

APPENDIX 1 (Part 1)

SWINDON AND WILTSHIRE JOINT SPATIAL FRAMEWORK: ISSUES PAPER

1. INTRODUCTION

Help shape the future of your area

Swindon Borough and Wiltshire Councils have a duty to plan for the new homes, jobs and infrastructure needed to support the growing communities of each area while protecting the local environment and quality of life.

Local plans set out a vision and framework for the future development of an area; meeting needs and realising opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure. They are also the means to protect the environment, adapt to climate change and secure good design. By law, they are the basis upon which decisions are reached for individual development proposals that require planning permission.

Two separate local plans, one for Wiltshire and one for Swindon Borough, plan to 2026. Swindon Borough and Wiltshire Councils are now working together to review their respective local plans and extend the period to which their plans relate to 2036.

We would like your views on the issues and opportunities within Swindon Borough and Wiltshire that will help shape future growth in the area. The section on 'How to comment' at the beginning of this document explains how to submit your views.

Within this document are also a number of questions to help you respond to the consultation.

Why are we reviewing our Local Plans?

Having up to date Local Plans in place promotes sustainable development and ensures each Council can shape growth to serve the wider public interest.

National planning policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local plans should be '*drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date*' (paragraph 157). The adopted Local Plans' time horizons of 2026 are only 9 years away, less than the preference expressed in the NPPF.

The NPPF also states that "*Most Local Plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every 5 years. Reviews should be proportionate to the issues in hand*"¹.

¹ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 12-008-20140306

It is, therefore, time to begin reviewing the current plans to maintain up to date planning policy and look ahead to 2036.

Joint Working between Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council

Local planning authorities are legally required to co-operate with each other over issues that transcend administrative boundaries. A range of different issues cross over the boundaries of Swindon Borough, Wiltshire and other Councils and the appropriate means to deal with them varies accordingly. Several issues will benefit from direct co-operation between Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council.

How should the two Councils work together?

Different approaches to working together are being used by councils in England and a number of options have been considered. For example, some councils have cooperated informally, while others have opted to prepare joint documents, either in the form of one combined local plan or by preparing a framework which would be followed by individual local plans.

Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council have agreed to prepare and publish a non-statutory **Joint Spatial Framework** for Swindon Borough and Wiltshire. It will inform their respective Local Plan reviews by providing a clear strategic context across the wider area.

The preparation of a Joint Spatial Framework enables effective input from the community and stakeholders on strategic issues within each authority area and those that cross administrative borders. Its scope and process would be less legalistic than the preparation of a statutory Joint Plan and would enable the Plan reviews to proceed more quickly and efficiently.

Each Local Plan will have different scopes for their review. Some topics may need to be revisited in the Swindon Borough Local Plan but not in the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and vice versa. The detail for each Local Plan is contained in separate consultation papers prepared by each Council, as follows:

- Wiltshire Local Plan Review Position Statement
- Swindon Borough Council Local Plan Review Issues and Options Paper

This paper is relevant to both Local Plans, as it addresses specifically those issues that need to be addressed jointly and specifically the role of a Joint Spatial Framework.

What is the timetable for the Local Plan Reviews?

To facilitate joint working Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council have aligned their plan review timetables, this is set out in Table 1, below.

The timetables for the review of the Local Plans are set out in the Councils' respective Local Development Schemes. Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council have both recently updated their Local Development Schemes to align their Plan review timetables to facilitate joint working across the wider areas. The Local Development Schemes are available on the respective Councils' web sites.

2. THE JOINT SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

What is the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework?

The Joint Spatial Framework will not be a statutory planning document², so it will not be examined by a government appointed planning inspector, nor will it become part of either Councils' formal Development Plan; and therefore will not be used in the determination of planning applications. However, the Joint Spatial Framework will be as a result of joint working, and be based on a joint evidence base. It will be formally agreed by both Councils as a basis for coordinating their respective Local Plan reviews.

Scope of the Joint Spatial Framework

The Joint Spatial Framework will guide the overall strategy and distribution of development across the wider area of the two Councils, but decisions over detailed site allocations will be made through the Councils' individual Local Plan reviews. Similarly, policies to guide the determination of planning applications will be set out in the Local Plan reviews, not in the Joint Spatial Framework.

The proposed scope of the Joint Spatial Framework is set out below.

