

Wiltshire Local Plan Review

Planning for Royal Wootton Bassett

Introduction

1. What will Royal Wootton Bassett be like in the future?
 - How much should the town grow?
 - What priorities should we tackle?
 - Where should development take place?
2. Answers to these fundamental questions affect how the town develops over the next 15 years.
3. The Council is thinking about these questions in planning Wiltshire's future. It's an important stage in the Council's review of the current Wiltshire Core Strategy and the development of the Local Plan.
4. The Wiltshire Core Strategy is the basis for determining most planning applications. It also identifies land for development that provides for new homes, jobs and infrastructure for our growing communities whilst balancing the need to protect the environment. The Local Plan will continue this role and therefore help shape the places the community of Wiltshire live and work within.
5. The Council has come to some initial answers to these three questions. It is sharing them and wants your views.

Scale of growth

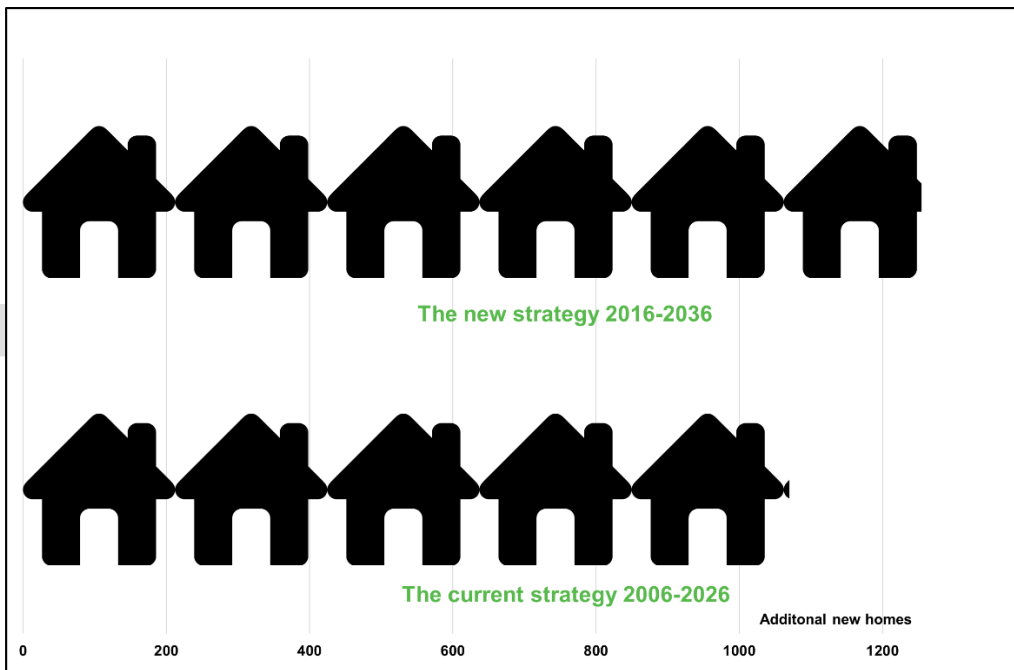
How much should the town grow?

6. The Council assesses what amount of new homes are needed between 2016 and 2036, the period of the Local Plan. It does the same for how much land will be needed for new jobs and businesses. Detail on these requirements can be found in the 'Emerging Spatial Strategy' paper.

