Neighbourhood Plan

02

What new evidence might we need to collect?

This forms part of a suite of Neighbourhood Planning guidance documents and toolkits which relate to different stages in the process.

Wiltshire Council

What new evidence might we need to collect?

As your key themes, vision and objectives emerge, it should become clear what you need to collect evidence on. Perhaps evidence is unavailable or maybe it exists, but it is not specific enough for your neighbourhood area.

Gathering evidence will inform your Neighbourhood Plan policies and underpin your objectives. There is no 'tick box' list of evidence required for Neighbourhood Plans, but proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken.

This guidance note follows our other guidance note What themes can a Neighbourhood Plan cover and how can your plan add local value? It offers scenarios of plan intensions (e.g. whether you want to allocate sites for housing or protect existing community buildings from a change of use) and lists possible evidence you may need to collect to support these.

Remember, your consultation statement, basic conditions statement and possibly SEA and/or AA reports will also form a key part of your evidence base.

The information in the table is not exhaustive, it is intended as a guide and helpful prompt only.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Housing		
Allocate land for housing?	• Carry out a householder survey (e.g. to establish type and extent of current and future demand for housing in your area).	How to write and conduct social surveys to gather data for your Neighbourhood Plan – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality: **neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/write-conduct-social-surveys-gather-data-neighbourhood-plan/**
Establish a proven need for affordable housing?		
Change or introduce a settlement boundary/limit of development?	• Review existing documents relating to development need and availability.	
Support windfall, infill, brownfield and/or exception sites?	• For housing completions and forecasts, along with the latest SHELAA sites, contact our Monitoring and Evidence team: **monitoringandevidence@wiltshire.gov.uk**	
Offer in principle support for specific types of housing?		
Set requirements for specific types of development?		

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Define what 'local connection' is in terms of 'local housing need' and affordable housing eligibility? Identify and bring vacant or derelict housing back into use? Influence the design of new housing development	• Do a '**Call for sites**' through consultation work. • Identify any **vacant or derelict housing**. • Undertake a **housing needs assessment** specific to your neighbourhood plan area (e.g. to identify housing mix requirements). • Ask us to undertake a **Rural Housing Needs** Survey (if you are looking to establish whether there is a proven need for affordable housing in your area). • Carry out **site assessments** (e.g. sites considered, criteria for assessing them, reasons for allocation/rejection). • Develop **site allocation briefs** (e.g. stipulate access, landscaping, design requirements, provisions). • **Review your settlement boundary** (justify areas to remove/include).	How to assess and allocate sites for development – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality: **neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/assess-allocate-sites-development/** How to undertake a Housing Needs Assessment – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality[1]: **neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/undertake-housing-needs-assessment-hna/** Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA): **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-sw-joint-spatial-framework** Wiltshire Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2017: **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-monitoring-evidence** Latest Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement: **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-monitoring-evidence**

[1]This toolkit is in the process of being updated. The updated version will be on the Locality neighbourhood planning website as soon as it is available.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
		www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review-consultation (see supporting documents) **Wiltshire Council's interactive policy map** to identify housing allocations: **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy**

Business and employment

Allocate sites/reserve certain areas for shops, offices and other employment/business use? Protect existing employment sites/business uses in specific areas/types of buildings from change of use? Support new employment uses or expansion of existing premises? Support retention and re-use of previously developed land and conversion of buildings for employment use? Support extensions to houses to facilitate home working? Require live/work and home office options in new housing schemes?	• **Survey existing local businesses** (e.g. existing capacity/floorspace, suitability of premises and/or desire to relocate). • **Survey vacant premises.** • **Survey land and property values.** • **Identify and appraise possible sites/ allocations.** • **Invite representatives** from local businesses or groups to join the steering group/wider forum. • Get in touch with our **Economy and Regeneration (including Major Projects) team** to find out what local information they can provide: **econdev@wiltshire.gov.uk** • Think about **how policies/local solutions could encourage home working** (e.g. improving broadband quality even if bigger companies are not prevalent).	**Wiltshire Employment Land Review (ELR)** (April 2018): **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review-consultation#Employment%20Land%20Review%C2%A0** (see supporting documents and information) **Swindon and Wiltshire Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (FEMA)** (December 2016): **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-sw-joint-spatial-framework** **Plan making – Neighbourhood plans – Advice on evidence – Topic four: Employment example** by Planning Advisory Service (PAS): **www.local.gov.uk/pas/plan-making/neighbourhood-plans/plan-making-neighbourhood-plans-advice-evidence/plan-making-1**

