# Wiltshire Employment Land Review

*Appendix 4: Consultation Key Messages*

Prepared for Wiltshire Council

October 2017

# Contents



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| Job Number: | 17 06 03 |
| Version Number: | Working Draft 1.0 |
| Approved by: | Gareth Jones |
| Date: | October 2017 |

# 1 Introduction

This document sets out a strategic summary of the feedback from the stakeholder consultations undertaken to inform the Employment Land Review (ELR) for Wiltshire.

Stakeholders consulted include:

- Nicola Bailey, Federation of Small Businesses
- Paddy Bradley, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP
- Gavin Calthorp, Swindon Borough Council (Economic Development)
- Arian Crampton, Wiltshire Council (Workforce and Skills) Written response
- Allan Creedy, Wiltshire Council (Sustainable Transport)
- Rob Emony, Department of International Trade
- James Gregory and Peter Barefoot, Alder King
- Julian Head, Wiltshire Council (European Funding)
- Henry King, Kavanaghs
- Kevin Ladner, Wiltshire Council (MoD Liaison)
- Ian Larrard, Swindon & Wiltshire Initiative
- James Lockhart, Whltmarsh Lockhart
- Peter Manley, Wiltshire Council (Strategic Businesses)
- Rob Perks, Wiltshire Chamber of Commerce
- Andy Rhind Tutt, Salisbury Chamber of Commerce
- Colin Scragg, Carter Jonas
- Simon Smith, Wiltshire Council (Planning)
- Dean Speer, Myddleton and Major
- Huw Thomas, Huw Thomas Commercial
- Richard Walters, Wiltshire Council (Major Projects)
- Chris Wordsworth and Lindsay Holdoway, HPH Commercial Property

In addition we have used information gathered from consultations undertaken for our previous work on the Functional Economic Market Area Assessment undertaken for Swindon and Wiltshire.

All comments have been anonymised. Comments have been marked with a number in case they need to be investigated further.

These are the views of a range of stakeholders, and not the views of the consultants undertaking this work. In some cases, there is variation in the views, and they may in places contradict each other.

As well as informing the overall report, the information from the consultations has been used to inform a future growth scenario for the Employment Land Review.

# 2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

All comments have been anonymised. Comments have been marked with a number in case they need to be investigated further.

## 2.1 Strengths

Residential development activity seen as a catalyst for growth [22]

Sufficient workforce [22] – although there are many statements to the contrary

Half of the top 100 businesses in Wiltshire have expanded or want to [17]. These businesses want to stay within their existing travel-to-work area in order to keep their staff – which is important in a tight labour market [17]

High quality of workforce, enhanced by recent increase in housing [02]

Well located, desirable location to live [22]

Great West Way – slow route from London to Bristol/South West. People move to Wiltshire for the quality of life [16]

Wiltshire is well located, between the SW and London [15]. More focused on links to SE than SW [23] [16]. Infrastructure and sites need to support this strategic direction [16]

## 2.2 Weaknesses

Housing is expensive [23]

Land is expensive [23]

No university [23]

Accessibility is constrained beyond the M4 and A350 corridors

## 2.3 Opportunities

Mainline rail electrification to London makes commuting easier, therefore likely to see more out-commuting [08] [23]

The economy will perform well if employment premises are available [06]

## 2.4 Threats

The LEP strategy is very aspirational, but many of the areas are not actual current strengths [02]

# 3 Workforce

All comments have been anonymised. Comments have been marked with a number in case they need to be investigated further.

## 3.1 Availability

Varying views of workforce availability, e.g.:

- Very tight labour market – in terms of both low skilled and high skilled labour [15]
- Constrained workforce availability in Wiltshire [23][02]
- Lack of skills is a greater constraint on economic growth than lack of sites and premises [08][18]
- Sufficient workforce [22]

Army leavers provide a potential pool of labour [08]

## 3.2 Out-commuting

Many high skilled people commute out of the county to work in Swindon, Bath and Bristol, which is a problem for local employers [19]

## 3.3 Lack of a university

No university [23] [02]

Lack of a university means that young people are moving away and not coming back [10] [15]. Possibly coming back later in life when they have families of their own [21]. More sophisticated argument – young people move away anyway, but none are being attracted into the local area for higher education and then staying

Continued decline in population aged 16-18 [09]

# 4 Infrastructure

All comments have been anonymised. Comments have been marked with a number in case they need to be investigated further.

