

Wiltshire Local Plan Review

**Planning Positively in Rural Areas
(Regulation 18 consultation)**

**Report of Informal Consultation with
Town and Parish Councils**

Autumn 2019

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to record the discussions that took place between Wiltshire Council officers and representatives of town and parish councils during the Autumn of 2019, with the aim to consider the appropriate scale and distribution of development in Wiltshire and the priorities for each area to inform the strategies in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.2 This report follows on from the town meetings report, which illustrates the outcomes of the meetings held with town, parish and neighbourhood planning representatives, in relation to the emerging development strategies for growth at principal settlements, market towns and a potential new settlement.

Rural Workshops

How do we distribute the 'rest of HMA' housing figures in the rural areas?

Do the numbers suggested in the emerging development strategies seem appropriate?

What are the factors that might influence the level of housing a settlement should plan for?

Are we approaching housing policy in the right way in rural areas?

- 1.3 Representatives of town and parish councils and neighbourhood plan steering groups were invited to attend rural workshops hosted in Tisbury, Calne and Marlborough. Invitees were made aware of the events via a letter sent to every town and parish clerk (**Appendix 1**). As opposed to the rural workshops held last year, we extended the invites to the market towns and principle settlements to acknowledge the interrelationships between the urban and rural settlements in Wiltshire.

2 Overview: Rural Workshops

2.1 The dates of the rural workshops are listed in **Table 1** and were held in Marlborough, Tisbury and Calne.

Table 1: Rural Based Workshops

Event	Venue	Date and time
Rural Parish Workshop	Town Hall Marlborough	18:00 – 20:00 18th September 2019
Rural Parish Workshop	Nadder Centre Tisbury	18:00 – 20:00 25th September 2019
Rural Parish Workshop	Calne Library Calne	18:00 – 20:00 1st October 2019

2.2 The purpose of these rural workshops was to update the attendees on what we have done since the rural workshops that we undertook last October, as well as providing an update on the Local Plan Review. The Rural Workshops were designed to develop ideas about rural policies and to discuss the complementary roles of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

2.3 The presentation was split into two parts; the Local Plan Review update and developing rural housing strategies, and the emerging thinking of rural housing policies. This aimed to stimulate conversation at individual tables of three main discussion points. Ultimately, it was hoped that the workshops would capture these views and inform rural strategy and policy development as part evidence gathering for the Local Plan Review.

2.4 Representatives of rural parishes, market towns and principle settlements were all encouraged to attend the rural workshops as we understand that there is a dynamic between urban settlements and their rural hinterland.

2.5 All three events were open to all the invitees, allowing them to choose the workshop that was most convenient and preferred to them. Additionally, the format and information remained consistent throughout the events. Confirmed attendees were grouped on tables by Housing Market Area (HMA) as much as possible, and parishes who had more than one representative were originally separated amongst the tables in order to stimulate a wider variety of discussion. Due to a higher number of attendees at the final workshop, parishes were kept together for ease of facilitation.

2.6 **Figure 1** provides a geographical representation of those town and parish councils who took part in the rural housing workshops