[2]The 2022 ELR update is currently being prepared and will be on the Council's website as soon as it is available.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
		Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Assessment (March 2022), by Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP): **swlep.co.uk/about/our-economy** Other useful documents available on their website: **swlep.co.uk/** **Wiltshire Council's interactive policy map** to identify employment established employment areas and allocations: **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy**

Rural economy and agriculture

Support rural diversification and development relating to reuse of agricultural buildings?	• **Survey farm and non-farm industry** in the open countryside.	
Set criteria for when development in the open countryside is acceptable?	• Think about how **policies/local solutions could help** the rural economy**.**	
Stipulate requirements for new agricultural buildings?	• **Invite representatives** from rural businesses or groups to join the steering group/wider forum.	

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Retail and leisure		
Support specific retail and leisure uses/mix of uses.	• **Survey local businesses** within the defined town centre.	**Wiltshire Retail and Town Centres Study** (November 2020):
Support re-use of previously developed land and conversion of buildings for retail use?	• **Survey of vacant units** within the defined town centre.	**www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review-consultation**
Resist change of use of non-residential uses[4]?	• **Survey existing Class E uses[3]** within the settlement.	(see supporting documents)
	• **Identify vacant or underused sites.**	
	• **Explore grant funding for community led projects for new community uses.**	
	• **Invite representatives** from local businesses, landlords, landowners, or other interested groups to the wider forum.	
	• **Household survey** to understand shopping habits and measure whether certain needs are being met within the settlement	
	• Think about how **policies could support existing/future uses, identify opportunity sites and improve access** to facilities for local people.	
	• Engage with our **Economic Regeneration** team to identify opportunities for support, funding opportunities or evidence when helping to establish a place identity: **EconomicRegeneration@wiltshire.gov.uk**	

[3]Class E covers a broad range of commercial, business and service uses including retail, cafés and restaurants, financial and professional services, indoor sport and recreation, medical or health services (to visiting members of the public), creche, day nursery and day centres, offices, research and development and light industry. See: **www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes**

[4]Be aware that permitted development rights could take precedent over a policy.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Tourism		
Support existing tourist accommodation and facilities and protect them from change of use? Support new tourist accommodation and facilities	• **Survey existing tourist accommodation and facilities.** • **Invite representatives** from local businesses or groups to join the steering group/wider forum. • Think about how **policies could support existing/future tourism.**	
Community facilities		
Identify and protect existing community buildings and land uses from changes of use? Allocate land for new community facilities? Support extension/change of use of existing community asset? Support conversion of existing buildings and re-use of previously developed land for community use? Support/allocate land to expand/relocate primary and secondary schools and stipulate requirements? Set criteria for when loss of a community asset might be acceptable? Identify priority projects for CIL funding?	• **Survey local community facilities** including schools and medical provision and identify any gaps/issues with existing. • Carry out a **householder survey** (e.g. to establish how satisfied people are with local services and amenities in your area). • **Invite representatives** from local organisations or groups to join the steering group/wider forum. • Think about how **policies could support existing/future** community facilities.	**How to write and conduct social surveys to gather data for your Neighbourhood Plan** – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality: **neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/write-conduct-social-surveys-gather-data-neighbourhood-plan/**