Additional homes

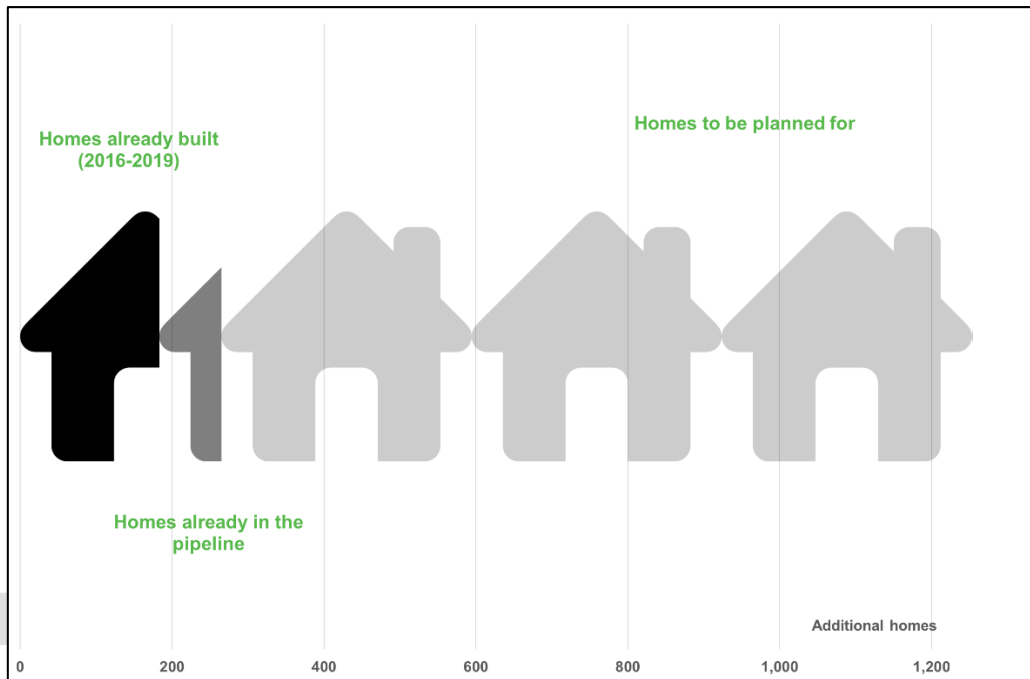
7. Assessments estimate levels of new homes within housing market areas, as these reflect where the majority of the population live and work, where the majority of home moves take place and where there is a common range of private sector rents. There are four housing market areas in Wiltshire and each area includes many settlements. Royal Wootton Bassett is in the Swindon Housing Market Area.

8. The Council has considered how best to accommodate needs for new homes, setting scales of growth by testing different distributions. The result of this work suggests the scale of growth should change marginally from what is currently planned.
9. The current strategy 2006-26, the Wiltshire Core Strategy, identified a requirement for 1,070 dwellings at Royal Wootton Bassett. The new strategy proposes a requirement for **1,255 homes** for the plan period 2016-36



10. From this total estimate of need over the plan period can be deducted homes already built and those already in the pipeline as shown in the diagram below¹.
11. When the number of homes built and in the pipeline is deducted it leaves a further 990 homes to be accommodated up until 2036.

¹ In Royal Wootton Bassett 183 dwellings have been built between 2016-2019 and at 1 April 2019, 82 dwellings are already in the pipeline (i.e. they have planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission).



12. Both the Local Plan and a neighbourhood plan can allocate sites for development. Each community is encouraged to help determine where development takes place through the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. The Local Plan will allocate land where necessary to ensure supply of deliverable land to meet strategic housing needs and for large or complex sites.
13. Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council would support higher level of growth than what is proposed, provided this enables delivery of capacity improvements to transport, education and health infrastructure, ideally by way of a strategic development. However, amongst other issues, fundamental concerns remain regarding the capacity of M4 Junction 16. Due to the complexities linked with higher growth such strategic development would have to be steered by the Local Plan.
14. The current Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan is going to be reviewed. Wiltshire Council will seek to align the Local Plan with the Neighbourhood Plan vision. The neighbourhood plan could complement the Local Plan by proposing additional sites that meet a particular housing need, for self-build housing or for other uses, or that positively plan for brownfield sites.
15. Needs for development land should be met as far as possible on brownfield sites to help minimise the loss of greenfield land. The Council suggests that a target of 70 homes could be built on brownfield sites at Royal Wootton Bassett over the next 10 years².
16. The Local Plan ensures that the proposed scale of growth will be accommodated; where necessary to ensure supply of deliverable land to meet strategic housing

² Further detail can be found in the Emerging Spatial Strategy paper.

needs and to help deliver large or complex sites. It must be certain that there is a land supply sufficient to meet assessed need. It cannot rely on the brownfield target being met by as yet unidentified windfall redevelopment, the scale or timing of which is uncertain.

17. Meeting a brownfield target, for example as part of reviewing the neighbourhood plan, will reduce the need for greenfield sites in future reviews of the Local Plan. Sites identified formally, with sufficient certainty, either in the development plan or by granting planning permission, reduce the need.
18. Alongside neighbourhood plans, development briefs for individual sites and master plans for larger areas, are a means for the community with developers and landowners, to help bring forward brownfield opportunities and achieve appropriate designs.