Consultation Question 1:

Do you agree with the proposed scope of the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework as set out below? If not please explain why.

Proposed Scope of the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework

- i. The Joint Spatial Framework would set out in broad terms the quantum and spatial distribution of new jobs, homes and infrastructure in Swindon and Wiltshire in the period 2016-2036.
- ii. The Joint Spatial Framework would be non-statutory and would not therefore be a development plan document or subject to examination in

² In respect of the provisions contained within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

- public in its own right. However, it would be tested through the examination of the respective local plans. The Local Development Scheme timelines will be aligned to allow for the conjoined examination of the cross boundary matters between both Councils arising from the Joint Spatial Framework.
- iii. The Framework would cover all of Wiltshire and Swindon but would include separate sections for each Housing Market Area (HMA). There are best fit Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) definitions with the HMAs that will allow the alignment of jobs and workers at the HMA level to form the basis for plan making.
 - iv. The section of the Framework which concerns the Swindon HMA and the 'Swindon/M4 corridor' FEMA will be based on evidence prepared through joint working by Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council.
 - v. Those sections of the Framework covering the other Wiltshire HMAs (the Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge HMAs) and 'A350/West Wiltshire towns' and 'Salisbury/Amesbury/A303' FEMAs will be led by Wiltshire Council with joint working undertaken only in relation to cross-boundary implications with the Swindon HMA and/or 'Swindon/M4 corridor' FEMA.
 - vi. A consultation strategy will be prepared for the Joint Spatial Framework in line with the Councils' respective Statements of Community Involvement (SCI). Joint public consultation will be held to develop the Joint Spatial Framework. This consultation will not be part of the formal Local Plan review process, which will need to be undertaken separately by each respective planning authority in relation to their plans, but will be programmed to inform and be aligned with the Local Plan review process. The Framework will also be informed by consultations on the local plan reviews.
 - vii. The final Joint Spatial Framework would be agreed by both authorities to inform the Local Plan reviews and support the Regulation 19 pre-submission consultations.
 - viii. The Framework would broadly set out the overall scale and distribution by authority and HMA of housing growth in the plan period.
 - ix. Through an iterative process the broad spatial distribution of housing development is agreed through the Framework to meet the identified needs, as appropriate, across the respective HMAs. This will include the identification of broad locations where growth will take place. However it will not identify specific sites as this will be a matter for the individual local plans to address.

- x. The Framework will identify the overall scale and distribution of planned employment land by FEMA and authority.
- xi. The Framework will identify strategic employment locations but not individual sites.
- xii. The Framework will identify the infrastructure needed to support the level of growth, in particular transport infrastructure.

What are the objectives of the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework?

We have identified five objectives for the Joint Spatial Framework that will guide further work in its preparation. In particular, the objectives will be used to compare alternative development strategy options and so choose a preferred approach.

The objectives take account of the proposed scope and purpose of the Joint Spatial Framework. For example, detailed design objectives are not included because they are more applicable to the Local Plan reviews. The objectives therefore focus on much broader aspects that also involve resolving cross-boundary issues.

The objectives derive from those contained within the adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan and Wiltshire Core Strategy, and reflect national planning principles.

Consultation Question 2:

Do you agree with the proposed objectives for the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework as set out below? If not, please describe how they should be changed?

Proposed Joint Spatial Framework Objectives

Objective 1 - Housing

Enable each housing market area to meet the needs for housing by a distribution that supports the role and function of settlements and takes into account their functional relationships.

Objective 2 - Economy

Facilitate local and inward investment by meeting land requirements for existing and emerging businesses in each functional economic market area; supporting the roles of town centres, business clusters and the regeneration of Swindon's central area and other priority areas for regeneration elsewhere.

Objective 3 - Resilient communities

Ensure that new development supports resilient communities with the necessary infrastructure, facilities and services. Manage patterns of growth to make the most effective use of existing and enhanced infrastructure.

Objective 4 - Environment

Make the most effective use of land, avoid increased risks from flooding and respect and enhance the environmental quality of Swindon and Wiltshire, specifically nationally designated landscapes, heritage and biodiversity assets, air quality and the best agricultural land.

Objective 5 - Accessibility and transport

New development should maximise opportunities for public transport use and active travel methods, be focussed at locations which would not exacerbate net out-commuting nor cause unacceptable pressures on existing transport infrastructure and make the best use of existing and planned transport investment.

