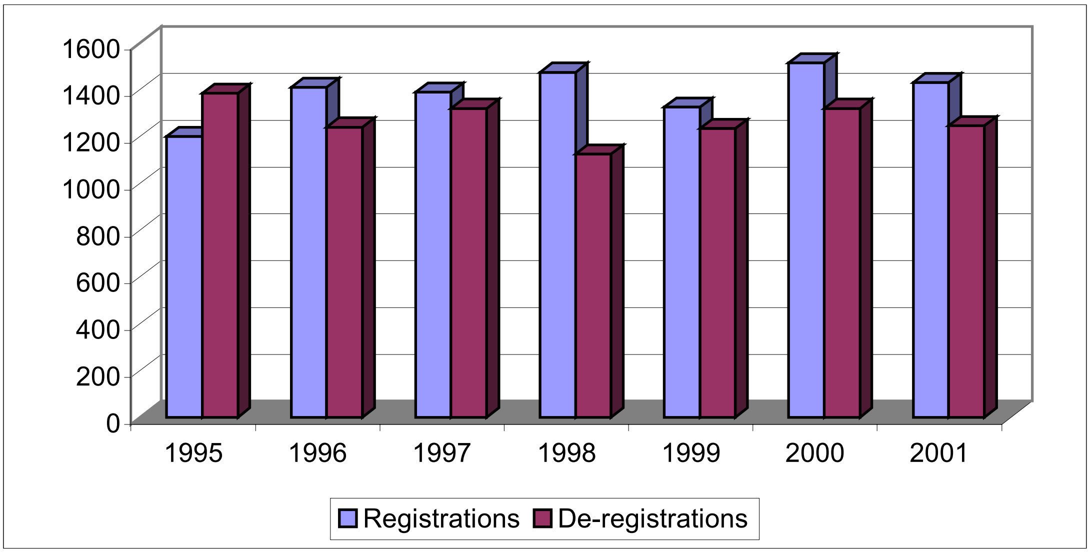
*Table 3.9: Business Enterprises by Size 2001*

| Area/Size | No. Of firms | % Of Firms | No. Of Employees | % Of Employees |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| West Wiltshire: | | | | |
| 1-4 employees | 2943 | 67.8 | 6176 | 11.8 |
| 1-49 employees | 4177 | 96.2 | 23695 | 45.3 |
| 50-199 employees | 133 | 3.1 | 11623 | 22.2 |
| 200+ employees | 32 | 0.7 | 16933 | 32.4 |
| Wiltshire: | | | | |
| **1-4 employees** | 12399 | 69.6 | 25782 | 14.5 |
| **1-49 employees** | 17301 | 97.10 | 93697 | 52.8 |
| **50-199 employees** | 419 | 2.4 | 36813 | 20.7 |
| **200+employees** | 101 | 0.57 | 47040 | 26.5 |

Source: Adapted from Annual Business Inquiry 2001 Workplace (NOMIS 2002)

VAT registrations and de-registrations are a good source of information regarding business start-ups and closures. They are useful indicators of the health of the economy and level of business entrepreneurship. The establishment of new firms provides an important source of job creation. Research by the 'Small Business Service' (SBS) reveals that new firms, especially small firms, are the greatest single source of new jobs at all points of the economic cycle. Generally, the entry of new firms into an industry stimulates productivity because of increased competitiveness. The least efficient firms are forced to exit the market, or experience a reduction in their market share if they cannot compete with the new and/or stronger competitors. The reallocation of market share removes the least efficient players thus increasing productivity overall. The SBS claim that half of labour productivity growth and 90% of total productivity growth comes from entry, exit and the reallocation of market share. There were over 2,275 new VAT registrations in West Wiltshire between 1995 and 2001 and the net change in stocks was 260, which makes it the district with the second highest net change increase in the county (Figure 3.6).

*Figure 3.6: Business start-ups & closures in West Wiltshire, 1995-2001*




Source: Small Business Service, 2002

### *3.3.2 Employment Specialisation*

The industries that employ the highest number of employees in Wiltshire and Swindon are listed below by employment share (Table 3.10). These 15 sectors account for 75.7% of jobs in Wiltshire and Swindon, although the first 6 industries listed below account for 50.36% of the total employment share.

West Wiltshire has a similar profile to Wiltshire & Swindon for the first 5 listed sectors, however, thereafter there are various employment specialisation differences. The 15 sectors listed in the table below account for 86.25% of jobs with the first 6 industries holding 53.55% of the employment share.

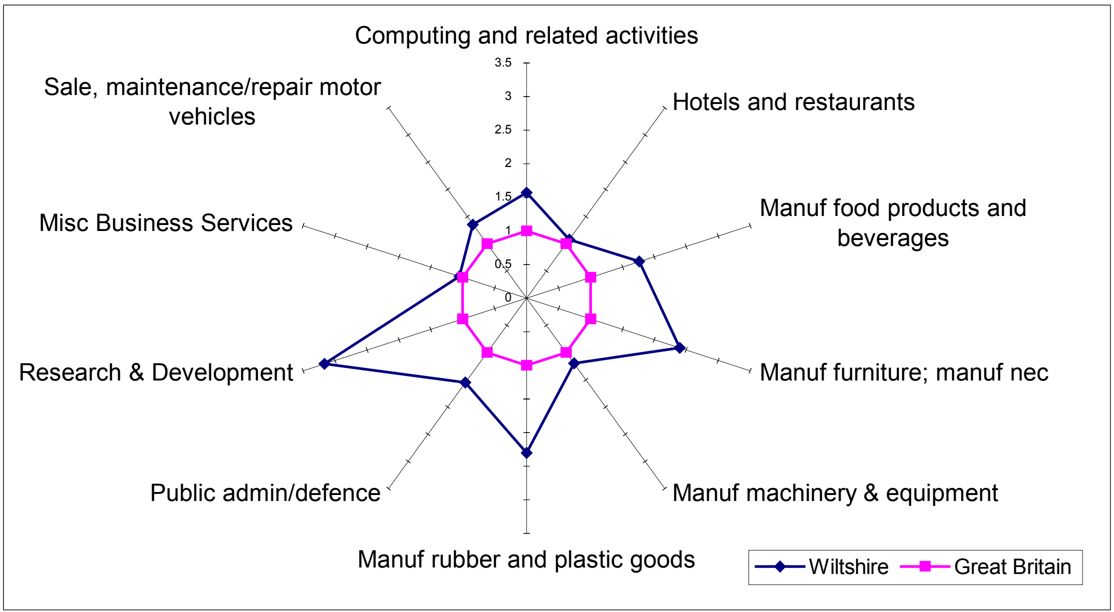
*Table 3.10: Largest Sectors by Employment Share (%)*