## 4.1 Strategic road network

Poor north-south transport links. Improving these could increase demand [09]. Need a strategy for the upgrading of the length of the A350 [02]

A350 difficult to navigate [16]

Improvement of the A350 north-south could make the area more attractive [08][07]

Internal transport infrastructure within the county is poor e.g. trains and buses [23]. Road infrastructure is not able to cope with the volume of vehicle movements [05]

## 4.2 M4 and Junction 17

Development at J17 potentially constrained by Highways England [09]

## 4.3 Public transport

Bus services linking rural to urban areas are seeing reduced subsidy. Could be a barrier to increased workforce participation in urban areas [09]

## 4.4 Broadband

Broadband provision is poor. Not quick enough or good enough [23] [22] [10] [15]. Particularly a problem for the creative industries [10] [15]

Broadband and mobile signal are problematic in rural areas [15]. However, broadband flagged up as being good in some towns e.g. Warminster and Westbury [02]

## 4.5 Power

Need power provision to sites to enable new industrial development and occupation [22]

# 5 Property Market

All comments have been anonymised. Comments have been marked with a number in case they need to be investigated further.

## 5.1 Supply and demand for sites

Very limited supply of sites and premises available [17][21][01][04]

Lack of supply of cheap sites for development [03]

Lack of unconstrained employment land [22]

Significant problem of housebuilders controlling the supply of employment land [22][17][06]

Site owners holding out for residential 'hope value' [20][19]

Employment land being lost to residential development, on the basis of insufficient demand for employment land – although this is questionable [20]

South Wiltshire lacks a campus business park [21]

Most demand is in the north of the county, at the top of the A350, and M4 [19]

Local plan has allocated a number of mixed-use sites that are not suitable for many employment uses [21][01]

The planning system is one of the biggest barriers to the development of employment premises. The process is convoluted and expensive [02][04][05]

## 5.2 Supply and demand for premises

Lack of speculative development, due to difficulty of accessing finance, constrains business expansion plans [22][07] This has led to a current shortage of supply, which may be affecting businesses' expansion plans

No real demand for large offices, but significant demand for industrial units [22][19][04][06]

Most office occupiers are looking for higher quality offices, which aren't available [03] or viable to deliver [06]

Over-supply of large offices, with vacant offices in Chippenham and Trowbridge [04]

Shortage of small offices, and incubator units are generally fully let [19]

Rural barn conversions are a good source of supply, although broadband is often poor, which is a constraint in particular to the creative industries [19]

Expect greater demand for industrial and manufacturing space post Brexit [22], but there is a risk that Wiltshire cannot accommodate this [07]

ERDF support available to deliver flexible new workspace for small businesses. All sectors, general start-up [13]

Enterprise network – flexible office space available for small start-up businesses [15]

Lots of demand for industrial property [03] B&NES trying to discourage industrial and warehousing development, and focus on offices and the creative media sector, which presents an opportunity for Wiltshire [04]

Insufficient supply of industrial premises [03][04]

Most demand is for units of less than 5,000 sq ft, with demand coming from local businesses [04]

Large, unsatisfied demand for larger industrial units of 10,000 sq ft + [19][01] Unsatisfied demand for industrial could get worse if no further allocations are made [01]

Most demand comes from businesses already located locally who want to expand or relocate [03]

## 5.3 Rents and yields

Industrial rents are increasing. Demand is relatively stable, but supply is dwindling, which is pushing up rents [22][04][07]

Office rents not moved [04]

Wiltshire is balanced in terms of supply and demand [02]

Lack of available premises, so lack of deals [03]

## 5.4 Investment and development

Constrained land availability for development [22]

Land costs are lower, build costs are the same as elsewhere, but rental levels are lower, so investors' return on investment is lower; hence speculative build unlikely to take place [08][23]

Land is expensive [23] (n.b. contradicts the statement above)

Speculative development is not viable Wiltshire [02] [03]

Speculative development of offices is unviable, especially Grade A [22]

Industrial development is more viable [22]

## 5.5 Quality of existing stock

A lot of the industrial property stock is 'tired' and needs replacing. This will be even more so in 20 years' time [08][23]

Need for replacement of some stock. Many occupiers are in obsolete buildings but cannot afford to move. However, viability of replacement is low [02]