The Local Economy

19. The Council has assessed what additional land is needed for businesses in each of the economic zones of the County. These zones encompass many settlements. It has considered how best to accommodate needs for new business by testing different distributions³.
20. On current evidence, an additional 6 hectares of employment land is needed at Royal Wootton Bassett. Employment land supply has been reviewed and there is insufficient supply available and capable of meeting the needs.

QUESTIONS

What do you think to this scale of growth? Should there be a brownfield target? Should they be higher or lower?

Place shaping priorities

What priorities should we tackle?

21. The Local Plan will contain a set of place-shaping priorities for each main settlement. They play a central role in developing planning policies and proposals for development. They will be the basis for an overarching planning policy for Royal Wootton Bassett that will guide development and the direction of growth.
22. Some priorities apply equally everywhere, notably the need to address climate change and achieve carbon reduction. Place shaping priorities are intended to be those distinct to a particular place. They may include:
 - Important local objectives or issues and how they can be addressed

³Further detail can be found in the Emerging Spatial Strategy paper.

- Opportunities that have been identified that can help support a local community's vision
 - Infrastructure requirements for which there are local aspirations and capable of delivery or that are necessary to support likely future growth
23. They must relate to the development and use of land and so should revolve around specific outcomes and their benefits.
24. They are also a starting point for policies that can be in neighbourhood plans. The Council will continue to work with Town and Parish Councils to find the priorities best suited to delivering sustainable development and town centre improvements. At this stage of the plan making process these are the draft priorities that have been identified for Royal Wootton Bassett:

- Protecting the distinct character and identity of the town, recognising its proximity to Swindon.
- Maintaining capacity at M4 Junction 16 throughout the Plan period
- Maximising the use and availability of sustainable modes of transport along with managing levels of congestion on strategic routes and in the town centre
- Safeguarding land for a Swindon parkway station
- Provision of additional employment to improve self-containment
- Infrastructure improvements to promote and encourage non-car travel
- Increased primary education, GP and cemetery capacity
- Safeguarding the historic alignment of the Wilts and Berks Canal and taking forward canal restoration
- Conserving and enhancing environmental assets around Royal Wootton Bassett
- Maintaining the town's elevated historical setting and central conservation area

QUESTIONS

Are these the right priorities? What priorities may be missing? How might these strategic priorities be achieved?

Potential Development Sites

Where should development take place?

25. Land around much of Royal Wootton Bassett is being promoted for development by land owners or prospective developers. From this larger amount of land, the Council is focussing its own assessment of a smaller pool potential development sites that are shown on the map below. How these sites have been chosen is explained in a separate 'site selection report', published alongside this document. Not all these sites will be needed to meet the housing requirement in Royal Wootton Bassett, further assessment will be carried out following the consultation to identify which site or site(s) will be proposed for allocation in the draft plan.

26. The Local Plan ensures the proposed scale of growth will be accommodated. The amount to be planned for takes account of development that is already certain and, in the pipeline, including as many brownfield sites as can be relied on, such as those with planning permission.
27. However, given the overall scale of growth decision will need to be made where and how the built-up area may need to extend – greenfield sites. Each potential development site has its own individual characteristics. Rarely is one site very clearly the best choice. There are a range of different constraints and opportunities associated with each. Some are common to several or even all potential development sites. The information below shows what features, possibly both good and bad, set each one apart from others under consideration using current evidence.
28. This pool of sites can be used to allocate sites in either the Local Plan or the neighbourhood plan. One or more sites in whole or part will be selected and the rest of the pool of potential development site will remain as they are – i.e. potentially available for consideration in any subsequent review. The results of this consultation might remove some sites, might restore others that were rejected or might even throw up new ones that have not so far been considered.
29. In Royal Wootton Bassett additional land is required to meet strategic housing and employment requirements. The review of the neighbourhood plan, however, can also consider whether further land is needed for development to meet the community's needs.
30. The Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan can select sites for development for new homes, businesses, and other uses to meet local needs. Prioritising brownfield land, work would focus first on identifying opportunities using previously development land. The pool of sites provided here is a starting point for any greenfield sites.

QUESTIONS

Is this the right pool of potential development sites? Are there any other sites we should be considering?

What land do you think is the most appropriate upon which to build? What type and form of development should be brought forward at the town?

Are there important social, economic, or environmental factors you think we have missed that need to be considered, generally or in respect of individual sites?