| Wiltshire & Swindon | | West Wiltshire | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Misc business services | 12.31 | Misc Business Services | 13% |
| Retail trade, except of motor vehicles | 10.7% | Retail trade, except of motor vehicles | 10.8% |
| Health and social work | 8.3% | Health & social work | 9.9% |
| Education | 6.9% | Education | 7.4% |
| Hotels and restaurants | 6.2% | Hotels & restaurants | 7.2% |
| Public admin/defence;compulsory SS | 5.9% | Whole trade/commission trade, etc | 5.4% |
| Wholesale trade/commission trade etc | 4.2% | Construction | 5.3% |
| Construction | 4.1% | Manufacture food products & beverages | 4.4% |
| Computing and related activities | 2.9% | Public admin/defence; compulsory SS | 4.4% |
| Sale- maintenance/repair motor vehicles | 2.9% | Manufacture rubber & plastic goods | 3.8% |
| Land transport; transport via pipelines | 2.5% | Manufacture furniture; manufacturing nec | 3.6% |
| Financial intermediation | 2.4% | Post and telecommunications | 3.4% |
| Manufacture motor vehicles, trailers etc | 2.3% | Sale, maintenance/repair motor vehicles | 3.2% |
| Post and Telecommunications | 2.2% | Computing and related activities | 2.7% |
| Manufacture food products and beverages | 2.0% | Land transport; transport via pipelines | 1.9% |

Source: Annual Business Inquiry Workplace 2001 (NOMIS2002)

Location quotients have been used to compare employment in West Wiltshire against a Great Britain benchmark. A location quotient figure of 1.0 represents equivalence to the nationwide share of employment and a figure greater than 1 shows that employment levels are higher than expected compared to that benchmark area. A high degree of specialisation provides a considerable advantage and source of growth in an area. Figure 3.8 illustrates the employment specialisation in Wiltshire. Research & Development's high location quotient reflects the high concentration of R&D establishments, for example, the centre for Applied Microbiology & Research and the Research & Defence Diversification Agency in Salisbury. There are other R&D establishments many of which are based in the Porton Down Science Park (this business park provides premises for companies looking for an R&D business environment). Manufacturing of rubber & plastic goods, food & drink, furniture (including 'not elsewhere classified' manufacturing) also score high location quotients in Wiltshire. The 2001 quotient figures for the manufacturing of electrical machinery/apparatus and radio & TV/communications equipment score highly. However, it is anticipated that these location quotients will be affected by the closure of the Dyson manufacturing facility and Lucent Technologies (in Malmesbury).

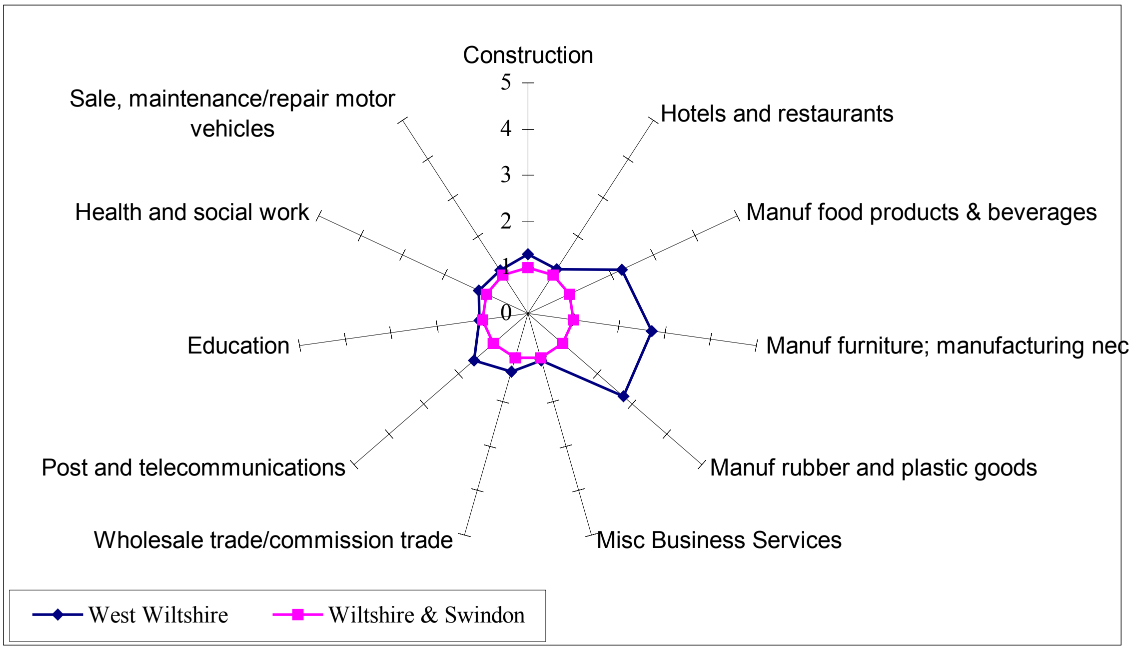
*Figure 3.8: Employment Specialisation in Wiltshire (Great Britain Benchmark)*




Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001 Workplace (NOMIS 2002)

Figure 3.9, which compares West Wiltshire's employment specialisation with Wiltshire & Swindon as the benchmark area shows that manufacturing employment is still very significant in West Wiltshire despite recent job losses.

*Figure 3.9: Employment Specialisation in West Wiltshire (Wiltshire & Swindon)*




Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001 Workplace (NOMIS 2002)

The manufacture of rubber & plastic goods, manufacture of furniture (and other forms of manufacturing), and the manufacture of food products & beverages have the highest location quotients in West Wiltshire. Some of the high profile companies in these industries reflect the district's specialisation. These include:

**<u>Food products & beverages</u>**
Apetito, Lyons Seafoods Ltd, Pork Farm Bowyers Ltd, Nutricia Ltd

**<u>Rubber & plastic goods</u>**
Avon Rubber Plc, Cooper-Avon Tires Ltd.

**<u>Furniture & Other Manufacturing</u>**
G Plan Upholstery, Airsprung Beds Ltd

## 3.4 Commercial Property

### *3.4.1 Enquiries for Commercial Property*

Enquiries for property are received by Great Western Enterprise Economic Development Division form a variety of sources, including West Wiltshire District Council, West Wiltshire Economic Partnership, Business Link Berkshire & Wiltshire and the South West Regional Development Agency. Whilst this should not be taken as indicative of the total demand for industrial sites and premises, it does provide a reliable image of the trend of enquiries in the district.

Out of the number of enquiries handled by Great Western Enterprise during the year from 1 April 2002, there were 144 that specified West Wiltshire as a preferred location. A large number of those were for the District as a whole, but some requested specific towns within the District (Figure 3.10).