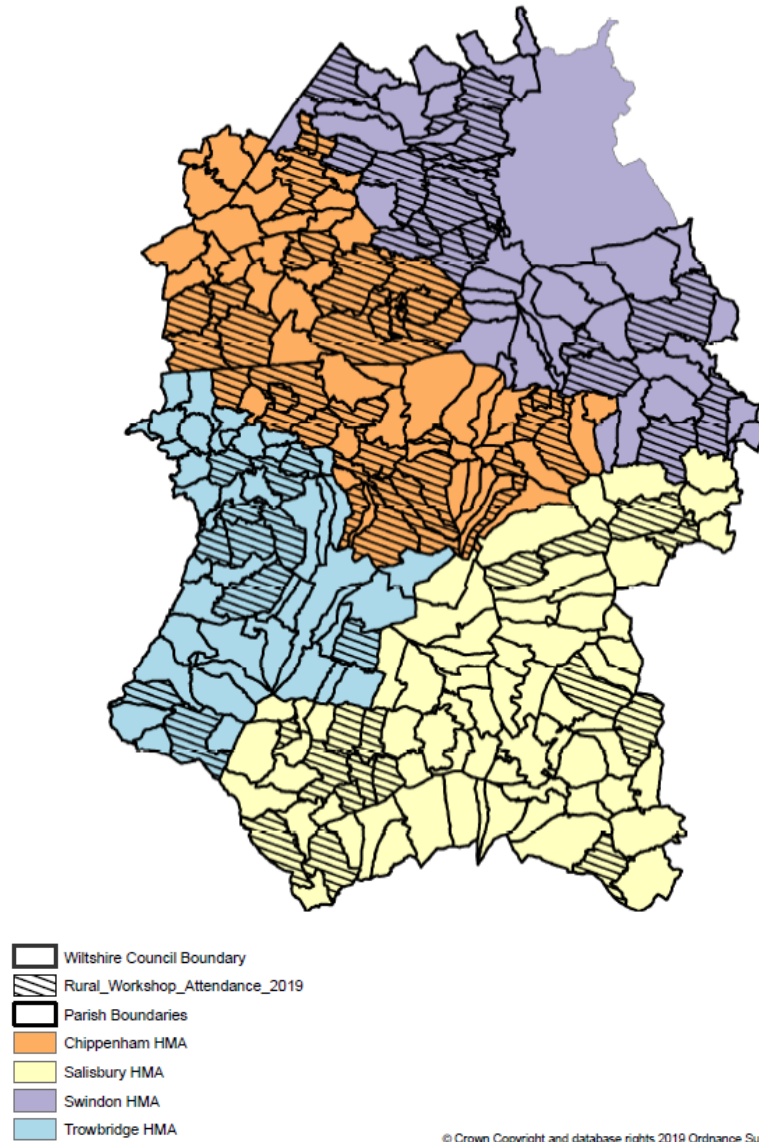


Figure 1: Visual representation of attendance at the Rural Workshops.

3 Prepared Materials

3.1 A copy of an agenda was sent out ahead of the workshops to all invitees, this agenda was evolved and refined as soon as attendance was confirmed. An example of the original agenda can be seen in **Appendix 2** The refined agenda can be seen in the presentation (**Appendix 14**).

3.2 At each of the workshops the tables had a pack of resources. Wiltshire Council officers from the Spatial Planning and Housing teams, facilitated discussions on tables with the aid of the following material:

- A map of the revised Housing Market Area (HMA) boundaries for Wiltshire;
- tables showing indicative housing requirements for Wiltshire's large villages and local service centres broken down by these revised HMAs (Chippenham, Salisbury, Swindon and Trowbridge);
- bar charts depicting the possible housing requirements for these aforementioned large villages and local service centres, again separated by HMA; and
- the Alternative Development Strategies (ADS') that were presented at the market town and principle settlement meetings.

All of these materials can be found in **Appendices 3 - 12**

3.3 Upon arrival, attendees were presented with an 'Arrival Activity', an example of which can be seen in **Appendix 13**. The arrival activity asks attendees to identify the two greatest challenges in relation to planning for housing, it includes the responses from the 2018 rural workshops and invites this year's attendees whether these comments are still valid. This gave the opportunity for attendees to review and start conversations regarding development in rural areas.

3.4 After the arrival activity, a presentation was given. The presentation was split into two parts in order to clarify the context of the discussion points. A copy of the presentation can be found in **Appendix 14**.

4 Outcomes: Rural Based Workshops

Arrival Activity

4.1 During the rural consultation events held in Autumn 2018, participants were asked to identify the main challenges facing rural areas in Wiltshire and how they could be addressed. As mentioned, on arrival, the participants of this set of rural consultation events were asked to identify the two greatest challenges in relation to planning for housing and to outline whether these have changed since the last time.

Below is a summary of the comments from last year's events and this year's events.