What is the relationship of the Joint Spatial Framework to the Local Plan Reviews?

Preparation of the Joint Spatial Framework will be carried out alongside the reviews of the respective Local Plans. Consultation feedback on the Local Plan reviews and on-going discussions with adjacent Councils will inform and shape the Joint Spatial Framework. The timetable for the production of the Joint Spatial Framework in relation to the Local Plans reviews is set out below.

Table 1: Aligned Local Plan Review and Joint Spatial Framework Timetable

		Local Plan Review	Links	Joint Spatial Framework
2017	Q1	Plan Preparation & Evidence Gathering	□	Preparation & Evidence Gathering
	Q2			
	Q3			
	Q4	Issues & Options Consultation (Regulation 18)		Scoping & Methodology Consultation
2018	Q1	Plan Preparation & Evidence Gathering	□	Draft Framework Preparation
	Q2			Draft Framework Consultation Commences
	Q3			Final Framework Preparation
	Q4	Preferred Options Consultation (Regulation 18)		
2019	Q1	Submission Draft Plan Preparation	□	Completion of Framework
	Q2	Submission Draft Plan Consultation (Regulation 19) Commences		
	Q3	Final Submission Plan Preparation		
	Q4			
2020	Q1	Submission (Regulation 22)	□	
	Q2	Examination Process		
	Q3			
	Q4	Inspector's Report		
2021	Q1	Adoption		

3. AN EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH

What new evidence is required to support the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework?

The Councils' Local Plan reviews need to be prepared on the basis of appropriate and proportionate evidence. The Local Plan policies and proposals, once submitted to the Secretary of State, will be examined by an independent Inspector and the evidence behind the plan tested. Further evidence will need to be gathered to support this process. The extent and scope of the evidence needed will be determined as part of the plan making process.

The NPPF specifically requires that each Local Plan is based on an objective assessment of need in order to help gauge future levels of housing and employment growth.

Consequently, the Councils' have jointly prepared two evidence base reports:

- The Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment 2017 (SHMA)
- The Swindon and Wiltshire Functional Economic Area Assessment 2017 (FEMAA)

Both documents have been prepared to support this consultation on the scope of the Local Plan reviews and are available on the Councils' websites. These documents provide current evidence of the need for new homes and jobs in Swindon and Wiltshire from 2016 up to 2036. It is important to stress they do not represent the policy of the two Councils and that this evidence will be tested through the plan making process. They will also be kept under review during the plan making process to ensure that the Joint Spatial Framework is based on the most up to date household projections and reflects government planning policy that is currently under review (see below).

What is the need for new homes up to 2036?