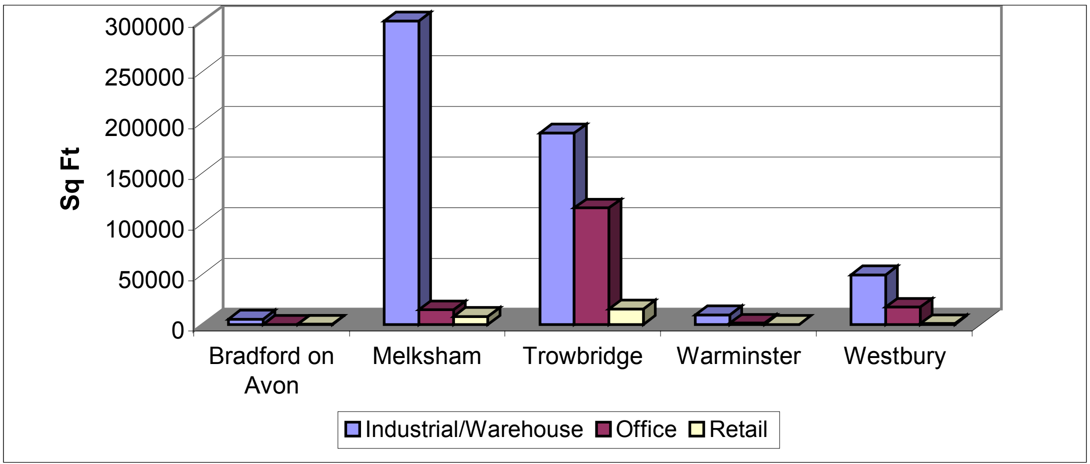
*Figure 3.10: Enquiries for Commercial Property and Land April 2002–March 2003*


*Source: Property Pilot , Great Western Enterprise Economic Development Division, 2003*

The majority of the demand for industrial and warehouse property was for smaller units of less than 5,000 sq ft, with only two enquiries for premises above 25,000 sq ft. Demand for office premises also favoured the smaller units, particularly of the 0-500 sq ft size band, with only three requests for property above 5,000 sq ft. All retail enquiries were for small shop units of less than 2,000 sq ft and half of the ten enquiries for land were for small plots of less than 5 acres.

### 3.4.2 Availability of Commercial Premises

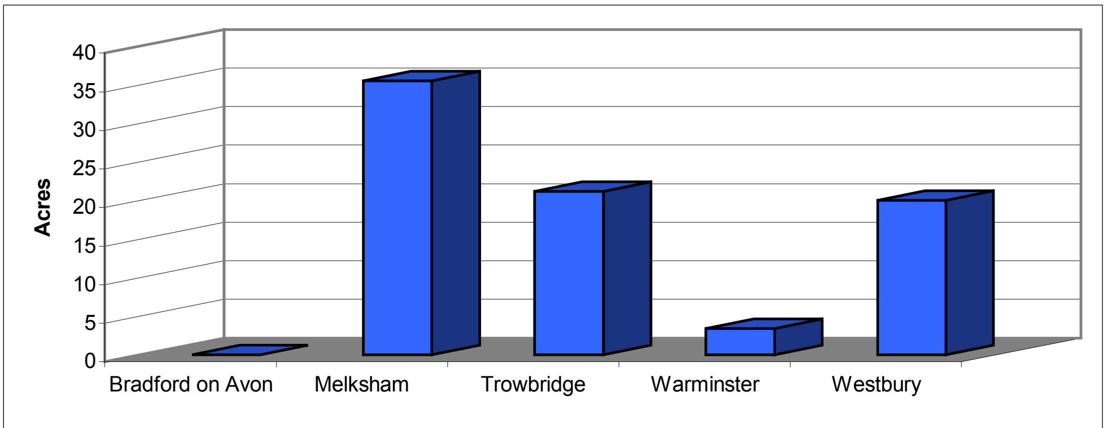
*Figure 3.11: Available Commercial Property – March 2003*




*Source: Property Pilot, Great Western Enterprise Economic Development Division,2003*

The availability of commercial premises has remained fairly stable throughout the District during the past year. The overall supply of industrial and warehouse premises has risen slightly, but Trowbridge and Warminster have seen a slight decline. The year has seen the entry on to the market of a number of developments of small starter industrial units to meet the demand mentioned above. This accounts for the increase in square footage in Westbury, where 12,500 sq ft of industrial space at Commerce Business Centre and 4,500 sq ft at Cory Way has been developed, both on the West Wilts Trading Estate. Melksham has also seen the development of Avonside Enterprise Park, where 8,000 sq ft of space on an old dairy site has been redeveloped to provide seven starter units. A further development of seven units providing a total of 10,000 sq ft of industrial space at Dunkirk Business Park in Southwick, near to Trowbridge, entered the market in January 2003 and all seven units have already gone under offer.

*Figure 3.12: Available Employment Land – March 2003*




*Source: Property Pilot, Great Western Enterprise Economic Development Division 2003*

The supply of office premises has fallen slightly across all towns in the District apart from Westbury, where the increase is again accounted for by the development of the Commerce Business Centre, which includes three office units totalling almost 11,000 sq ft.

West Wiltshire has for some years had the largest amount of available employment land in the county, but the past year has seen a reduction of almost 30% in the acreage. Both Crusader Park and Warminster Business Park in Warminster have left the market, while the largest employment site at Northacre Industrial Park in Westbury has been reduced from 30 acres to 14 acres.

*Table 3.11: Available Commercial Premises and Land – 2002/03*

| | **1 April 2002** | **1 July 2002** | **1 Oct 2002** | **1 Jan 2003** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Sq Ft/ Acres** | **Sq Ft/ Acres** | **Sq Ft Acres** | **Sq Ft/ Acres** |
| **Bradford on Avon** | | | | |
| Industrial | 5,450 | 5,450 | 5,450 | 7,410 |
| Office | 2,630 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Retail | 0 | 0 | 0 | 233 |
| Land | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Melksham** | | | | |
| Industrial | 271,734 | 267,918 | 327,827 | 304,827 |
| Office | 17,253 | 16,510 | 17,594 | 14,521 |
| Retail | 10,030 | 10,429 | 11,470 | 8,868 |
| Land | 35.25 | 35.25 | 35.25 | 34.5 |
| **Trowbridge** | | | | |
| Industrial | 213,759 | 205,812 | 191,875 | 182,984 |
| Office | 133,694 | 140,287 | 142,355 | 115,953 |
| Retail | 13,675 | 16,363 | 21,531 | 15,396 |
| Land | 21.39 | 21.49 | 17.14 | 20.94 |
| **Warminster** | | | | |
| Industrial | 26,256 | 20,656 | 19,100 | 18,864 |
| Office | 3,246 | 3,246 | 3,043 | 2,531 |
| Retail | 2,458 | 2,458 | 0 | 0 |
| Land | 20 | 15.17 | 19.10 | 15.4 |
| **Westbury** | | | | |
| Industrial | 38,378 | 45,707 | 64,826 | 62,115 |
| Office | 4,092 | 4,690 | 13,713 | 18,036 |
| Retail | 1,349 | 1,877 | 1,189 | 1,189 |
| Land | 36 | 36 | 36 | 36 |