Table 2: Summary of Main Challenges in Wiltshire's Rural Areas

Location of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small villages and those not disaggregated do not want housing imposed on them • Nimbyism can be an issue in many villages • Available land is not deemed suitable by local authorities and statutory bodies • Pewsey has an issue with where development may be located
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local facilities are at or over capacity • There should be joint working to aid the delivery of health services and ensure they are co-ordinated • CIL increase would improve infrastructure investment • Development should be designed with the future in mind • Coalescence is an increasingly more pressing issue • Public transport and public transport infrastructure • Health and social infrastructure
Type of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing not being delivered where it is required • Starter homes of young people as they are currently not readily available in either urban or rural areas • There are no downsizing opportunities • More input from the community in local housing needs surveys • More communication between the community and developers over housing types • The lack of coherence of development • Control of what is delivered in terms of design • Housing needs to be delivered that caters for people's changing needs and abilities, for example, supporting independent living for the aging rural population
Housing Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second homes and holiday homes are becoming common place and leading to a breakdown of rural communities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of housing in rural areas is very difficult • In Lyneham DIO own many homes which may be left vacant or privately rented • Developers being held accountable for contributions • More consideration needs to be taken for local needs rather than just what developers want (market signals)
Traffic and Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idmiston has traffic issues • In Lyneham there is no control over the source of people coming into and leaving the village • Public transport in the rural areas of Wiltshire is not regular or available
Additional Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Plans vs large scale strategic planning a county level – is any weight given to NPs? • What does the HIF bid mean for the surrounding parishes?

4.2 As mentioned, the presentation was divided in half in order to keep the discussion questions as the focal point. The first half of the presentation was an update on the Local Plan Review giving background and context to the Alternative Development Strategies put forward to Cabinet on 10 April 2019. This presentation outlined potential development strategies that the Council could adopt as part of the review and the methodology that was used to form the strategies in line with government guidelines and legislation.

4.3 After the first presentation had concluded, attendees were encouraged to converse and comment on the following discussion points:

- *How do we distribute the 'rest of HMA' housing figures in rural areas?*
- *In planning positively for your parish, what are the factors that might influence the level of housing a settlement should plan for?*

4.4 A summary of these comments can be seen in **Table 3**.

Table 3: A summary of the comments made from Discussion Point 1.

Taking the starting point think about your parish, should the number of homes be higher or lower?
<p>Settlement Specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collingbourne Ducis - does not have the sites for more growth so a smaller number of homes would be preferable. • Pewsey – a requirement at Pewsey then the remainder is spread across to the small villages in the Pewsey CA. • Cricklade – A much higher delivery than what the figure suggests. • Gratton - would like the younger generation to move in so there is no need for growth. • Crudwell - would like to plan for local needs. • West Lavington – With the current commitments the parish feels like any further figures on top of that should be windfall only due to access and transport considerations.

- Market Lavington – the figure of 20 dwellings reflects less housing coming forward since 2006 but it is too low going forward. Their neighbourhood plan has recently been submitted and proposes to allocate 88 dwellings. To go beyond the NP figure would require highways work to be carried out.
- Sutton Benger – The requirement of 45 is considered to be far too high for the village. 99 dwellings have been built in the past 20 years and there are 50 commitments. Believe there are not sufficient services or transport, accessibility is poor, and roads are too narrow to support any further development at all.
- Potterne – 26 dwellings are proposed through their NP and they do not support any requirement over that figure, they would only support infill.
- Worton – it is a linear village and is constrained from the north and the south. 25 dwellings is too high, but 12-15 would work well.
- Atworth – a lower level of housing will be required due to the land being privately owned and less available.
- Box – where would the housing go as there is no readily available land, the village is surrounded by Green Belt and AONB constraints.
- Colerne – the MOD estate means there is the potential for land to be made available for a high level of growth option however there would need to be a settlement boundary review.
- Corsham – are close to a made Neighbourhood Plan and therefore have not considered a residual for the period 2016 – 2036.
- Derry Hill number is too high – no idea where 80 houses would go in Derry Hill and the villages could not take this level of growth.
- Seend – 50 too high to plan for, although seems reasonable scale over 20-year period.
- Melksham – discussed settlement designations. Shawn and Whitley should be separated and designated as small villages. Berryfield may have grown to the point it should be considered as a large village.
- Rudloe needs more amenities – focus is needed on facilities and infrastructure before housing.
- Planning permissions keep being refused for a site in Purton however, if it was the get accepted Purton could take some development.