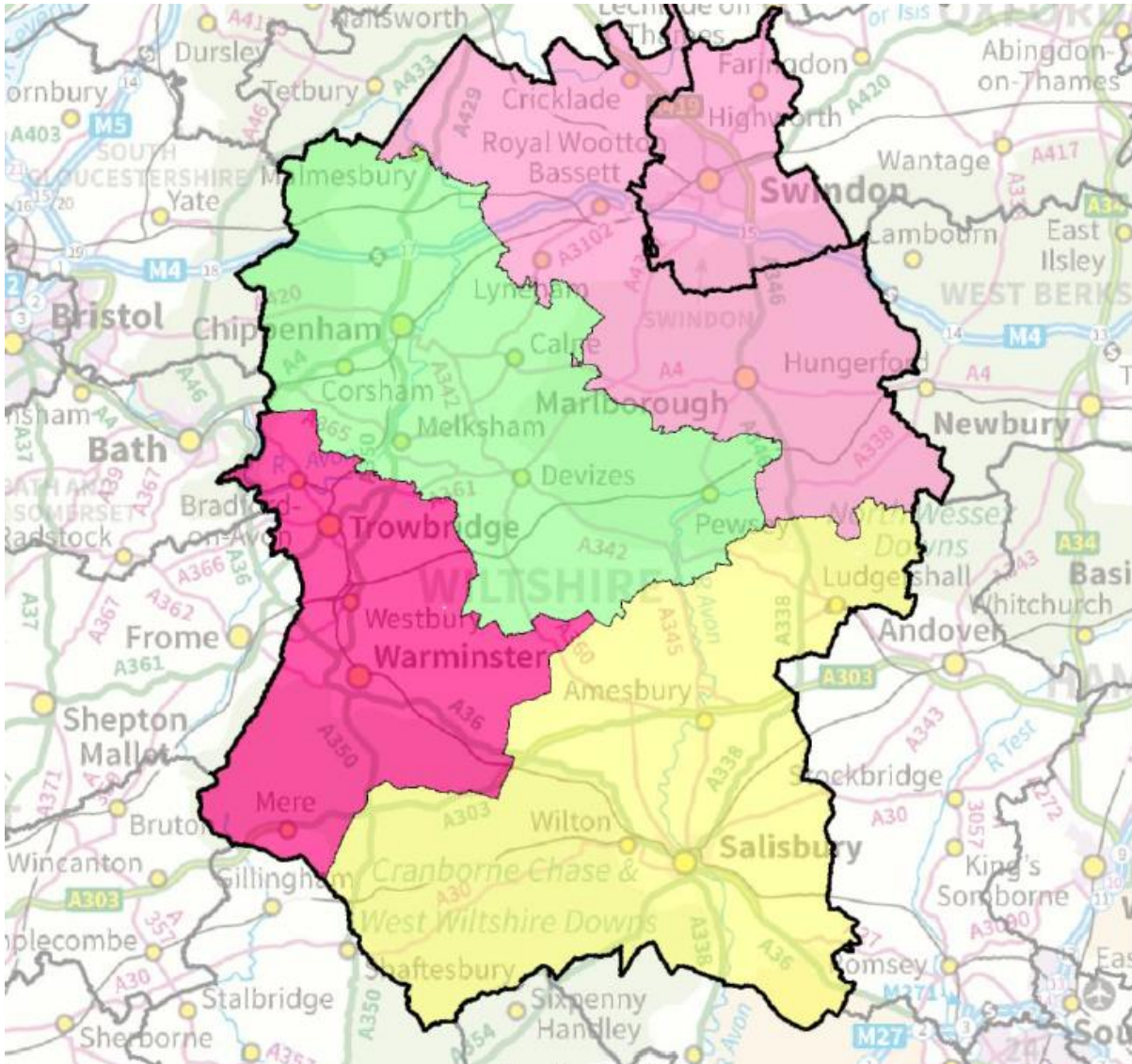
The SHMA indicates that Wiltshire and Swindon Borough should plan for a need for 3,650 new homes per year between 2016 and 2036. The current local plans, looking to 2026, plan for a combined requirement for 3,567 homes. The overall rate of growth anticipated in the SHMAA is broadly unchanged.

Out of the total needs, a number of homes are already accounted for because land already has planning permission or is allocated in current or emerging plans (together referred to as 'commitments') or homes have been built. At 1 April 2017, this is approximately 46,000 homes. This suggests that land to accommodate a

further 27,000 new homes would be needed to meet the scale of needs suggested in the SHMA.³

The SHMA disaggregates its assessment of housing need to four housing market areas, which are illustrated on the map below.

Figure 1: Proposed Housing Market Areas



³ This figure does not take into account an assessment of windfall or new brownfield land opportunities for the delivery of homes within each authority. These assessments are part of the process of plan making.

In summary, the overall total is 73,000 dwellings for the period 2016-2036 to meet need as identified in the SHMA, with the need in each housing market area being:

- Swindon HMA: 29,000 dwellings (of which approximately 22,500 homes have been built or committed);
- Chippenham HMA: 22,250 dwellings (of which approximately 9,000 homes have been built or committed);
- Salisbury HMA: 8,250 dwellings (of which approximately 8,000 homes have been built or committed);
- Trowbridge HMA: 13,500 dwellings (of which approximately 6,500 homes have been built or committed).

The SHMA projects a minimum additional affordable housing need in Wiltshire and Swindon Borough as a whole of 17,253 households over the period 2016-2036. When this is added to current need, it leads to a requirement for 22,756 additional affordable dwellings for the period 2016-2036 (23,053 taking into account vacancy). The affordable housing need in Swindon Borough of 8,380 equates to 31% of total projected housing needs. In Wiltshire, the affordable housing need is projected to be 14,376, 36.9% of total projected housing need. Affordable housing need is not additional to the total housing need identified but is a component of that need.