Source: Property Pilot, Great Western Enterprise Economic Development Division, 2003

***Business Competitiveness: Key Points***

- GDP in Wiltshire is roughly average for the UK and has been falling in real terms since 1995.
- West Wiltshire has the second highest economic activity rate in the county.
  It also has the highest rate of employment (as opposed to self-employment) in the county.
- Average yearly earnings in West Wiltshire are slightly higher than the county and regional averages although lower than that of Great Britain.
- West Wiltshire experienced the slowest employment growth (by workplace) in the county with a percentage increase of 10.4% between 1996 and 2001.
- Distribution, hotels & restaurants, and public administration, education & health account for the largest percentage of employment in West Wiltshire. Banking, finance & insurance and manufacturing are also significant sources of employment.
- Distribution, hotels & restaurants and banking, finance & insurance account for the highest proportion of business units.
- The biggest decline in employment has been in manufacturing with a decrease of 24%.
- Females outnumber males in industry groups such as public administration, education & health as well as distribution, hotels & restaurants.
- In December 2002 West Wiltshire had an unemployment rate of 1.1%. This on a par with the county rate and below the regional and the United Kingdom rate.
- West Wiltshire the highest level of long-term unemployed across the four districts in Wiltshire.
- West Wiltshire follows county trends in terms of business sizes and VAT registrations/de-registrations.
- Employment specialisation (with Wiltshire & Swindon as a benchmark) in West Wiltshire lies in manufacturing of rubber & plastic goods, manufacture of furniture (and other forms of manufacturing) and the manufacture of food products & beverages.
- The majority of the demand for industrial and warehouse property was for units of less than 5,000 sq ft with only two enquiries for premises above 25,000 sq ft. Demand for office premises and shop units also favoured the smaller units.

## 4. Education and Skills

This section presents an assessment of the labour market qualifications, basic skills, and training levels in West Wiltshire.

### 4.1 School Performance

The Key Stage 2 educational targets set by Government were for 80% of 11 year olds in the UK to reach Level 4 standard in the Key Stage 2 English tests, and 75% to reach Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 Mathematics tests by 2002. Data from the Department of Education & Skills (Table 4.1) shows that in 2001 and 2002 Wiltshire Local Education Authority results were below this standard (as was the case regionally and nationally). In 2001 the proportion of Key Stage 2 children (aged 11) who achieved level 4 in English in West Wiltshire was slightly below the county, regional and national levels. However, the results for Mathematics in West Wiltshire were above average. The provisional results for 2002 show an improvement in Numeracy and Literacy for the Wiltshire LEA with the Numeracy results raising Wiltshire to the regional level. However, West Wiltshire results have not risen and look set to fall below the attainment levels for the county, region, and country.

*Table 4.1: Educational Attainments, 11 yr olds, Level 4 Key Stage 2 2001/2002*

| Area | English tests 2001 | Mathematics tests 2001 | English tests 2002 | Mathematics tests 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| West Wiltshire | 72 | 71 | 71 | 71 |
| Wiltshire LEA | 73 | 70 | 74 | 73 |
| South West | 75 | 70 | 75 | 73 |
| England | 75 | 71 | 75 | 73 |

Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2003

Overall, West Wiltshire pupils achieved above average performance (above regional and national levels of attainment) at GCSE/GNVQ (Table 4.2).

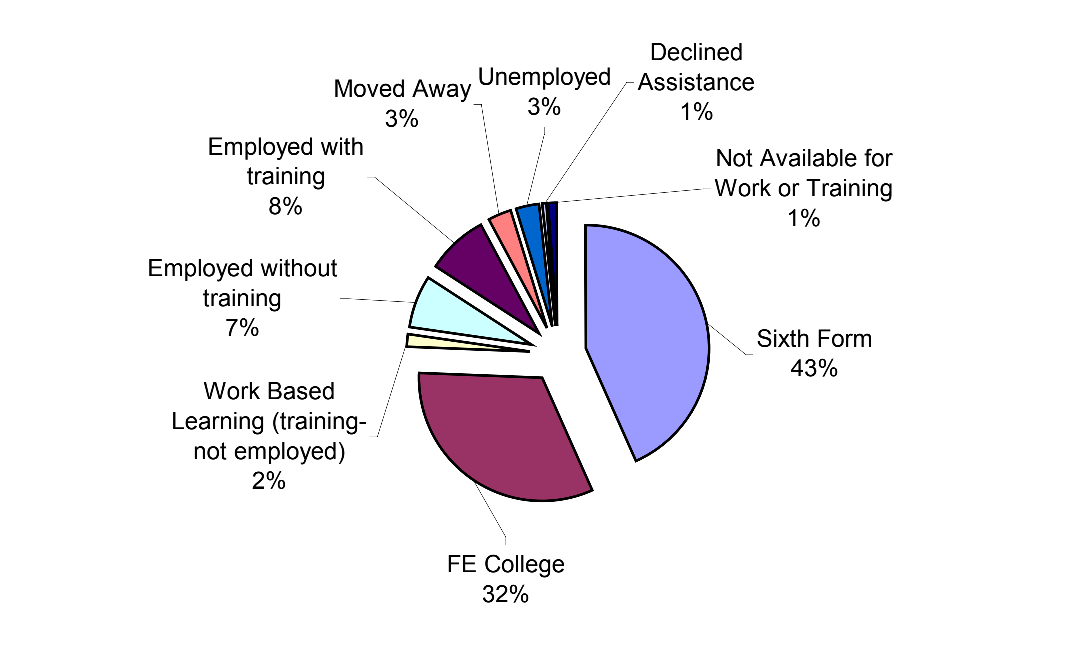
*Table 4.2: GCSE/GNVQ Educational Attainments, 2001*

| Area | %5+ GCSE/GNVQs at Grades A* - C | %1+ GCSE/GNVQs at Grades A* - G |
|---|---|---|
| West Wiltshire | 54.0 | 96.0 |
| Wiltshire LEA | 55.4 | 95.7 |
| South West | 52.2 | 95.6 |
| England | 50.0 | 94.5 |

Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2003

Lifetime Careers Wiltshire reports local destinations of 16-18 year olds based upon a survey of the previous year's Year 11 students (Figure 4.1). Data from the survey shows that the majority (75.5%) of year 11 students (aged 16-17 year olds) in West Wiltshire opted to stay on in full-time education (Figure 4.1). This proportion of school leavers will eventually raise the qualifications/skills profile of the future workforce.