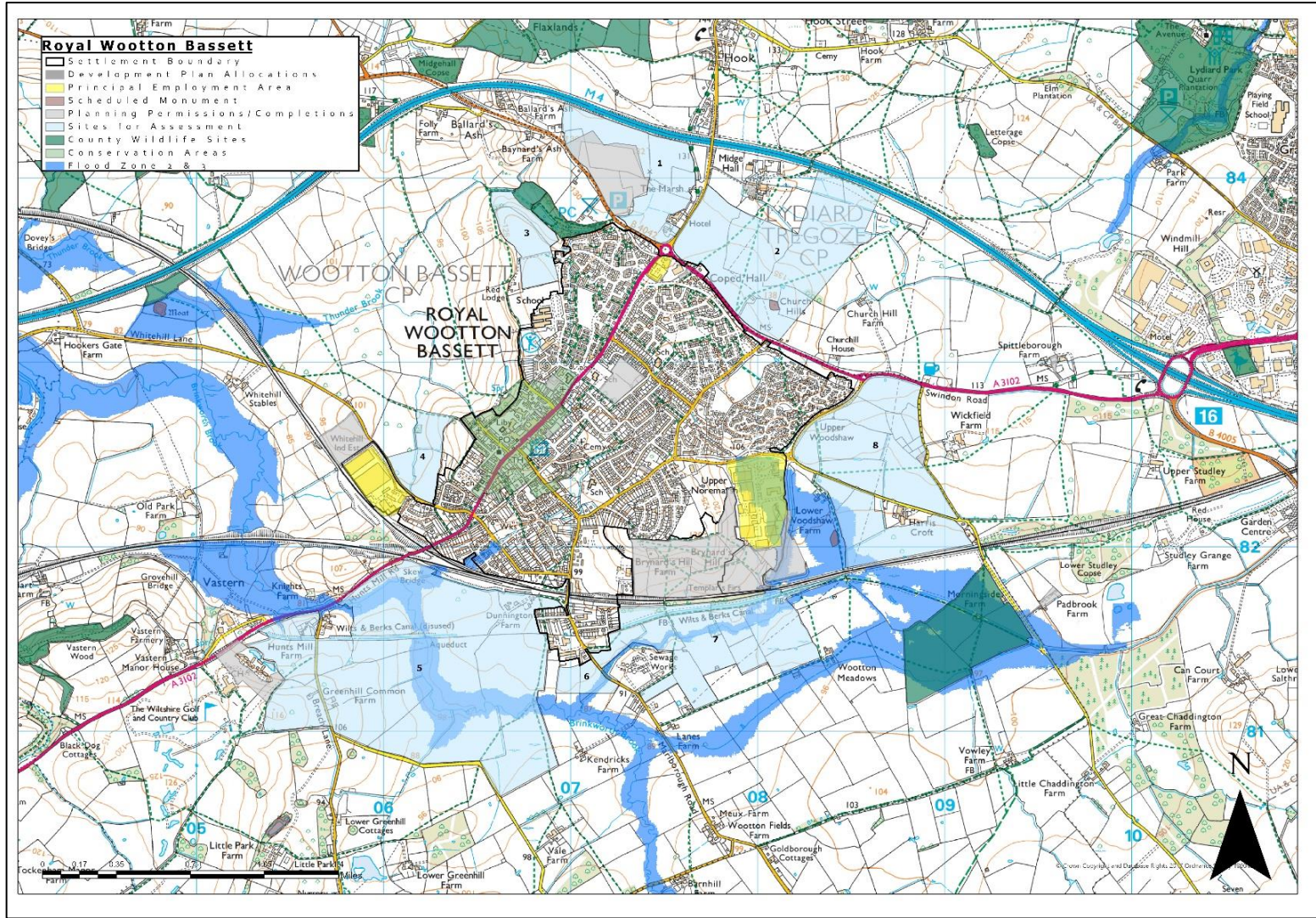


Figure 1 Map showing potential development sites for assessment

Eight potential sites have been identified in Royal Wootton Bassett for further assessment of their development potential. Key considerations for these potential site options are provided below.

Considerations relevant to all sites:

- Royal Wootton Bassett settlement area is within 12km of North Meadow and of Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation which is under recreational pressure
- Sites should be connected to the town centre by methods other than private transport to help minimise congestion.
- Contributions would be required to expand primary education and GP capacity.

