Wiltshire Local Plan Review

Scale and Distribution of Growth: Strategic Priorities

(Regulation 18 consultation)

Report of Informal Consultation with Town and Parish Councils

September 2019

1   Introduction

1.1   The purpose of this report is to record the discussions that took place between Wiltshire Council officers, local Wiltshire Council elected members, representatives of town and parish councils and neighbourhood plan groups over the Summer and Autumn of 2019. With the aim of considering the appropriate scale and distribution of development in Wiltshire and the priorities for each area to inform the strategies in the emerging Local Plan Review.

Background

1.2   In November 2017 Wiltshire Council began the review of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (renamed the Wiltshire Local Plan). A consultation took place between Tuesday 7 November 2017 and Tuesday 19 December 2017 in accordance with Regulation 18 ('preparation of a local plan') of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012[1].

1.3   The consultation included Housing Market Area (HMA) profiles which highlighted the strategic issues facing each of the county's principal settlements and market towns[2].

1.4   A further informal consultation took place in October 2018, which aimed to further develop the discussion from the 2017 consultation with relation to the scale, location and direction of growth, in both the urban and rural communities that make up Wiltshire.

1.5   The purpose of the 2019 consultation was to present the Alternative Development Strategies (ADSs) to the towns and parishes within Wiltshire and discuss strategic priorities for each settlement. The aim was to uncover the priorities for the towns and how best to distribute housing and employment presented in the ADSs moving forward with the Local Plan Review (LPR).

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[1] The report on the 2017 Regulation 18 consultation can be found online at:
http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review
[2] The Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework Housing Market Area profiles can be found online at:
http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-sw-joint-spatial-framework

> **Principal Settlement/Market Town Meetings/New Settlement Meeting**
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> How approximately 45,000 homes and 182 ha of employment land can be strategically disaggregated to balance economic prosperity alongside social and environmental factors specific to individual market towns.
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> Identification of strategic priorities for each market town and respective roles of neighbourhood plans and the local plan.
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> Exploration of a new settlement in the south of Wiltshire to uncover the opportunities and issues associated with this.

1.6 Representatives of town and parish councils and neighbourhood plan steering groups were invited to attend along with elected Wiltshire councillors. Invitees were made aware of the events via a letter sent to every town and parish clerk (**Appendix 1)**.

1.7 The new settlement meeting invited representatives from Allington CP, Amesbury CP, Bulford CP, Cholderton CP, Durnford CP, Durrington CP, Firsdown CP, Idmiston CP, Newton Tony CP, Pitton and Farley CP, Winterbourne CP and Winterslow CP. These are settlements that were identified as being within or near to the 'area of search'. The invitation for this meeting can be found in **Appendix 2**.

2 Overview: Alternative Development Strategies

2.1 To continue to plan for growth in the County, Wiltshire Council have developed Alternative Development Strategies (ADSs) for each principal settlement and market town. The proposed ADSs were presented for each HMA to Cabinet at their meeting on the 30th April 2019[3].

2.2 The principal settlement and market town meeting events are listed in **Table 1**. The workshops were designed to encourage a discussion about each principal settlement and market town and consider their capacity for growth.

2.3 A proposed New Settlement (**listed in Table 2**) has been tested as part of the fourth ADS for the Salisbury HMA. The purpose of a New Settlement is to plan for growth in the South of Wiltshire, whilst simultaneously alleviating pressure from the rest of the HMA to accommodate this growth. As this is proposed as part of the strategies that are continuing to be tested, a meeting which focused on this growth option was held and subsequently formed a part of the informal consultation 2019.