Methodology

- Suggestion that housing numbers are very confusing! How does the government say you should put these figures in to villages?
- The figures should not be driven by previous delivery – Derry Hill is the only large village in the area, they don't want to take all development.
- A bottom up approach should be taken not a top down, the numbers should come from Local Needs Surveys and reflect the needs of the community.
- The classification of villages needs to be reviewed to ensure that they are correctly designated.
- Each settlement is different and has its own characteristics and this should be understood
- Should the location of large villages be taken into account, i.e. the villages that are closer to market towns.
- There were concerns surrounding the numbers and increased percentage of houses that a local area will have to deliver in the plan period.
- The figures need to be up to date and take account of current developments currently being built out.
- The town and local service centre figures should be combined with the rural figures to understand the total impact.
- MOD housing delivery is not in the figures, but it has a huge impact on local services and facilities.
- Include small villages as there are some potential opportunities working investigating.
- Numbers imposed do not reflect the need for affordable homes but rather reflect the market.

Higher Number

- Large villages shouldn't be given large figures as the infrastructure can't cope.
- Large figures will end up destroying the character of villages.
- Infrastructure is needed to accommodate higher levels of growth.
- Generally, those towns that have local amenities seem content to take the numbers suggested to them, and sometimes higher than those suggested.
- Those who have less amenities and access to local services are more uncertain on whether they would be able to provide the suggested number of housing in their area.

- Higher numbers were also mentioned as viable in certain large villages, as they could help to maintain the local school.
- Joint working is essential for higher growth numbers to ensure that key infrastructure is delivered. This could be done by increasing pressure on developers to deliver their infrastructure promises.
- Numbers should be higher for small villages where facilities have closed down or services have been relocated to take some of the housing allocation to try and deliver the necessary infrastructure.
- Some rural parishes believe that the Local Service Centres could take more housing than that which is being proposed to them.

Lower Number

- Small villages are unsure on what numbers they would need, as when housing needs surveys have been completed, it was concluded that their requirement is zero.
- Some parishes mentioned that there were few viable land opportunities, so achieving the proposed numbers may be difficult, let alone higher figures.
- There should be a housing allocation in the small villages as it is important for their sustainability.
- Lower numbers for villages to ensure that development boundaries are stuck to and to ensure coalescence.
- Small villages need more houses because they have been in decline and neighbourhood plans are too onerous for villages that are too small.

Transport/Infrastructure

- Space needs to be allocated for infrastructure as well as housing to ensure the delivery of crucial infrastructure before higher levels of growth can be sustained.
- Traffic signals are needed.
- Roads and physical infrastructure.
- Consideration of school capacity (SA looks at this, but do we need more holistic infrastructure planning).
- The way in which infrastructure is delivered through CIL and Section 106 should be reviewed.
- Housing numbers may be deemed acceptable, but there are other issues regarding transport, pavements, employment opportunities and available facilities and services.
- The land requirement does not seem to take into account the land required for infrastructure.

Employment

- Commuter villages – the numbers do not take into consideration employment in villages when determining figures. The number should reflect the employment potential of the surrounding settlements.
- The local employment is not suitable to sustain the house types being delivered.
- Employment must be delivered along-side housing if there are to be higher numbers in villages and local service centres.

Affordability

- Some rural areas who wish to have more housing in their village, mentioned that high land prices have led to people not being able to afford to stay or move into the area, affordable housing numbers should be higher in rural areas.

Housing

- The homes that become available should be for younger families.
- Smaller homes should be available for an ageing population.

Delivery

- Developers should not be lumped together in rural areas.
- Concerns were raised that rural settlements will have to account for the fallout from the lack of delivery at Principle Settlements and Market Towns.
- Perpetuity was mentioned as being a concern for all.

Additional Comments

- A new village was suggested, potentially near Bulkington.
- Wiltshire officers should visit the parish councils to increase their understanding.
- Should the housing just be directed to the cities and towns?
- Wiltshire council should work in partnership with the parish councils in order to identify strategic priorities for individual parishes; this could possibly come in the form of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG).

- Nimbyism is seen as being something that can hinder development alongside infrastructural constraints.
- There should be consultation/discussion with small villages/towns/local centres that border each other.

In planning positively for your parish, what are the factors that might influence the level of housing a settlement should plan for?

Deliverability

- The availability and deliverability of land.
- Affordable housing is needed but the deliverability aspect could become an issue.
- There are issues surrounding viability when all constraints and objectives are considered.
- Increasing land values are making it unaffordable to live in rural areas.
- Allowance of market housing.
- A legal precedence.
- The settlements location.