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Green and blue infrastructure (GBI)[5]		
Designate land as a Local Green Space?	• **Undertake an audit of existing Green and Blue Infrastructure/Space** – Where is it? What is it? Is it formally designated? What is the quality, condition, value and benefit to the community? • **Engage with the community** (e.g. to establish how satisfied people are with green infrastructure and amenities in your area and if it could be improved). • **Apply NPPF criteria (para 102)** to see if land can be designated as Local Green Space in your Neighbourhood Plan.	**Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan** – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality: **neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/** **How to write a neighbourhood plan in a climate emergency,** by Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) (on Locality's website): **neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/how-to-write-a-neighbourhood-plan-in-a-climate-emergency/** **Wiltshire Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy (February 2022)[6]:** **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-bio-green-blue-infrastructure**
Ensure new GI is provided through new development/allocations?		
Protect important open spaces which make a positive contribution to the area?		
Identify priority projects for CIL funding?		

[5]Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) refers to the use of green elements, like trees, forests, fields, parks, gardens, informal/formal green spaces, allotments, cemeteries, country parks, sports pitches, footpaths, and blue elements such as rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains and water treatment facilities. GBI is not just about amenity 'open spaces'. It is much more wide ranging and includes areas that might be publicly accessible or not.

[6]The GBI Strategy lists three main goals: (1) Climate change: Sequestering carbon into our communities naturally through better soil management, tree planting, promoting wetland habitat; (2) Biodiversity: Promoting a variety of more and better linked habitats across the county; (3) Health and Well-being: The importance of GBI to local communities in terms of interaction with nature and healthy lifestyles (e.g. access to nature and the countryside for leisure and commuting purposes as well as public open spaces, sports pitches, parks and allotments). It is therefore fundamental for GBI to be considered as part of the neighbourhood planning piece that helps to bring a lot of threads together such as climate, ecology, flooding, active/sustainable transport.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
		Wiltshire Council's interactive policy map to identify Local Green Spaces: **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy** **Wiltshire Council's Community Environmental Toolkit: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/3854/Community-Environmental-Toolkit**
Community facilities		
Set bespoke car parking/cycle parking standards for new development? Support proposals which have adequate on-site parking and resist ones which result in loss of public or private parking capacity? Allocate/protect land for a car park? Allocate development near to local facilities and services? Require transport statement/travel plan/HGV routing agreement? Encourage off-road parking provision/new footways in certain locations? Ensure new development links to existing public rights of way/cycleways?	• **Identify 'movement routes'** (footpaths/cycleways/bridleways) on a map and highlight 'gaps' to be 'connected' by future development**.** • **Engage with the community** (to establish what transport considerations are relevant to your area, e.g. car/cycle parking/storage, PROW links, traffic 'hotspots'). • **If allocating sites,** consider issues like access, road safety, proximity of public transport facilities and the capacity of transport networks (include these in the site selection criteria). • Think about how **policies can ensure parking does not dominate the public realm or ensure pedestrian/cyclist permeability and connectivity.**	**What transport matters can a neighbourhood plan address? – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality: neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/transport-matters-can-neighbourhood-plan-address/** **Wiltshire Local Transport Plan: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/2676/Wiltshire-Local-Transport-Plan** **Wiltshire public rights of way map: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/recreation-rights-of-way** **Wiltshire cycleway route maps: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/1231/Wiltshire-Cycleway**

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Identify existing traffic/highway safety issues in certain areas/hotspots and support development which would result in improvements?	• Explain how any Neighbourhood Plan transport policies are in general conformity with the relevant Wiltshire Core Strategy/Local Plan and/or Wiltshire Local Transport Plan policies and standards[7].	**Connecting Wiltshire – cycle maps & routes: www.connectingwiltshire. co.uk/getting-around/cycling/cycle-maps-routes/** **Department for Transport, Cycle Infrastructure Design, Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020) – guidance on designing high-quality, safe cycle infrastructure:** **Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**