Table 1: Settlement Based Workshops

Principal Settlement/Market Town	Venue	Date and time
Marlborough	Town Hall **Marlborough**	10:00 – 12:00 **22nd May 2019**
Royal Wootton Bassett	County Hall **Trowbridge**	11:00 – 13:00 **29th May 2019**
Bradford-on-Avon	County Hall **Trowbridge**	10:00 – 12:00 **3rd June 2019**
Devizes	Town Hall **Devizes**	16:00 – 18:00 **4th June 2019**
Warminster	County Hall **Trowbridge**	15:00 – 17:00 **6th June 2019**
Melksham	Town Hall **Melksham**	15:00 – 17:00 **12th June 2019**
Calne	County Hall **Trowbridge**	14:00 – 16:00 **13th June 2019**
Westbury	County Hall **Trowbridge**	11:30 – 13:30 **17th June 2019**
Malmesbury	Monkton Park **Chippenham**	13:00 – 15:00 **20th June 2019**
Tidworth and Ludgershall	Bourne Hill **Salisbury**	10:00 – 12:00 **25th June 2019**
Corsham	Town Hall **Corsham**	10:00 – 12:00 **8th July 2019**

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[3] The Cabinet report papers can be found online at:
https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=83793#mgDocuments

Salisbury	Guildhall **Salisbury**	16:00 – 18:00 **11th July 2019**
Chippenham	Town Hall **Chippenham**	16:00 – 18:00 **17th July 2019**
Trowbridge	County Hall **Trowbridge**	16:00 – 18:00 **22nd July 2019**
Amesbury	Bourne Hill **Salisbury**	14:00 – 16:00 **21st August 2019**

Prepared material

2.4   In advance of the workshops and meetings officers summarised the current strategies, the proposed ADSs and the outcomes of engagement on the LPR to date. This was presented in a briefing note and were tailored to each settlement. These were circulated to attendees prior to the meeting date, alongside an agenda and the relevant appendices to the report to Cabinet dated 30th April 2019. Examples of a briefing note and agenda are provided in **Appendices 3 and 4**.

2.5   On arrival attendees were presented an Ordinance Survey (OS) and illustrative map of the relevant principal settlement or market town. These maps highlighted the SHELAA sites that are being considered for development as part of the LPR, an example of which is included in **Appendix 5**.

2.6   The principal settlement meetings took on a more workshop style, whereas the format of the town meetings was a round table discussion. The format of the workshops incorporated a presentation followed by discussion. An example of a presentation used at one of these meetings can be found in **Appendix 6**.

Discussion Point 1: Strategic Priorities

2.7   Discussion points were included in both the agenda and briefing notes. Discussion point 1 concerns the strategic priorities for the market towns and how to deliver them.

2.8   The existing strategy as outlined in the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 was presented for each market town. The 2017 issues consultation began by uncovering problems with the current strategy.

2.9   There are 3 ADSs for each Housing Market Areas (HMAs), except the Salisbury HMA, where there are 4 ADSs proposed. These alternative levels of growth are proposed for each principal settlement and market town for the period 2016 – 2036. At this stage, initial conclusions from high level sustainability appraisal (SA) work helped to highlight

the emerging preferred strategies for each settlement. These initial conclusions were presented in the briefing notes for each of the meetings to enable discussion relating to the emerging strategy. The maps enabled a discussion surrounding the potential distribution of these strategies.

2.10 Other sources of information included:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (Adopted 2015)

- Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework: Issues Paper 2017

- Wiltshire Local Plan Review: Consultation Paper

- Scope of the Plan (Regulation 18 consultation) Report

- Scale and Distribution of Growth – Report of Informal Consultation with Town and Parish Councils

- LPR Development Strategy, Cabinet 30th April 2019

Discussion Point 2: Respective Roles

2.11 Discussion 2 focuses on the respective roles of both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

2.12 In the principal settlement and market town meetings Wiltshire Council updated the attendees on the progress of the Local Plan, and respectively, those who attended who have, or wish to start a Neighbourhood Plan provided updates on their progress and future intentions, including where they are set to review a 'made' neighbourhood plan. Additionally, these meetings allowed any commitments to or intentions to enter a Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) to be discussed.

2.13 The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group representatives who were in attendance had the opportunity to raise any issues that they have faced whilst going through the Neighbourhood Planning process, and discussions were had regarding how these issues can be eased looking forward at emerging neighbourhood plans and reviews to 'made' plans during the emerging Local Plan period 2016 to 2036.

2.14 It is important to establish the differences between strategic planning and neighbourhood planning to ensure that they can complement each other in planning

holistically for the principal settlement or market town. This discussion looked to identify where issues could be best overcome by strategic or non-strategic policies in either the Local Plan, neighbourhood plan or both.