Requirement for new additional stock is greater than the need for replacement and regeneration of existing stock [04]

Shortage of science and innovation space [23]

## 5.6 Permitted Development Rights

Positive impact through regeneration and reduction of redundant stock [22]

But, it is a risk to enabling employment in the right locations [22]. Could lead to a shortage of office space if it continues [05]

Rash of PDRs exercised in the Chippenham area, but not actually implemented/developed [20]. Probably used as a Trojan Horse to eventually seek full residential planning permission

Loss of some redundant offices in Salisbury because of PDR. Helps deal with offices vacated by Insurance sector, and provide residential accommodation for the elderly [21]

## 5.7 Other

Availability of power is key to the delivery of new employment sites [06]

# 6 Inward Investment

All comments have been anonymised. Comments have been marked with a number in case they need to be investigated further.

Wiltshire is attractive to inward investors – particularly the towns and more accessible locations [13]

Need for a promotional strategy to attract businesses into Wiltshire from other locations [05]

People are attracted to Wiltshire, as employees and employers, by the high quality of life [23]

However, quality of life is not a sufficient differentiator to attract high quality inward investment to Wiltshire. Many other places also have high quality of life [18]

DIT approach is 'UK First' i.e. attracting the investment to the UK, then identifying the best five locations in the UK for any potential foreign investments [18]. A place must have the infrastructure and skills in place to make it genuinely attractive before DIT will put it on a shortlist to share with foreign investors. Site or property availability alone is not sufficient

Globally competitive sectors in Wiltshire [18]:

- Life sciences/medical research at Porton Down, with science park being developed adjacent
- Swindon as a back-office location for financial services- more attractive with the electrification of the mainline. Chippenham could also be an attractive location, although it has less profile than Swindon

Don't necessarily need sites and premises available now for inward investors, as their timetable is fairly long [18]

Some inward investors will start out with a small sales office and then grow their presence gradually. Therefore, small managed workspaces will help to attract initial inward investment activity [18]

# 7 Sector Specific Messages

All comments have been anonymised. Comments have been marked with a number in case they need to be investigated further.

## 7.1 General

Economy of Wiltshire is resilient as it is not exposed to any dominant sectors [22]

No particular business clusters [22]

Half of the top 100 businesses in Wiltshire have expanded or want to [17]. These businesses want to stay within their existing travel-to-work area in order to keep their staff – which is important in a tight labour market [17]

Key sector growth in Swindon (financial/tech, pharmaceuticals, automotive) is unlikely to create demand for supply chain activity in Wiltshire [12]

## 7.2 Key sectors

High tech and industrial engineering across the county [22] [23] Advanced manufacturing [21][06]

Distribution [23] Distribution especially in north Wiltshire [02] Distribution – A303, Solstice Park [23] Distribution – M4 [22][06][07]

Military [23][21][06]

Tourism [23]

Porton Down – bioscience [23] Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) [21]. Drawing in functions from elsewhere, including high quality staff. Life sciences [23]

Agri food [23] Food manufacturing around Westbury [06]

Swindon can attract HQs and multinationals [23]

Chemicals and pharmaceuticals (??) [22]

General manufacturing in west Wiltshire [02]

Digital and creative [19]

Small and specialist manufacturing in south Wiltshire [01]

Some spin out from universities (e.g. Bath), and MoD [04]

## 7.3 Growth opportunities

Growth in direct MoD employment – army rebasing [23]

Next SEP – greater focus on the visitor economy [16]

Joint Forces Cyber Command presents opportunity for cyber [16]

Science Park adjacent to Porton Down [21]

Boscombe Down – military activity and civilian support for this – Boeing contract to service Apache helicopters [21]

Growth in general manufacturing constrained by lack of premises [01]

Most businesses in Wiltshire are smaller SMEs, so need to enable the growth in this sector [02]

## 7.4 Decline

HPA being lost to Essex [23]

Loss of financial institutions in Salisbury [23] although mostly gone now. However, this did not lead to a loss in total employment, or an increase in unemployment [10]. Decline in employment in Insurance and Finance, due to consolidation in the sector [21], but this has not led to increased unemployment as people have been re-deployed in the local economy or have moved elsewhere

Office market is declining in south Wiltshire [01]

# 8 Place Specific Messages

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Growing companies will only move around 10 miles, otherwise they risk losing the existing staff base [19]