Site 1: Land at Marsh Farm (SHELAA reference 499)

- There is a risk of coalescence with Ballard's Ash
- The site abuts with the M4 motorway and as such noise would be a major design consideration in terms of achieving acceptable amenity for dwellings.
- Mitigation including a strong landscape buffer along the north of the site will be needed
- Contribution of site to the setting of Grade II Building "The Marsh" requires assessment

Site 2: Land at Midge Farm (SHELAA reference 3366)

- There is a risk of coalescence with Swindon and Midge Hall
- Development in the north and east of the site should be limited for landscape reasons
- The site includes the Grade II farmstead and would lead to the loss of its agricultural setting.
- The site is close to a congested corridor
- The site partially abuts the M4 motorway and the B3102. As such noise would be a major design consideration in terms of achieving acceptable amenity for dwellings.

Site 3: Land at Maple Drive (SHELAA references 477 and 3160)

- There is potential for impact on the Jubilee Lake & Wood County Wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserve
- There is more limited capacity in the north of the site due to the presence of woodland
- There are potential views to the north and west, and any design would need to consider Jubilee Lake and the wooden escarpment.

Site 4: Land at Whitehill Lane (SHELAA reference 3161)

- The northern half of this site is shown as a town park in the made Neighbourhood Plan at Policy 3
- Development should be limited in the north of the site, where it would create a conspicuous, new urban edge.

Site 5: Land south of Wootton Bassett (SHELAA site 3156)

- Consideration could be given to how this site relates to the wider aspiration to develop a parkway station for Swindon.
- The site is highly prominent with key views across to the skyline of Royal Wootton Bassett and surrounding countryside. There is risk of coalescence with Vastern, the Wiltshire Crescent development and surrounding farmsteads
- A significant buffer will be required to protect setting of Grade II Hunts Mill Farm.
- The proposed route of restored Wilts and Berks Canal should be respected in any development
- There is an opportunity to provide buffering to the railway corridor through biodiversity net gain at the northern edge of the site
- The Brinkworth Brook and its flood zone provide a natural boundary to the south
- There is more limited capacity through the south of the site, requiring a strong landscape buffer here to mitigate effects.

Site 6: Land south of Templar's Way (SHELAA reference 498)

- There is a risk of flooding on a small part of the site
- The proposed route of restored Wilts and Berks Canal should be respected in any development
- The potential for significant adverse historic landscape effects is high and will require further surveys
- This land may be more suitable for employment to protect and extend the Templar's Way employment site to the north
- Odour from the sewage plant could lead to amenity impacts

Site 7: Land south of Wootton Bassett A and B (SHELAA references 462 and 463)

- Most of the land is taken up with the old canal green infrastructure corridor to the north and east. There is an opportunity to provide buffering to the railway corridor at the northern edge of the site
- Proposed route of restored Wilts and Berks Canal should be respected in any development
- Development on the southern part should be limited to avoid a new conspicuous urban edge.
- Odour (sewage plant) and noise (rail line) might affect amenity

Site 8: Land at Woodshaw (SHELAA reference 3357)

- The site has views over the countryside to the north and distant views to the North Wessex Downs AONB to the south.
- There is a risk of coalescence between the settlements of Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon.
- The site has more limited capacity to the south due to key landscape features
- There is an opportunity to provide buffering to the railway corridor at the southern edge of the site
- The southern part of site likely to be problematic in heritage terms due to the presence of Grade 2 Lower Woodshaw Farmhouse.
- The site may be able to provide employment land due to its proximity to the strategic road network.

Settlement profiles

31. When planning for growth it is important to consider the characteristics of the town in terms of important services and infrastructure (green infrastructure, health, education, transport and utilities), as well as housing need and the local economy. The following profiles therefore summarise measures in place or being put in place to address known infrastructure issues and their timing, what additional provision would be needed to support growth and what other opportunities there may be.

QUESTIONS

Are there any other issues or infrastructure requirements that should be identified?