Table 2: New Settlement Meeting

New Settlement Meeting	Sports Pavilion **Winterslow**	16:00 – 18:00 **11th September 2019**

Prepared material

2.15 In advance of the new settlement meeting an agenda was circulated to the invitees. This can be found in **Appendix 7**. At the meeting a presentation was given to help introduce and steer the discussion points. The presentation that was used can be found in **Appendix 8**.

2.16 Two maps were presented at the event. These were high level OS maps showing the area of search in a northern part and a southern part. These were able to show the land-based constraints in the area which would be able to help identify a direction of growth. These maps can be found in **Appendix 9**.

Discussion Point 1: If there is to be one, where should there be a new settlement in the south of the county? And why?

2.17 Discussion points were provided in the agenda and the presentation slides to help uncover the views of the attendees.

2.18 The first discussion point followed on from the presentation to understand the local perceptions with relation to the proposed new settlement and to help uncover an appropriate direction of growth, taking on the opinions and knowledge of the members of the local community.

Discussion Point 2: What are the main concerns, issues and opportunities?

2.19 The second discussion point looked to uncover the main concerns, issues and opportunities associated with positioning a large scale of growth in the area in question.

Discussion Point 3: How can they be addressed?

2.20 Discussion 3 followed on from this and the identification of opportunities in particular, to uncover how the community believe that concerns and issues raised could be addressed in bringing a new settlement forward in that part of the County.

3   Outcomes: Principal Settlement, Market Town and New Settlement Meetings

3.1   A full write up of the principal settlement, market town and the new settlement meeting can be found in **Appendix 10.** Provided below is a summary of the discussions which were held regarding the scale of growth and the ADSs in each principal settlement, market towns and potential new settlement.

Chippenham Housing Market Area

Calne

3.2   The emerging preferred options for Calne are CH-B, suggesting an additional 250 new homes based on a requirement of 1610 homes over the plan period and CH-C, whereby there is a need for 420 additional homes based on a requirement of 1610 homes. Neither of the emerging preferred strategy options propose additional land for employment.

3.3   The strategic priorities that came out of the meeting indicated the need for town centre regeneration and employment-led development; the provision and promotion of sustainable transport; minimising the impact of development on local infrastructure and the local environment; and taking a consolidation approach to housing growth, but with the provision of employment growth.

3.4   It is anticipated that a joint Neighbourhood Plan update between Calne and Calne Without could materialise, with the possibility of it aligning with the LPR.

Chippenham

3.5   At this stage of the LPR, all of the Alternative Development Strategies were discussed as potential options.

3.6   The strategic priorities identified in the Chippenham Principal Settlement meeting were to improve town centre resilience through regeneration and investment; to deliver significant job growth to improve self-containment; to improve the highway network through a level of growth which enables a new road linking the A4 to the A350; respecting the environmental constraints associated with flood risk; and the need to prevent coalescence between Chippenham and the surrounding villages. Importance was emphasised on maintaining and improving green infrastructure corridors. There is

also the need to resolve transport congestion within the town and alleviate the amount of traffic using the centre of town which may facilitate the regeneration of certain areas.

3.7 Neighbourhood planning representatives for both the Town and surrounding parishes suggested that they were keen to work alongside the preparation of the Local Plan, allocating sites using disaggregated housing numbers and pursuing the masterplanning of these sites.

3.8 Parishes are also to work with the Town Council in determining how CIL monies from new developments should be invested, particularly in ensuring that services which will be used by new developments are suitably invested in.

Corsham

3.9 From this meeting, discussions identified that the opportunity to reopen Corsham station should be safeguarded by the Local Plan Review. Other strategic priorities include: protecting the settlement identities of both Corsham and Box; and the possible transport strategy for Corsham, similar to the one for Devizes to be explored. The initial assessment of the emerging strategies indicates that a low growth scenario for housing should be carried forward for Corsham, given the constraints in the area.