Community facilities

Identify priority projects for CIL[8] funding? Support/identify site for telecommunications mast? Ensure new development includes adequate on-site provision (and screening) for storage of refuse bins?	• **Gather information on potential projects** from relevant plans or service providers and **identify the need for different types of infrastructure in your area** that might be deliverable given the scale and likely resources open to the parish council (e.g. local transport projects, air quality monitoring infrastructure, NHS local defibrillators and health promotion initiatives etc.).	**Community Infrastructure Levy** – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality: **neighbourhoodplanning.org/ toolkits-and-guidance/understanding-community-infrastructure-levy-cil/** **Wiltshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 3, 2011 – 2026** (December 2016)[9] **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/5712/ Infrastructure-delivery-plan**

[7]The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (2011 – 2026) Car Parking Strategy contains minimum parking standards for residential development across Wiltshire which Neighbourhood Plans will need to be in general conformity with. However, policy PS6 provides the flexibility to allow for a lower level of provision where specific circumstances can be demonstrated.

[8]The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that local authorities can set on new development to raise funds to help fund the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support new homes and businesses. Any projects and actions identified by the community should be included as a supplement or annex to your Neighbourhood Plan.

[9]Whilst quite dated (2016), the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies some local community projects which may be relevant to your Neighbourhood Plan Area (all three versions are available to download). However, please bear in mind that future iterations of the plan are likely to focus increasingly on strategic infrastructure projects.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Require broadband connection to new premises?	• Identify other sources of funding open to the parish councils. CIL need not fund the whole of a project but part of it in conjunction with other funding sources, e.g. grants etc. • Speak to providers (e.g. telecoms providers about masts and broadband connections and waste management about refuse bin storage).	The list of projects that Wiltshire Council may fund, in whole or in part, through CIL can be found in our **Infrastructure Funding Statement**[10] at: **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ dmcommunityinfrastructurelevy**
Design		
Create better places for your communities by providing simple and practical ways to include design within your Neighbourhood Plan?	• **See Parts 3, 4 and 5 in the Wiltshire's Neighbourhood Planning Design Guidance.** • **Engage with the community** (surveys, community walkabouts, workshops) and **prepare a Character Assessment** (i.e. what makes your place unique). • Work on **design principles/masterplans/ codes.** • Think about **writing Neighbourhood Area-wide, Character Area and/or site specific design policies.**	**Wiltshire's Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide**[11] **Achieving well-designed places through neighbourhood planning** – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality[12]: **https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/ toolkits-and-guidance/good-design-neighbourhood-planning/**

[10]Whilst parish councils are welcome to contribute their CIL money towards these projects, it is more likely that they will have their own local spending priorities.

[11]This toolkit is in the process of being produced. It will be on the Wiltshire Council (neighbourhood planning) website as soon as it is available.

[12]This document is becoming increasingly out of date which is why we have decided to produce our own Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide. However, until our guide is publicly available it offers a useful overview/starting point to locally define and promote good design.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Housing		
Allocate development on brownfield sites?	• Explore all the **renewable energy resources** that could viably be developed within your area and bottom out which could carry **community support**.	**How to write a neighbourhood plan in a climate emergency,** by Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) (on Locality's website): **neighbourhoodplanning.org/ toolkits-and-guidance/how-to-write-a-neighbourhood-plan-in-a-climate-emergency/**
Allocate sites for renewable and low carbon energy sources?		
Require that new development addresses sustainable design and construction through passive (e.g. green roofs) and active (e.g. solar panels, wind turbines) design approaches?[14]	• **Identify any individual or community scale renewable energy projects in the pipeline in your area** and invite representatives to join the steering group/ wider forum.	**Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA): www. wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review-consultation (see supporting documents)**
Require that new development includes water efficiency measures?	• Think about how you can encourage responsible **retrofitting of historic buildings**.	**Ciria SuDS guidance** covering a range of opportunities and challenges related to general water management: **www.susdrain.org/resources/ciria-guidance.html**
Require that new development includes electric charging points where dedicated parking is provided?	• Think about how you can encourage **sustainable design and construction and water efficiency** in new development.	**LUC Renewables Study[13]**
Improve sustainable drainage (e.g. maintaining/enhancing natural flood protection areas, protecting local water sources from surface runoff in protected areas)?	• Check **environment designations** that may apply to your area which would limit certain types of development (e.g. biomass boiler).	