Topic	Comment
Education	<p>The overall level of housing would generate a maximum of 133 early years pupils, 318 primary pupils and 226 secondary pupils.</p> <p>Existing provision of early years education is at capacity.</p> <p>There is some surplus in existing primary schools across the Town and the potential to expand one school by 60 places. However, to accommodate the above number of pupils a new 1 Form Entry school is needed. This size of school is not ideal however and a larger school would be preferred based on higher housing growth to make it more viable.</p> <p>The secondary school is operating at capacity but benefits from a large site and could be expanded to supply a further 365 places. This would create a very large school, however and require further discussion with the academy.</p>
Energy	<p>According to Scottish and Southern Electricity Network's (SSEN) Network Capacity Map, the substation and supply points in and around Royal Wootton Bassett are currently unconstrained.</p> <p>However, the infrastructure is constrained in relation to energy generation, according to SSEN's Generation Availability Map. This means new generators may require investment in the infrastructure to be able to connect to the grid.</p>
Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI)	<p>A multi-functional 'Local Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Network' has been identified and is shown on</p>

Topic	Comment
	<p>the map in figure ii below. The Map indicates areas where improvements will need to be sought – i.e. in the form of functional and sufficiently scaled corridors within which the aim would be to consolidate and incorporate new green and blue spaces into the existing GBI networks.</p> <p>The map in figure iii below identifies biodiversity and heritage assets which are also GBI assets. These features are important waypoints within the existing landscape and should be considered as being integral to how new development areas are sensitively planned.</p>
Sport and Leisure Facilities	<p>At Royal Wootton Bassett there is a need for the following, as identified by the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are an abundance of grass pitches and ATP at Royal Wootton Bassett. Additional development may create the need for another 3G ATP. <p>Leisure Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cricklade Leisure Centre is in the process being improved as part of the Community Campus and Hub programme. Construction is due to complete at the end of the year, with the facility asset transferred to Cricklade Town Council. There are no further planned requirements for Cricklade • Wiltshire Council is in the process of undertaking a Leisure Facility Needs Analysis. Any requirements relating to Lime Kiln Leisure Centre in Royal Wootton Bassett will be informed by this work, which will include planned growth and demand.
Health	<p>There are 2 GP surgeries in Royal Wootton Bassett. There are capacity issues. In September 2016 the Area had the fourth largest gap in provision (-409m²), predicted to rise to -533m² by 2026. Improvement grant funds have been approved for an internal redevelopment of New Court Surgery which will help capacity issues.</p>
Housing needs	<p>The older population is expected to increase by 28% in the 60-74 age group and 107% in the 75+ age group. At the same time the 0-14 age group is expected to increase by 4% and the 15-29 age group</p>

Topic	Comment
	<p>to increase by 3%. Finally, the 30-44 age group is expected to increase by 2% and the 45-59 age group to decrease by 12%.</p> <p>Local Household Incomes</p> <p>The annual average gross income is £42,000 and the net income after housing costs is £28,000.</p> <p>Affordability Ratio (based on 2 bed property)</p> <p>Median price is £178,000</p> <p>Annual gross income £42,000</p> <p>Affordability ratio is 4.24</p>
The Local Economy	<p>The town benefits from proximity to M4 Junction 16</p> <p>Levels of unemployment are low</p> <p>Occupancy at Interface Park remains strong</p> <p>There is a very limited supply of employment sites and premises available in Royal Wootton Bassett, particularly affordable sites. Since 2011, no new employment floor space has been completed.</p> <p>Low level of self-containment indicates a pronounced dormitory role.</p> <p>Town centre vacancies are substantially lower than the national average.</p> <p>There is no capacity for additional convenience retail floorspace and very limited capacity for comparison retail floorspace up to 2036.</p>
Sport	<p>At Royal Wootton Bassett there is an identified need for the following, as identified by the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy, and the emerging Leisure Review:</p> <p>There are an abundance of grass pitches and Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) at Royal Wootton Bassett. Additional development may create the need for another 3G ATP.</p> <p>There will be a need for new / upgraded leisure centre facilities, which will be informed by the forthcoming Leisure Review. It may be necessary to find a site, though currently the leisure centre is located at the school and there is no reason to believe that would not remain the case.</p>
Transport	Key features

Topic	Comment
	<p>Royal Wootton Bassett is close to Junction 16 of the M4 and is well connected with Class A roads to other settlements, including Swindon (A3102), Calne (A3102) and Chippenham (A3102/A4). The town also benefits from strategic bus routes to Calne, Chippenham, Malmesbury and Swindon.</p> <p>Current constraints/local concerns</p> <p>The M4, along with an expanding Swindon, continues to influence patterns of travel in the area generating additional volumes of traffic and congestion in Royal Wotton Bassett.</p> <p>Community has expressed concerns regarding the impacts of HGV traffic on the local road network, especially through the town centre.</p> <p>Away from the strategic bus route network, bus links to surrounding villages are poor.</p> <p>Royal Wotton Bassett has no railway station and is not on the express coach network. The nearest railway station is Swindon.</p> <p>Future development growth would increase pressure on M4 Junction 16.</p> <p>The estimated capital cost of an Royal Wotton Bassett rail station and necessary track improvements is £30m to £50m.</p> <p>Opportunities</p> <p>Future development could provide a bypass of the town thus reducing traffic congestion and impacts on the High Street.</p> <p>The bus route to Swindon and Chippenham has seen good growth in recent years and the operator, Stagecoach, is investing significantly to continue this trend.</p> <p>A rail station could improve sustainable transport choices.</p>