3.10 Further, the Local Plan will identify strategic greenfield sites in the Corsham area, whilst Box Parish Council and Corsham Town Council should seek to identify regeneration and infill opportunities with their parishes through their respective neighbourhood plans.

Devizes

3.11 The emerging preferred strategy for Devizes is currently CH-B, whereby there is a need for approximately 165 additional homes based on a requirement of 2010 homes and no additional employment land. This option will be tested further along with other options.

3.12 The strategic priorities identified in the Devizes market town meeting were: the need for affordable housing to respond to local needs; improved housing design and quality of development; retaining employment allocation and employment development through mixed-uses; town centre regeneration and an opportunity for tourism-led regeneration as well as air quality improvements; and enhanced transport infrastructure and bus services.

3.13 A neighbourhood planning document may be produced by a wider group of parishes as well as the town in order to overcome cross boundary issues. Local housing numbers are influenced by national policy and the Local Plan can identify sites and set out the town's strategic objectives and priorities.

3.14 The extant Neighbourhood Plan for Devizes focuses on housing sites within the town, the review is likely to be broader and to also include employment land and green infrastructure. A Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) is to be established between the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

Malmesbury

3.15 At Malmesbury, strategies CH-B and CH-C are emerging as the most preferred options at this stage. Strategy CH-B is whereby approximately 340 homes are required based on a requirement of 885 homes and strategy CH-C is whereby approximately 445 homes are required based on a requirement of 990 homes.

3.16 Delivering community facilities and social infrastructure alongside housing to meet identified needs as they emerge is the main strategic priority. Other strategic priorities include improving and enhancing the town centre, diversifying the employment offer and improving the existing facilities within the town.

3.17 If the neighbourhood planning group confirm their intentions to review their NP, Wiltshire Council and Malmesbury Town Council are to enter into a SoCG. It is intended that site assessment work would be undertaken as part of plan preparation, resulting in housing site allocations.

Melksham

3.18 The emerging preferred strategy for Melksham is currently CH-C, whereby there is a need for approximately 2600 additional homes based on a requirement of 3950 homes and 5 additional hectares of employment land.

3.19 One of the strategic priorities identified for Melksham is transport infrastructure improvements and traffic and transport management/improvements to overcome road capacity issues. It was felt that Melksham had taken substantial growth in recent years, with a lack of infrastructure. Therefore, stress was placed on delivering infrastructure before any large-scale future growth could be provided. The provision of an eastern bypass could alleviate transport issues and introduce more employment

opportunities. Additionally, if it was to be frontloaded, the eastern bypass could open up land in the area for development.

3.20 Other strategic priorities included community and public gain through investment into infrastructure from new developments, investment into education facilities through a holistic approach, improving pedestrian safety and access particularly to schools and improved employment offer in the town specifically to improve high skilled employment.

3.21 As many of both the issues and priorities are felt to be strategic and more appropriately planned for the Local Plan rather than neighbourhood plans. Melksham Town and Melksham Without are to work closely with Wiltshire Council on the preparation of the Local Plan.

Salisbury Housing Market Area

Amesbury

3.22 At this stage, the emerging preferred strategy for Amesbury is currently SA-C, whereby there is a need for 0 additional homes based on a requirement of 1230 homes and no additional hectares of employment land.

3.23 Strategic priorities for the town were identified as promoting self-sufficiency, encouraging residents to work in the town, improvements to the town centre, tourism and town centre promotion and improved recreational facilities, including sports pitches.

3.24 Further engagement is desired relating to infrastructure and transport. The prospect of decoupling Amesbury, Bulford and Durrington, as well as introducing a settlement boundary to Larkhill is to be explored by the Council, the Town and the parishes. A joint NP is to be considered by Amesbury and Durrington.

Salisbury

3.25 The emerging preferred strategy for Salisbury is current SA-C, whereby there is a need for 490 additional homes based on a requirement for 5390 homes between 2016-2036, plus 3.5 additional hectares of employment land.

3.26 Much of the discussion was focused around identifying suitable and well-located employment land. Other strategic priorities include encouraging affordable housing and more affordable market housing types, the need to alleviate traffic issues and transport pollution (including city centre congestion), traffic management is needed to reduce issues in the surrounding villages, including potential new roads.