*Figure 4.1: Destination of Year 11 Students in West Wiltshire, 2001/2002*




Source: Lifetime Careers Wiltshire, 2003

Of those that entered the workplace, 10% (with 'employed' status or in Work Based Learning) were involved in some form of training. It does appear that a slightly lower percentage of young people in West Wiltshire (85.5%) are involved in some form of structured learning than is the case nationally (86.5%). More worryingly, 112 local 16 year-olds (7%) entered employment without structured learning and a further 77 (4.8%) were not in education, training or work at the time of the survey. These learning participation rates can be a cause for concern given the fact that the United Kingdom has the lowest participation rate of almost all OECD countries.

Research suggests that education and training contribute to higher earnings and productivity. People with education and training typically earn more but the disparity grows with age and experience. In fact, there is evidence that suggests that the earning levels of young people with no qualifications are initially only slightly lower than those of the qualified, but that by the age of 30 their earnings will have already peaked. By contrast the qualified/trained can face steadily rising productivity and salaries, throughout most of their working lives.

**4.2 Qualifications**

A review of qualifications of the working age population reveals that West Wiltshire is slightly below the county and national levels for attainment of NVQ Level 4 or above (Table 4.3). However, West Wiltshire has a higher percentage of working age people who have reached NVQ Levels 1, 2 and 3 than are found in Wiltshire and Great Britain. It also has a higher percentage of people with trade apprenticeships. This is a reflection of skills base with an emphasis on skilled and semi-skilled manufacturing. West Wiltshire and Wiltshire also have lower percentage rates than the national level for people with no qualifications at all.

*Table 4.3: Qualifications of working age population (aged 16-59/64), 2001 %**

| Level | West Wiltshire | Wiltshire | Great Britain |
|---|---|---|---|
| NVQ Level 4+ | **21.4** | 26.6 | 23.7 |
| NVQ Level 3 | **17.1** | 14.4 | 13.9 |
| NVQ Level 2 | **14.3** | 14.1 | 14.8 |
| NVQ Level 1 | **21.4** | 19.4 | 15.1 |
| With other Qualifications | N/A | 7.2 | 8.9 |
| No Qualifications | **10** | 9.9 | 16.4 |
| With Trade Apprenticeships | **10** | 8.7 | 7.3 |

Source: Local Area Labour Force Survey 2001 (NOMIS 2002)
*Percentage of all persons of working age (16-59/64) for each geographic type coverage

Although West Wiltshire performs reasonably well in county and national qualification comparisons there is room for improvement amongst those with little or no skills. Approximately 31.4% of the workforce in West Wiltshire has low (NVQ 1 or below) or no qualifications at all.

**4.3 Basic Skills**

National research shows that West Wiltshire has the highest proportion of persons of working age with poor literacy (22.1%) and numeracy (21.7%) skills in the county (Table 4.4). These percentages amount to 14,121 people with poor literacy skills and 13,877 with poor numeracy skills.

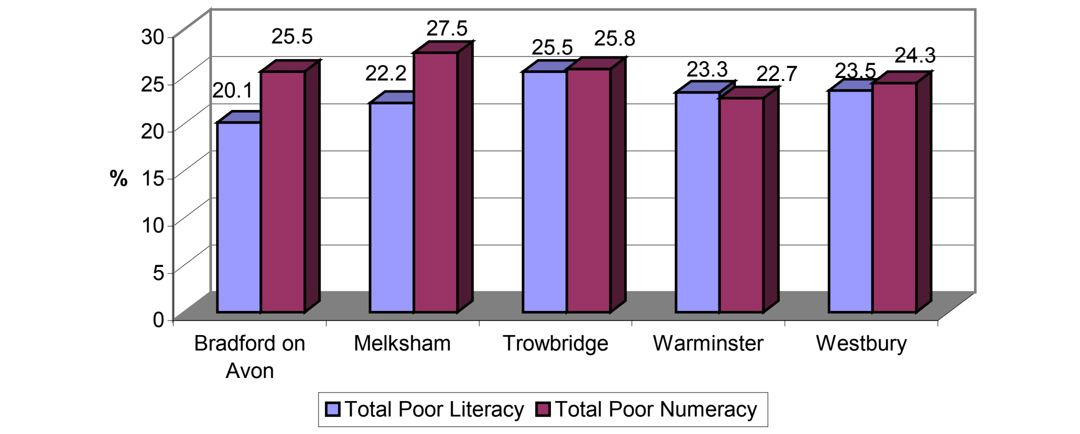
*Table 4.4: Population of Working Age (16-60) Lacking Basic Skills, %*

| Area | Total Poor Literacy | Total Poor Numeracy |
|---|---|---|
| England | 24.0 | 24.0 |
| Wiltshire | 21.3 | 20.5 |
| Kennet | 21.0 | 19.8 |
| North Wiltshire | 20.9 | 20.1 |
| Salisbury | 21.0 | 20.3 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **22.1** | **21.7** |

Source: Basic Skills Agency, 2002

If the data is examined at ward level (Figure 4.2) it is apparent that certain towns in West Wiltshire have a higher significance of poor basic skills. Trowbridge has the highest level of poor literacy skills whilst Melksham has the highest level of poor numeracy skills However, these are still above the basic levels skills for England as seen in Table 4.3.

*Figure 4.2: Population of Working Age Lacking Basic Skills (by Town)*



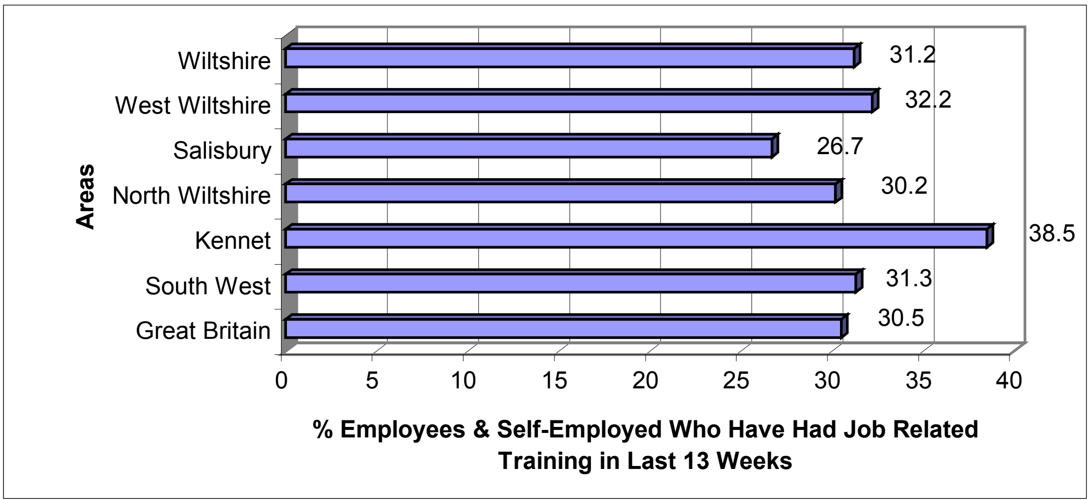

Source: Basic Skills Agency, 2002

It is worth mentioning that while the Basic Skills Agency have identified these levels of basic skill gaps, their research has also shown that less than 1% of the UK workforce actually recognise basic numeracy and literacy as skills they need to develop. This is significant because poor literacy and numeracy skills can be important barriers to current and future employability prospects, as well as to training and development opportunities that may arise.