[13]This is an emerging document which forms part of the Wiltshire Local Plan Review. It is likely to be publicly available at the Regulation 19 stage of the Local Plan Review, around October 2022.

[14]Policies should be in general conformity with strategic policies and should not hinder development, for example by making it unviable.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Natural environment		
Introduce a 'landscape setting/local gap' in between settlements?	• **Map important habitats/species/trees** in your area.	**How to consider the environment in neighbourhood plans – Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality: neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/consider-environment-neighbourhood-plans/**
Identify and protect special areas, key public views and vistas?	• Undertake **habitat surveys** for site allocations (if necessary).	
Require sensitive lighting in certain areas?	• Identify **key views** (e.g. map, photo, description) and assess them against set criteria (e.g. is the view accessible from public road/space, is there a specific reason for selecting the view)?	**CPRE's Night Blight interactive maps: www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/**
Protect and enhance habitats/wildlife corridors?		**Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessments: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-monitoring-evidence**
Require that new development achieves a net gain (10%) in biodiversity ?	• Assess an existing **'landscape setting/ local gap'**.	
Require ecological protection/enhancement measures in new development?	• Identify any **key ecological strategies** that should be referenced in a policy (e.g. Bat SAC Planning Guidance for Wiltshire), including any strategic mitigation strategies such as those for the New Forest SPA/SAC and River Avon SAC.	**Wiltshire Council's interactive policy map** to identify constraints and features in your plan area (e.g. SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, AONB, National and Local Nature Reserves, woodland Grade 1 Agricultural Land, Food Zones): **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy**
Ensure development complies with locally important strategies?		
Identify and protect locally important natural features?		**MAGIC interactive map** which provides geographic information about the natural environment from across government: **magic.defra.gov.uk/**
Make sure development complies with Habitats Regulations and any relevant strategic mitigation strategies [if your Neighbourhood Plan area is within a European designated site (or zone of influence for a European designated site)].		**Wiltshire Council's Community Environmental Toolkit: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/3854/Community-Environmental-Toolkit**

[15]Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) from November 2023. BNG will be measured using Defra's biodiversity metric and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years.

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
Historic environment		
Protect non-designated heritage asset(s)? Retain structures from a certain age (e.g. traditional form buildings that pre-date 1900? Support re-use of certain historic buildings? Make sure development complies with conservation area character appraisals/heritage assessment.	• Review existing information on the **Council's Historic Environmental Record (HER) and Historic Landscape Characterisation**. • **Identify (list and map) designated heritage assets** in your neighbourhood area. • If you are allocating sites, **assess the significance of any assets** that may be affected. • Undertake a **character assessment** to inform a design policy. • Identify (list, map, describe) and buildings and places valued by your local community (**non-designated heritage assets**).	**Wiltshire and Swindon Historic Environment Record (HER):** **services.wiltshire.gov.uk/ HistoryEnvRecord/Home/Index** **Wiltshire Historic Landscape Characterisation:** **wshc.org.uk/our-services/ archaeology/24-our-services/ archaeology/113-historical-landscape-characterisation-project.html** **How to consider the environment in neighbourhood plans –** Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, by Locality: **neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/consider-environment-neighbourhood-plans/** **Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment, Historic England webpages:** **historicengland.org.uk/advice/ planning/improve-your-neighbourhood/** **Wiltshire Conservation Area Management Plan and Appraisals:** **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-conservation-areas**

Question: Do you want to...	Possible new evidence to collect / tasks	Existing resources / toolkits
		Wiltshire Council's interactive policy map to identify constraints and features in your plan area (e.g. listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens): **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy**
		English Heritage's 'Heritage at Risk Register: **historicengland.org.uk/advice/ heritage-at-risk**
		Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management, Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition): **historicengland.org.uk/images-books/ publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/**
		Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage, Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition): **historicengland.org.uk/images-books/ publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/**
Green belt		
Amend the Green Belt boundary (release land for development)?		**Wiltshire Council's interactive policy map** to identify Green Belt: **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy**

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