3.27 There is a preference to allocate a lower number of houses in Salisbury, as lower growth options could deliver sufficient homes within environmental limits. Yet a higher level of growth could encourage economic growth and investment in homes for new workers.

3.28 Salisbury City Neighbourhood Plan steering group is planning to work with neighbouring parishes who are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. Winterbourne and Laverstock Neighbourhood Plans are set to include housing site allocations respectively and thus SoCGs are to be pursued as part of ongoing preparation of both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

Tidworth and Ludgershall

3.29 At this stage, the emerging preferred strategies are SA-B, SA-C and SA-D whereby there are no additional housing needs based on a requirement for 1210 homes between 2016-2036.

3.30 Strategic priorities identified that any housing growth will need to accommodate those leaving the military who wish to remain in the area. South-east Ludgershall is the preferred location for any further housing growth, as it would support the completion of Empress Way. Other strategic priorities include the diversification of local employment, improving the local retail and leisure offers, as well as balancing services and facilities across the Tidworth and Ludgershall.

3.31 Both town councils recognised that in order to overcome some of their strategic priorities, some growth would be required.

3.32 The LPR will continue to test housing at both towns, with further growth expected to happen towards the end of the plan period. Tidworth and Ludgershall are to consider a separate neighbourhood plans or joint neighbourhood plans as a tool for new housing allocations.

New Settlement

3.33 A proposal for a new settlement meeting suggests 2000 new homes over the plan period and an additional 8 hectares of employment land.

3.34 It was found that areas for growth which were supported by the attendees were:

- Land North of Old Sarum / Longhedge
- Land North West of Cholderton
- Firsdown
- Salisbury area
- Land at Lopcombe Corner
- East of Solstice Park
- An Amesbury Urban Extension

3.35 It was found that areas for growth which were not supported by the attendees were:

- North of the A303
- Amesbury/Porton Down
- Boscombe Down

3.36 Other related comments:

- A new community could supply an amount of growth to justify reopening the railway station at Idmiston.
- Limited space within the area of search to accommodate 2000 new homes.
- MOD ownership of land is a constraint.

3.37 Key concerns were with regards to the local road network and the need for upgrades, growth should be paired with employment growth, accessibility and employment impacts, highly constrained location in social, environmental and economic terms, increased village traffic, employment not mirroring projected growth, increased commuting, need to support villages, infrastructure constraints, potential for loss of village character and it was felt that substantial growth could bring undesired impacts on the parishes.

3.38 Key issues raised were in relation to MOD activity in the area, capacity of the A30, the need for a Salisbury by-pass, a new east to west road, flood plain and ecological designations, high quality agricultural land, operational airport at Boscombe,

Hampshire border, land availability, rivers and water meadows, infrastructure constraints, parish character, health and education needs and drainage.

3.39 Opportunities and the suggested ways to address the concerns and issues were given as development at Longhedge, further infrastructure upgrades, little or no impact on existing residents, centred in the middle of the economic centres, opportunity for Idmiston or Porton Down railway station to be reopened, transport improvements, growth at Alderbury, integration with existing communities and the potential for growth at villages to be guided and delivered through neighbourhood plans.

Swindon Housing Market Area

Marlborough

3.40 The emerging strategy or Marlborough is Strategy SW-B. This proposes 50 additional homes based on a requirement for 485 homes over the plan period and no additional employment land.

3.41 Affordable housing was discussed as being a key issue that Marlborough faces, therefore the delivery of affordable housing is a key strategic priority for Marlborough going forward with the Local Plan. Other strategic priorities include growing the tourist sector, meeting employment needs and enhancing the social infrastructure of the town and surrounding areas.

3.42 Marlborough's Neighbourhood Plan is expected to be updated in terms of locally specific policies, including a review of saved Kennet Local Plan policies and WCS rural employment policies. A collaborative approach should be taken in producing policies in both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

Royal Wootton Bassett

3.43 The emerging preferred strategy for Royal Wootton Bassett is a higher level of growth, with approximately 1030 additional homes based on a requirement of 1255 homes and 6 additional hectares of employment land. The preferred direction of growth for the town would be to the South.