**4.4 Training**

The LFS 2001 found that 32.2% of West Wiltshire's employees & self-employed of working age received job related training in the 13 weeks prior to collection of the data (Figure 4.3). This marginally is higher than any other district except for Kennet (38.5%). It is also slightly higher than the South West and Great Britain.

*Figure 4.3: % Job Related Training for Employees & Self-employed of Working Age*




Source: Labour Force Survey 2001

Participation in work-related training is affected by gender, age, occupation, sector and employment status. Research by the Learning & Skills Council found that in Wiltshire relatively high levels of work related training were to be found in the young to middle aged age groups, people in higher and some intermediate level occupations, workers in public services, business & finance and transport & communications. The ABI data reveals that just under half of employment in West

Wiltshire lies in several of the occupations listed above therefore there is a significant amount of sectors/occupations that are more likely to receive work related training.

The LSC research also found that employer funded learning opportunities for those working in lower-order occupations and those working in construction, hotels and restaurants, other services, wholesale & retail were low. This is significant because distribution and hotels & restaurants experienced one of the greatest employment growth increases in West Wiltshire from 1996 to 2001.

The rationale for providing training and learning opportunities is economic. Change, and the ability to respond quickly and efficiently is now a constant feature of business activity. This has led many firms towards flatter management structures, a more participative workforce, and more flexible working practices. The upskilling of low skilled workers is now therefore considered to be of great importance to business competitiveness. The Department of Trade and Industry has reported that there is a growing body of research suggesting that in advanced Western economies productivity will be the most important driver of economic growth, and that workforce skills are the key determinants of productivity rates. The Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS) also provides evidence that people management practices like training and development are linked to the improvement of a firm's economic performance.

### 4.5 Skill-Shortage Vacancies

The results of the Employer Skills Survey (2001) shows that Wiltshire has a higher level of hard-to-fill and skill-shortage vacancies than most other South West counties (Table 4.5).

*Table 4.5: Vacancies by LSC in the South West 2001*

| | Devon & Cornwall | Somerset | Gloucestershire | Dorset | **Wiltshire** | Greater Bristol |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of establishments reporting skill-shortage vacancies | 4 | 1 | 7 | 6 | **12** | 4 |
| Total skills shortage vacancies | 1987 | 1298 | 5940 | 3642 | **4118** | 688 |
| % of establishments reporting hard to fill vacancies | 9 | 3 | 11 | 11 | **18** | 11 |
| Total hard to fill vacancies | 6921 | 4296 | 8977 | 6748 | **7549** | 3744 |

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2001 (Learning & Skills Council - LSC)

The LSC for Wiltshire & Swindon found that over half of the hard-to-fill and skills-shortage vacancies reported by local employers belong to the following occupational groups:

- administrative and secretarial
- personal service
- sales and customer service

An examination of the Trowbridge, Melksham and Warminster Job Centre vacancy data reveals that administrative & secretarial, sales & customer service, process/ plant & machine operatives, and elementary occupations had the largest number of vacancies during the last quarter of 2002. At local and national level there are employers who are finding it difficult to recruit staff with the right skills.

***Education & Skills: Key Points***

- West Wiltshire students performed on a par with Wiltshire at GSCE/GNVQ with 54% of students gaining 5+ A-C passes in 2001.
- The majority of 16 year olds in West Wiltshire opted to stay in full time education.
- 7% (112) 16 year olds entered employment without structured learning and a further 4.8% (77) were not in education, training or work at the time of the survey.
- West Wiltshire has a lower proportion of working age people qualified to NVQ Level 4 than Wiltshire as a whole. It also has a higher percentage number of working age people that have reached NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 as well as a higher percentage with trade apprenticeships.
- West Wiltshire has the highest proportion of adults with poor literacy and numeracy in the county. However, the levels are still below the national rates.
- Approximately a third of West Wiltshire's employees & self-employed are engaged in job related training. This is higher than the county, regional and Great Britain levels.
- Wiltshire has a higher level of hard-to-fill and skill-shortage vacancies than most other South West counties.

## *5. Agriculture*

The following section provides a basic profile of the West Wiltshire agricultural sector using the latest data from the Department for the Environment, Rural Affairs and Agriculture Agricultural Census (DEFRA).

### 5.1 Agricultural Census

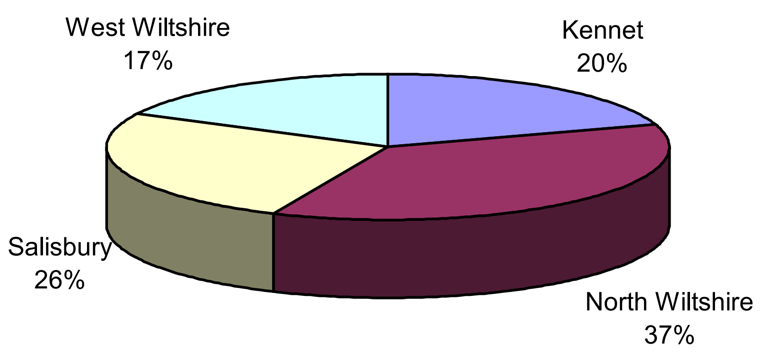
The Agricultural and Horticultural 2002 Census undertaken by DEFRA reveals that there are 3,410 farm holdings in Wiltshire, covering over 260,666 hectares of land (Table 5.1). Kennet and Salisbury have the largest areas of land dedicated to agricultural and horticultural use whilst West Wiltshire, which is more densely populated, has the lowest at 37,147 hectares and has 595 farm holdings, (see Figure 5.1). The total area given over to agricultural and horticultural use has increased slightly in the previous decade except for the North Wiltshire area where a 1.7% decrease has occurred.