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI)

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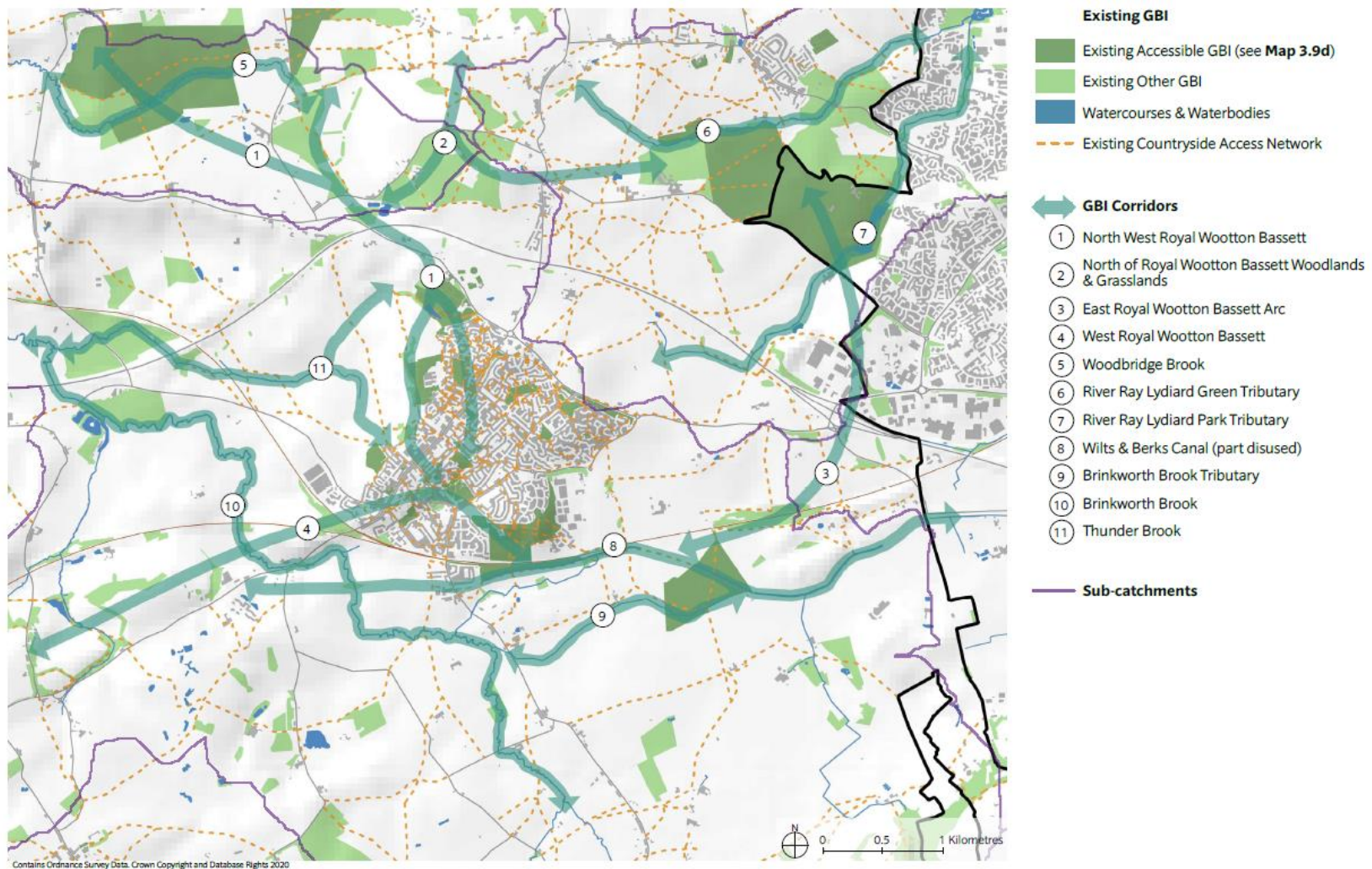


Figure 2 Map showing Royal Wootton Bassett Green and Blue Infrastructure Network and improvement corridors (numbered).