3.44 A strategic priority for the town is for any new employment land allocations to meet business demand as employment is a key part of Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon's relationship.

3.45 A new railway station has been a part of the discussions, and there is potential to discuss a 'West of Swindon' train station in order for this relationship between the two towns to strengthen. Additionally, other social infrastructure provision is expected through higher levels of growth.

3.46 There is an intention among the Town Council to review the 'made' neighbourhood plan and work closely with Wiltshire Council in preparing the respective plans. This is to be achieved through further meetings between the two bodies.

Trowbridge Housing Market Area

Bradford on Avon

3.47 The emerging strategy for Bradford on Avon is TR-C, which proposes to deliver a further 40 homes based on a requirement for 300 homes over the plan period and no additional employment land.

3.48 Findings from the meeting suggest that strategic priorities for the Town include the retention of the Greenbelt, reducing traffic and congestion, investing in transport infrastructure, improving health services and ensuring a mix of housing types in the town to assure affordability for younger people.

3.49 The 'made' Neighbourhood Plan is set to be reviewed and Wiltshire Council are to work with the town in producing a SoCG support the preparation of the Local Plan. NP to include housing site allocations to meet residual requirement figure for lower levels of growth. LP is to outline the strategic context, including the requirement figure for the Town.

Trowbridge

3.50 At this stage, all of the proposed strategies are continuing to be tested for Trowbridge. With levels of growth expected to reflect the Town's role as a principal settlement.

3.51 Strategic priorities place emphasis on improving all modes of transport available in the town and reduce reliance on private cars, as well as improving the traffic issues in Trowbridge and the surrounding villages. Importance was placed on meeting the housing needs of local people to allow them to live and work locally. Further, brownfield redevelopment and respecting environmental constraints such as the Greenbelt and bat migration area, are strategic priorities for the Town.

3.52 Trowbridge Town Council are keen to focus on brownfield redevelopment as part of their Neighbourhood Plan, as well engaging with Wiltshire Council and the surrounding parishes as a part of their Neighbourhood Plan preparation. Neighbourhood plans are to tie-in closely to the Local Plan to ensure that they can support each other in the planning process. Further engagement is to be undertaken in the autumn.

Warminster

3.53 The emerging preferred strategy for Warminster is TR-C, whereby there is a need for 50 additional homes based on a requirement of 1840 homes. There is preference among the Town to take a lower growth option/consolidation approach.

3.54 The strategic priorities for Warminster include congestion relief along the A350, traffic calming measures for the town centre, the promotion of public transport, town centre regeneration and employment growth.

3.55 The Local Plan is currently set to allocate sites for housing, but there is scope for the Warminster Neighbourhood Plan to allocate these sites to meet the housing requirement identified for the Town in the Local Plan. Town Council to undertake work to identify shortfalls of the neighbourhood plan and understand which issues can be met best in the respective plans e.g. protecting local green spaces.

Westbury

3.56 At this stage, both TR-B and TR-C are emerging as preferred strategy options for Westbury. TR-B proposes 1025 additional homes on a basis of a requirement for 2130 homes over the plan period and one additional hectare of employment land. TR-C proses 425 additional homes on the basis of a requirement for 1530 homes over the plan period.

3.57 In Westbury, the discussions around strategic priorities focussed predominantly on improving transport infrastructure and air quality, regenerating the town centre and introducing higher-skilled employment opportunities.

3.58 There is to be collaborative working between Westbury Town Council and Wiltshire Council in plan preparation.

4   Next Steps

4.1   The knowledge gained at the meetings with the principal settlements, market towns and at rural workshops will be used to further gather evidence and test the proposed Alternative Development Strategies.

4.2   It is also proposed to continue informal dialogue with town and parish councils and neighbourhood plan groups to update and inform them with relation to the local plan making process and to strengthen relationships. This work will include developing Statements of Common Ground between the Council and Town Councils/neighbourhood planning groups.

4.3   Strategic priorities for the principal settlements and market towns are to be identified for the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans are to be made and reviewed to see how they could use their respective role to assist with the local plan.