Policy

- Discourage the demolition of single small dwellings for long dwellings but encourage 'garden' infill.
- Concentrate on brownfield sites first.
- Social housing is being lost due to Right to Buy and RP policies.
- Using housing needs surveys for all areas to determine the need for all tenures.
- A strong planning framework is needed which should include more than just housing.
- Wanting to retain and protect a flexible settlement boundary to avoid coalescence with other villages.
- More involvement from small villages/parish during the NP process.
- The effects of a Neighbourhood Plan on a settlement, especially regarding the allocation of housing numbers and sites could play a factor in the level of housing a settlement should plan for.
- Some parishes mentioned that housing needs surveys appeared to not cover the real needs of the locality.
- Enforcement of CIL and Section 106 requirements in ensure that key infrastructure is delivered.
- The 'but to rent' scheme is taking over the housing market, which lowers the opportunity for people to purchase their own home.
- What happens if the Neighbourhood Plan is conflicting with the Local Plan?
- Lack of resources to prepare a NP.
- 5-year land supply.
- Neighbourhood plans versus strategic planning.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) views on Neighbourhood Planning.

Infrastructure

- If a higher level of housing was to be delivered then road infrastructure needs huge improvements e.g. transport, drains, roads, school capacity, doctors and hospitals.
- Look at the provision of facilities and services as a barrier to development or potential opportunities to deliver infrastructure upgrades alongside development.
- Delivery of key infrastructure is needed to support new housing to ensure rural settlements are not inundated with excess traffic and congestion from new developments (not always in their settlement).
- More holistic infrastructure upgrades, army basing is an example.
- In Pewsey infrastructure and services may be an issue.

- Reducing the need to travel will help to keep people within Wiltshire (reducing out-commuting) and within their local area.
- Making local facilities viable, having better quality transport infrastructure and a better mix of housing will help to increase the amount of housing a settlement could plan for.
- In Potterne there are parking issues (public and private spaces), roads are too narrow, they want to ensure that the physical separation from Devizes is maintained, the land profile does not allow growth, they want to preserve the natural environment and the historic nature of the settlement.
- Around West Wells more facilities are needed.
- Safe and good quality transport links are required – the current infrastructure must not be overloaded.
- Transport is a key consideration when assessing how to disaggregate growth particularly the impact on the highway system.
- Secondary school provision is an issue for rural settlements that are linked with towns, the main issues being their poor location and lack of capacity.

Employment

- Take homeworking into account, highspeed fibre broadband in all new rural developments would encourage homeworking and reduce out commuting as there is an employment shortage in villages
- Out-commuting has led to money not going into Wiltshire, both money and people should be kept in the area as much as possible, so employment opportunities in the local area could be an important factor that may influence the level of housing a settlement should plan for.
- More low cost/shared ownership houses in small villages to keep rural workers in the country side.
- Jobs and employment land are needed to go alongside housing in these areas and the locations can't support high levels of housing.
- Employment location should decide where housing goes. People commute out of villages – it is not sustainable to build homes in large villages where out commuting is required.
- Nucleated employment opportunities should be matched with nucleated housing and settlements.

Sustainability

- Small villages that have lost their facilities need rejuvenating to ensure village coalescence.
- Climate change must be considered.
- The strategy should incorporate sustainable standards in buildings and lifestyle.
- There is a need for a housing requirement or housing design guide, a prescriptive document that requires government involvement to ensure village character is not lost, as the private sector will divert around any policy that requires them to deliver anything they don't want to build.
- Housing turnover – computers, moving in and out, understanding who is moving where and understand the trends and effect of those trends.
- Building controls – the Council is not strict enough given the climate change emergency; solar panels should be installed on every new house; more consideration needs to be given to environmental factors such as surface water run-off.
- Some large villages serve as a focal point for surrounding villages, this needs to be recognised and maintained when planning to reduce out-commuting.
- Distinctiveness needs to be maintained.
- Climate change mitigation options in rural locations are a potential factor.
- Sustainability and affordability should be considered when planning for rural areas i.e. housing should be available that reflects the wages of those living there.
- Portfolio style properties are making houses in rural areas less affordable.

- Is there enough support for the elderly in rural settlements? Should they be looking to expand if not?
- High house prices but suggestion was made that there would be an uproar if lots of social housing was delivered – how do we approach this issue?
- What sort of housing should villages be planning for? Low cost? 5 bed?
- Building the levels of housing proposed would alter the distinction between rural and urban areas.
- Must keep economy local to generate wealth within the communities. Opportunities for local employment growth must be planned for.