*Table 5.1 Land in Agricultural and Horticultural Use, 2002*

| Area | **Total Hectares** | **% Total** | **% Change 93-02** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wiltshire | 260,666 | 100 | 2.4 |
| Kennet | 81,969 | 31.4 | 3.8 |
| North Wiltshire | 60,883 | 23.4 | -1.7 |
| Salisbury | 80,667 | 30.9 | 4.0 |
| **West Wiltshire** | **37,147** | **14.3** | **3.2** |

Source: DEFRA Agricultural and Horticultural Census, June 2002

*Figure 5.1: Agricultural and Horticultural Holdings by District*




Source: DEFRA Agricultural and Horticultural Census, June 2002

Nearly 51% (353) of holdings in West Wiltshire are less than five hectares, which makes it the district with the highest percentage number of farm holdings of this size. The proportion of holdings in West Wiltshire sized 100 hectares or more is the second lowest in the district (93 holdings/13%). 33% of land in West Wiltshire is rented and 67% is owned making it the district with the second highest proportion of land owned (North Wiltshire has 76%) (Table 5.2)

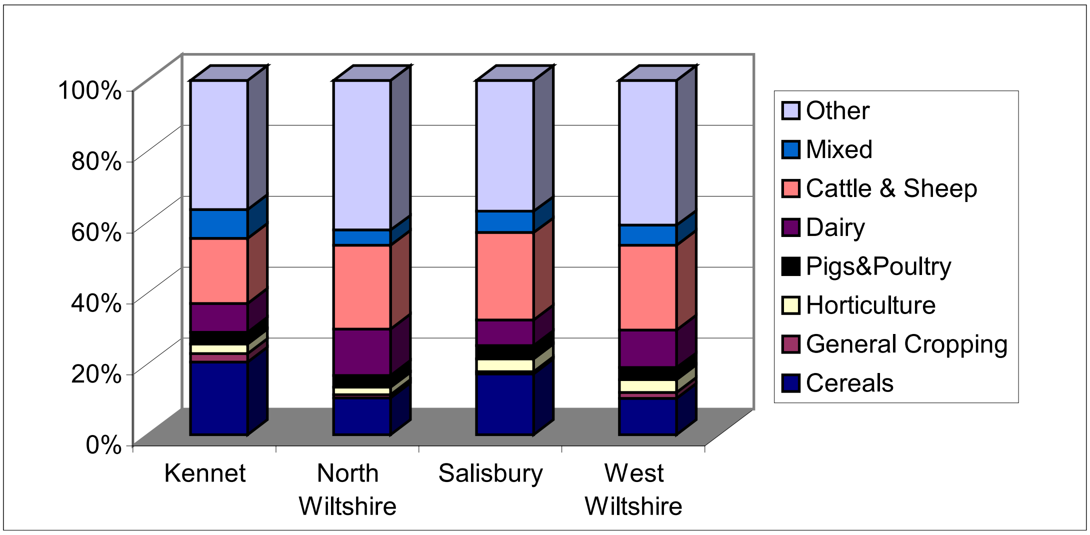
*Table 5.2: Holdings by Size* and Ownership 2002*

| District | Less than 5 | 5 to <20 | 20 to <50 | 50 to <100 | 100 or greater | Total Hectares Rented | Total Hectares Owned |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wiltshire | 1677 | 627 | 478 | 439 | 618 | 95,990 | 158,550 |
| Kennet | 296 | 124 | 86 | 87 | 178 | 35,411 | 43,241 |
| North Wiltshire | 581 | 254 | 203 | 190 | 159 | 14,263 | 45,566 |
| Salisbury | 447 | 154 | 104 | 91 | 188 | 34,402 | 45,854 |
| West Wiltshire | 353 | 95 | 85 | 71 | 93 | 11,913 | 23,888 |

Source: DEFRA Agricultural and Horticultural Census June 2002
* Hectares

Fig 5.2 reveals the principal holding types of farms by each district in Wiltshire. The majority of farms are classified as cattle & sheep, dairy and cereals. West Wiltshire has a similar breakdown to the other districts, however, North Wiltshire and West Wiltshire have a higher proportion of holdings involved in dairy and a lower proportion of holdings involved in cereals than Kennet and Salisbury.

*Figure 5.2: Holding Types by District 2002 #*




Source: DEFRA Agricultural and Horticultural Census June 2002
# Combined or stacked bar charts use exactly the same information as adjacent bar charts. The difference in appearance is caused by the fact that whereas in the adjacent bar charts the group information is drawn separately for each category, in the 'combined/stacked' bar chart they are combined into a single column

Table 5.3 shows how the agricultural and horticultural labour force is distributed across Wiltshire. Around 18% of the county's agricultural/horticultural labour force works in West Wiltshire, making it the district with the lowest number of workers (also has fewer holdings and land in agricultural & horticultural use than the other districts in Wiltshire). Just over 62% of agricultural labour in West Wiltshire is made up of farmers, whilst 27.3% are employees (full time male employees form the largest employment group within the 'employees' count). Casual labour makes up just 6.8% of the West Wiltshire agricultural/horticultural labour force.

*Table 5.3: Employment in Agriculture/Horticulture, 2002*

| Occupation | Kennet | North Wilts | Salisbury | **West Wilts** | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Farmers | 913 | 1566 | 1133 | **791** | 4403 |
| Managers | 76 | 75 | 76 | **45** | 272 |
| Full Time Male Employees | 345 | 247 | 320 | **195** | 1107 |
| Part Time Male Employees | 77 | 87 | 105 | **74** | 343 |
| Full Time Female Employees | 26 | 51 | 27 | **25** | 129 |
| Part Time Female Employees | 44 | 65 | 82 | **52** | 243 |
| Casual | 150 | 182 | 164 | **86** | 582 |
| Total Labour | 1629 | 2271 | 1906 | **1266** | 7072 |

Source: DEFRA Agricultural and Horticultural Census, 2002

## 5.2 Rural Initiatives

### *5.2.1 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Reform*

In 2002, the EU submitted a review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) so that public expenditure for the farm sector could be better justified. The aim of the review is to: increase food quality; preserve the environment, animal welfare, landscapes and cultural heritage; and enhance social balance and equity. The CAP reform key changes are:

- Cut the link between production and direct payments
- Make those payments conditional on environmental, food safety, animal welfare and occupational safety standards
- Substantially increase EU support for rural development via a modulation of direct payments with the exemption of small farmers.
- Introduce a new farm audit system.
- Introduce new rural development measures to boost quality production, food safety, animal welfare and to cover the costs of a farm audit.

This review will also affect West Wiltshire in a number of ways:

- Currently, the only profitable farm types in Wiltshire are mainly milk farms, pigs and poultry farms and large and small sized farms. Currently 36.8% of farmland in West Wiltshire is accounted for by 3.9% of holdings that are over 300 hectares in size. There will be

    - A reduction in direct payments for bigger farms. This section of the farming community will be affected through the capping of payments at €300,000 (£213,548 approx).

    - A wider ranging milk reform with differentiated price cuts for butter and skimmed milk powder and the maintaining of the milk quotas until 2014/15.