(These are draft plans from the emerging Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and may change)

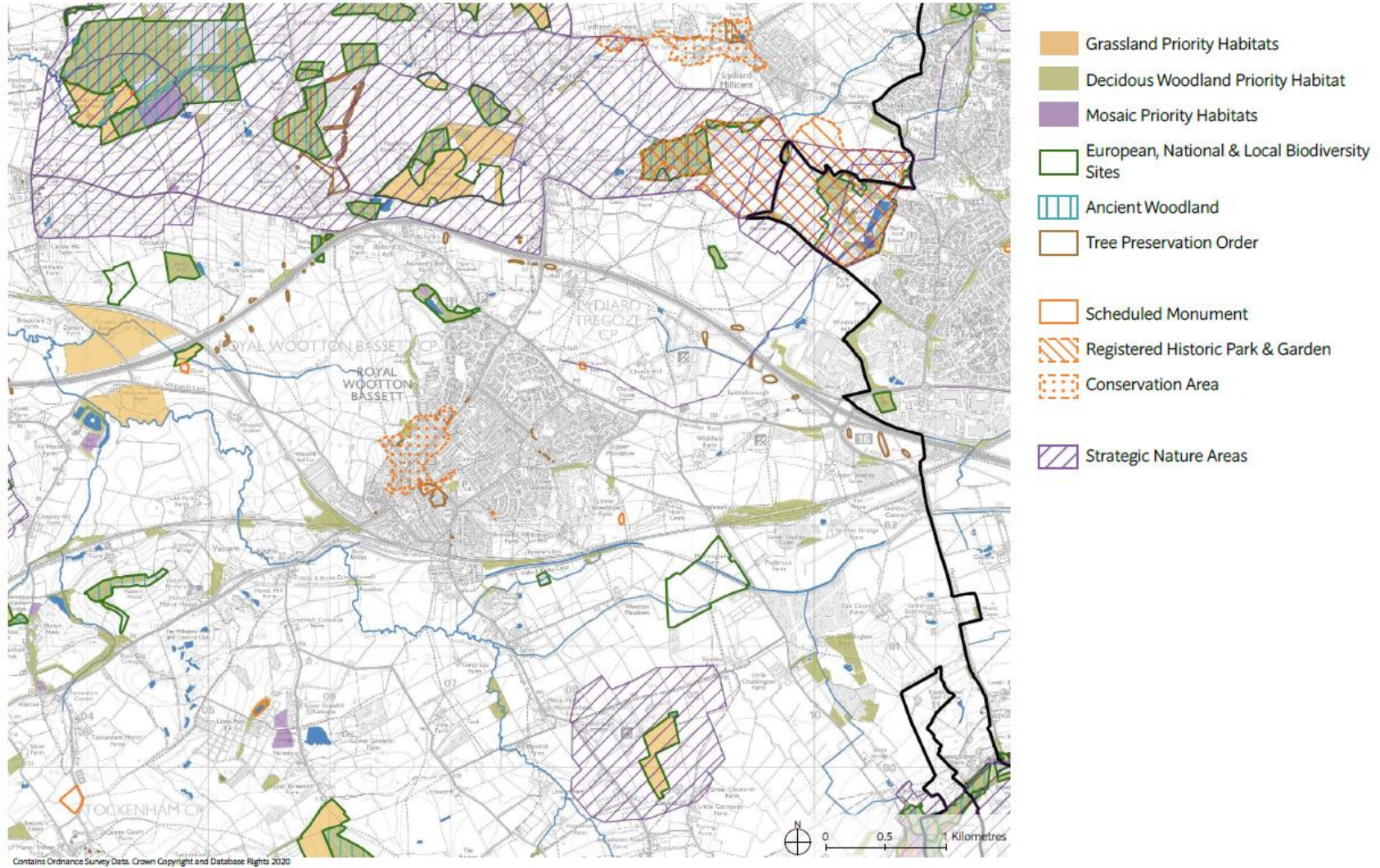


Figure 3 Map showing Royal Wootton Bassett Green and Blue Infrastructure Assets in relation to Biodiversity and Heritage. (These are draft plans from the emerging Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and may change)