Environmental Constraints

- Preserving conservation areas and protecting AONB, the countryside and natural environment needs protecting. It should not be lost but should be replaced.
- The question of how to plan for growth in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- Environmentally constrained – landscape impact – (Seend is on the ridge line) makes it difficult to find acceptable sites.

Additional Comments

- More consultation is needed with local councils to determine house types as it is currently not heard, more local knowledge will help to deliver more appropriate and sustainable developments.
- Local people included to make a positive planning experience.
- An aging population.

Discussion Point 2

4.5 The second half of the presentation focused on the Council’s emerging rational in regard to rural housing policies. It outlined comments that the Spatial Planning and Housing teams took away from last year’s consultation events and summarised what they had done since last year to address these. This year the discussion was focused on the following discussion point:

- *Are we approaching housing policy in the right way in rural areas?*

4.6 A summary of these comments can be seen in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Summary of the comments made from Discussion Point 2

Are we approaching housing policy in the right way in rural areas?

Affordable Housing

- Based on a case by case basis – 40% AH may not be viable to all parishes & towns
- Lack of mixed, multi-tenure, affordable housing – the long-term sustainability of rural communities requires the provision of well-sited, small developments of good quality, affordable housing offering a mix of tenures for one, two, three or four-bedroom homes for social rent, low cost rent and affordable sale.
- Will developers provide the level of affordable housing required?
- The AH percentage threshold should be kept as it is as it is currently flexible.
- 40% affordable housing is seen as too ambitious in some places.

- The quality of affordable housing is important.
- There should be scope for affordable housing only development.

Rural Exception Sites

- Rural exception sites should apply to development at the end of its life not just for new sites
- Traditional exception sites have had to be next to settlement boundary. This should be more flexible, so they could be further from the settlement boundary.
- More flexible Rural Exception Sites (RES) – up to 20, more is needed in the market.
- Disagreement with the ‘no exception sites in AONB areas’.
- Concerns that developers may find a way to take advantage – we must find a way to avoid this happening.

Community Led Housing

- How do we keep community-led housing in the community?
- Strong support for community land trusts. Seend is progressing on to meet its needs.
- Communities need to be made aware of the opportunity to control allocations through CLH.
- Community-led housing: we need more Community Land Trusts which involve local people in finding and delivering realistically affordable and relevant housing that creates genuinely attractive and engaged communities where local people want and can afford to live and work.
- Very positive feedback in regard to Community Led-Housing Policy.

Entry Level Exception Sites

- Entry level exception site policy – should be on Brownfield sites only and adjacent to larger settlements.
- Entry level exception sites – land and affordable housing being built by those needing them.
- The criteria of entry level exception sites not being bigger than 1ha is too big for some settlements. The criteria should be more place specific.
- Neighbourhood Planning policy and Local Plan policy should be used to aid the forcing of settlements to use entry level exception sites.

Self-Build

- A policy to encourage self builds.
- Self-build – confusion over (1) whether this was for the local people; and (2) what truly constituted a ‘self-build’.
- Self-build housing sites would be very well supported.

Housing Need Assessment

- Increase the level of decision making at a local level to allow communities to look into housing needs policy.
- Housing need surveys need to be amended to register how many people are looking for market homes – this will link into Affordable Housing and Self-build.
- Meeting local needs for young households.

Climate Change

- Climate change must be taken into consideration in all new builds and policies should be included in the Local Plan.
- A zero-carbon housing policy is needed.

Design

- Space standards for market housing, this is vital for sustainability and will be a better use of space.
- Village Design Statements for smaller villages that cannot afford Neighbourhood Plans.
- Rural Design Guide should be produced by Wiltshire Council to ensure developers are preserving the character of the settlement.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Space standards for market housing to ensure homes have good inside and outside space for family housing. |
| <u>Additional comments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there scope for a housing for younger people policy?• An aging population is unable to downsize in their own villages.• Local people need to be kept in the local area.• Market towns, surrounding parishes should plan together and share plans.• Land availability in rural areas is an issue.• A more diverse rural supply of housing is needed. |

Next Steps

- 5** 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.
- 5.1** 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.
- 5.2** 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.