- The main agricultural land uses in West Wiltshire are wheat (18.5%) and permanent grass (38%). There will be:

    - A 5% cut in intervention price and higher direct payments for cereal farmers.

- Prices for commodity crops and other produce are unlikely to improve which will further undermine farm profitability.

- The status of tenant farmers is also in question as it is unclear whether future payments will be made to tenant farmers or whether they will be made to the landowner. According to the 2002 Agricultural Census over 170 holdings in West Wiltshire are rented. Reskilling, for those farmers that leave agriculture will be important and given the demoralising circumstances, difficult to achieve successfully. This will be exacerbated in certain areas that are more isolated and inaccessible.

#### *5.2.2 Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy*

In December 2002 DEFRA released the Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy whose main aim is the development of sustainable farming. The strategy also intends to seek ways of improving integration in the food production chain, from processors and manufacturers through to caterers, retailers and consumers. Schemes that support environmental stewardship will also be introduced.

In addition, measures will be taken to reduce the existing levels of bureaucracy that characterise the communications between DEFRA and farmers. Other topics covered by this strategy are skills and training, regional producer schemes, improvement of animal health. The RDA and the local Government Office are currently working on an implementation plan for the South West. This is expected to be completed by the autumn 2003 and will look to address:

- Knowledge and Skills
- Doing Things Differently i.e. diversification
- The Food Chain
- The Environment

**_Agriculture: Key Points_**

- West Wiltshire has the lowest area of total agricultural land in Wiltshire at 37,147 hectares.
- This county district has the smallest number of agricultural holdings.
- West Wiltshire is the county district with the highest percentage number of small farm holdings within its boundaries.
- The principal holdings types are cattle & sheep, dairy and cereals.
- West Wiltshire is the county district with the lowest number of employees. Just over 62% of the labour force is made up of farmers and 27.3% are employees (excluding casual labour).

## *6. Deprivation*

The West Wiltshire 2001/2002 Economic Profile included a section dedicated to the findings of the 2000 Indices of Deprivation (produced by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR). This data revealed that Wiltshire and Swindon is considered to be relatively prosperous although there are pockets of deprivation that are often hidden in official statistics. There are, in fact, some wards in West Wiltshire that are amongst the most deprived in the county.

### 6.1 Deprivation in Wiltshire

A recent publication by Wiltshire County Council examined rural deprivation in Wiltshire. Rural deprivation does share some of the characteristics of urban deprivation including low income, shortage of low cost housing and unemployment, however, research has shown that living in a rural area does have an impact on the depth and scope of these problems. Although West Wiltshire is probably the least 'rural' district in the county, it has three rural wards (Dilton Marsh, Paxcroft, and Shearwater) that feature in the Index of Multiple Deprivation's top 20% most deprived wards in the county.

The report identifies four contributory factors that can potentially lead to rural deprivation: economic deprivation; transport deprivation; service deprivation; housing deprivation. The statistical impact of these factors varied across the county but the following section looks to provide a broad overview of rural deprivation in Wiltshire.

*Economic Deprivation*

Low incomes in rural areas of Wiltshire are attributed to the limited number of full time permanent jobs, low rates of pay, availability and accessibility of affordable child care, access to transport and low levels of benefit take-up.

A limited availability of permanent employment has meant that people have had to accept alternative working patterns like part-time, casual, seasonal work and self-employment. These forms of employment are characterised by fluctuating income levels and job insecurity. The level of technological unemployment, which has risen since 1990 as a result of investment by agricultural businesses in labour saving capital equipment, has also added to the employment problem. The job opportunities that do exist offer relatively low levels of pay. The employment problem is also compounded by the access and availability of transport (whether private or public) as well as the paucity of affordable childcare and nursery education.

The difficulties experienced by low-income households are further exacerbated by the low rates of benefit take-up. This has been attributed to lack of knowledge of entitlements, as well as the fear of being stigmatised by the community as being 'poor'.

*Transport Deprivation*

Access to affordable public or private transport can limit a person's ability to access education, services and jobs. Limited or no access to private transport coupled with potentially restrictive, unreliable, lengthy and costly public transport services can reduce a person's employment prospects, limit their access to education & training and essential goods and services (e.g. food and healthcare).

Data from the 2001 Census revealed that although car ownership was higher in the county than the national average, 8,653 (17.5%) of households in West Wiltshire did not have a car or a van. This assumes a greater significant in rural areas where public transport services may not be as frequent or as extensive as in urban areas.

*Service Deprivation*
Access to services has also become difficult for those without access to private transport. The trend for locating shopping and facilities in out-of-town locations, coupled with the decline of those village businesses who have not been able to compete with the competitive advantages enjoyed by larger retailers, has increased the isolation experienced by those without private modes of transport.

Accessing health care services (doctor, dentist, optician, hospital etc) are also problematic for those with transport difficulties. Furthermore, the reduction in the number of NHS dentists has left those people who cannot afford private dental care, without any dental care provision at all.

*Housing Deprivation*
House prices in many rural villages have been inflated through the increased housing demand by urban migrants and second homeowners. These price rises have placed the available housing stock out of the reach of many of the local people (especially young first time buyers) whose purchasing power is restricted by low income. In addition, the social housing provided tends to be located on the outskirts of villages, which exacerbates the problems experienced by those who have no access to private transport.

Research by the South West Public Health Observatory has highlighted the housing problems experienced in rural areas. They have observed that owner occupation rates tend to be higher with opportunities for renting often limited in both the public as well as the private sectors. Insecurity of tenure follows from tied properties and the holiday market.

Key Findings of Report concluded that:

- Pensioner households are the largest groups of Housing and Council Tax Benefit claimants and they are geographically widespread.
- There are a significant number of dependent children living in households claiming Housing and Council Tax Benefit and there are six settlements which have been deemed hotpots: Purton, Staverton, Dilton Marsh , Rudloe, Market Lavington and Laverstock.
- In Paxcroft, Dilton Marsh, Shearwater and Potterne, over 25% of children are living in poverty.
- Dilton Marsh, Paxcroft, and Shearwater are West Wiltshire wards.
- The dispersion of deprivation across Wiltshire is wide which makes concerted action difficult.

*Rural Deprivation: Key Points*

- Economic deprivation - Low incomes in rural areas of Wiltshire are attributed to the limited number of full time permanent jobs low rates of pay, availability and accessibility of affordable child care, access to transport and low levels of benefit take-up.
- Transport Deprivation - Access to public or private transport can limit a person's ability to access education, services and jobs.
- Service Deprivation - Access to essential services and facilities (especially in out-of-town areas) has become increasingly difficult for those without access to private transport.
- House prices in many rural villages have inflated because of the increased demand by urban migrants and second homeowners. These price rises have placed the available housing stock out of the reach of many of the local people.

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