## 8.1 Functional Economic Market Areas

M4 corridor – most active area outside London [22]

A350 – stable demand, good balance between supply and demand [22] Dualling of the A350 could make locations to the south of Chippenham more attractive to investors and occupiers [06]

A303 – manufacturing is strong [22]

Everywhere else – not a lot of activity [22]

Next SEP – more focus on rural development [16]

## 8.2 Calne

Performs less well because of poor access to motorway [03]

## 8.3 Chippenham

Economy is strong [15]. Data shows that employment has grown

Performs well because of proximity to M4 [03] and mainline rail links [05]

Growth in the Chippenham economy is constrained by the lack of available employment premises [07]

J17 – potential for Heathrow Logistics Hub, or storage and distribution in general [16][08][12][20][06]

Electrification of the main line to London potentially makes it a more attractive office location [08]. Definitely makes it a more attractive place to commute from

Out-commuting from Wiltshire. Potential labour pool for growth in Chippenham [04]

Good Energy is a major office occupier, although doubts about their ability to expand here [04]

Opportunity for a major new employment site in north Wiltshire given the good accessibility of the area [04]

## 8.4 Colerne

Former RAF site – potential for redevelopment [14]

## 8.5 Corsham

Potential for a digital hub [15]

Joint Forces Cyber Command presents opportunity for cyber cluster [16]

Genuine relationships between MoD and private businesses [20]

Mansion House given permission for development as flexible workspace for digital businesses [20]

Tunnels present opportunity for secure storage [16]

## 8.6 Devizes

Strong for FSB membership, but don't know why [15]. However, data shows employment has declined in recent years

Performs less well because of poor access to motorway [03]

## 8.7 Malmesbury

Dyson have bought new site at Hullavington Airfield for development as an R&D facility [16][04]

## 8.8 Melksham

Performs well because of proximity to M4 [03]

## 8.9 Royal Wootton Bassett

Abuts Swindon and may pick up some Swindon overspill employment [08]

## 8.10 Rural A303 FEMA

Porton Down is a significant growth opportunity [10] [16] Development of a science park 'outside the wire' will free up some space 'within the wire' for further Government activity. Incubator units which were inside the wire now replaced with science park activity outside [08]

Incubator space [13]

Ploughshare – technology transfer from MoD to civilian sector, leading to spin-out and spin-in growth [16]

Enterprise Zone status for Porton Down? [16] Applied for EZ status but unsuccessful. May re-apply or develop a simplified planning process [21]

Boscombe Down is a significant growth opportunity [10] [16]. Potential for military and civilian growth [14], especially in aerospace, with interest from Boeing in locating at the site [21]

Potential for incubation hubs to support new business starts by ex-military personnel [14]

Military rebasing – additional demand for services from expanded population. Also, additional workforce (dependents) looking for work [14] [15][21]

## 8.11 Rural M4 FEMA

Dyson has purchased the airfield for development. Likely to involve R&D and training, rather than manufacture, so limited potential for supply chain development [08]

Barracks – former MoD site – potential for redevelopment. Feasibility study into what can be done with this [14]

## 8.12 Salisbury

Needs a ring road [10]

Economy is OK [15]. Data shows that this is the case

Decline in employment in Insurance and Finance, due to consolidation in the sector [21] [01], but this has not led to increased unemployment as people have been re-deployed in the local economy or have moved elsewhere

Growth in industrial is constrained by lack of sites [01]

## 8.13 Swindon

Town centre not very attractive [23]

Stronger office hub than Wiltshire [08]. Electrification of the main line to London makes it a more attractive office location

House prices are lower in Swindon [08][23]

Lack of supply of employment land, could constrain future economic growth [08][12]

Need infrastructure, funded by housing development, to open up large new employment sites, but this is not happening e.g. in Wichelstowe [12]

Draws in commuters from Wiltshire, therefore less demand for employment land in Wiltshire [12]

Carriage Works – town centre regeneration project including new innovation hub for creative and technical sector, three minutes from the railway station [12]

## 8.14 Trowbridge

Less growth [15]. Data shows that employment has declined

## 8.15 Warminster

Less growth [15]. Data shows that employment has grown – although this is questionable

Confluence of rail lines. Not sure if this presents an opportunity [16]

## 8.16 Westbury

Former MoD site – potential for redevelopment [14]