The government in September 2017 issued for consultation⁴ a draft methodology on a standardised approach to assessing the objectively assessed need for housing as proposed in the Housing White Paper 'Fixing the broken housing market' (February 2017). The current proposals suggest that the standardised methodology will become the default objectively assessed need for Wiltshire and Swindon for the Local Plan Reviews. The Councils will review the figures as the standardised methodology is finalised and in the light of any more recent household projections. In order to make timely progress on the Local Plan reviews the Councils' have made available the 2017 SHMA to inform the process.

Consultation Question 3:

The Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) presents technical evidence of the projected level of housing needs in the period 2016 to 2036. Do you have any comments on the findings of the SHMA?

How much additional employment land does the FEMA propose?

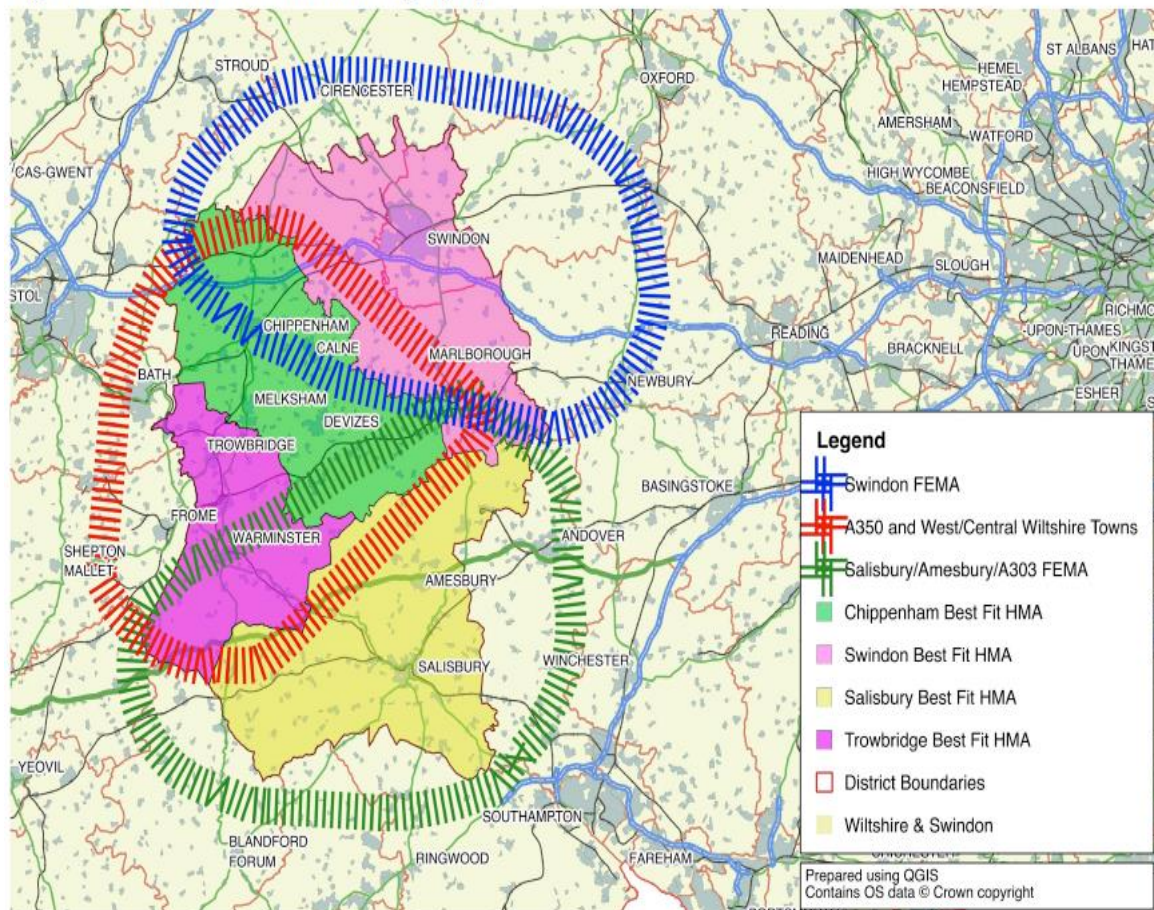
The Functional Economic Market Area Assessment provides an indication of the likely demand for land for industrial and office development between 2016 and 2036.

⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government, Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals', 14 September 2017

It does so by reference to overlapping 'best fit' functional economic market areas (FEMA). It identifies three such areas based around Swindon, the A350 and Salisbury - Swindon/M4 FEMA, A350 and West/Central Wiltshire Towns FEMA, and Salisbury/Amesbury/A303 FEMA.

Figure 2: Proposed Functional Economic Areas and Housing Market Areas

Figure 2.6 FEMA and HMA Geography



The headline figures for 2016-2036 employment growth and office and industrial floor space suggested requirements by FEMA as follows:

FEMA	Number of jobs 2016-2036	Additional Office (ha) 2016-2036⁵	Additional Industrial (ha) 2016-2036
Swindon FEMA	15,030	19.2 - 47.9ha	87ha
A350 FEMA	13,770	8.3 - 20.8ha	83.1ha

⁵ The requirement for office land is provided as a range to reflect the difference in plot ratios (i.e. the density of development on a site) between urban and greenfield sites. For example, more land would likely be needed for offices built on greenfield sites compared to those built in town centres.

Salisbury FEMA	11,430	6.3 - 15.6ha	44.4ha
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As with the assessment of housing need, these conclusions will be tested through the preparation of the Joint Spatial Framework and Local Plans.

Consultation Question 4:

The Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (FEMAA) presents technical evidence of the projected level of need for employment land in the period 2016 to 2036. Do you have any comments on the findings of the FEMAA?

How will the SHMAA and FEMA results be tested through the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework?

A proposed programme of work on the Joint Spatial Framework and each local plan review is attached at **Appendix 1** to this Paper. It is based on a number of steps which relate to the plan making process outlined in each council's Local Development Scheme.

The NPPF requires that each Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed need for housing in the housing market area as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the NPPF. The programme of work leading to a Joint Spatial Framework focuses on an assessment of alternative development strategies within each HMA and across the two Plan areas to consider how issues that cross HMA boundaries are addressed.

As part of this the role and function of settlements will be reviewed. Alternative development strategy scenarios may continue to promote the existing role of a settlement or suggest changes to the existing role. Unmet needs in one market area may need to be met by another. The alternative development strategy scenarios will be compared and tested using sustainability appraisal and by how well they perform against the Joint Strategic Framework objectives. A preferred strategy will be selected using this evidence that will then be developed into the final Joint Spatial Framework.

Consultation Question 5:

Do you consider that the methodology proposed in the programme of work to test the sustainability of delivering the scales of growth in each housing market area and each functional economic area is robust? If not, in your response please explain why.

4. SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING MARKET AREA PROFILES

The programme of work discussed above includes an assessment of Swindon, Chippenham, Salisbury, Trowbridge and Wiltshire's market towns to understand the strategic issues they face. This is a first step to understanding the opportunities and constraints to growth before considering how each place could develop sustainably; whether its role continues as currently planned or how it should change.

In combination, this better understanding of our main settlements can inform the assessment of whether and how the housing and employment needs in each market area can be met.

Published alongside this consultation Paper are four documents containing **Housing Market Area Profiles** that relate to the new proposed geographies contained within the SHMA and contain profiles of the main settlements in each area as set out below.

- Chippenham Housing Market Area - Chippenham, Calne, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Melksham
- Salisbury Housing Market Area - Salisbury, Amesbury, Tidworth and Ludgershall
- Swindon Housing Market Area - Swindon, Marlborough, Royal Wootton Bassett
- Trowbridge Housing Market Area - Trowbridge, Bradford on Avon, Warminster, Westbury

These profiles draw on existing published data sources such as the current role and function of each main settlement, as stated in the Councils current adopted Plans, the 2011 Census, the Councils own monitoring reports and other local area documents such as made and emerging neighbourhood plans.

Each profile identifies strategic issues at both a settlement and housing market area level.

What are considered to be the strategic issues in relation to the Chippenham Housing Market Area?

The Chippenham housing market area stretches from Wiltshire's borders with Cotswold District and South Gloucestershire in the north to the Vale of Pewsey in the south. It includes the principal settlement of Chippenham and market towns of Calne, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury and Melksham.

The Housing Market Area lies within the A350 and West/Central Wiltshire Towns FEMA. The northern part of the HMA also lies within the Swindon/M4 FEMA.

In summary, the strategic issues for the Chippenham housing market area at this stage are:

- The SHMA suggests an increase in housing needs. Do settlements in the HMA have the potential for economic development to support balanced growth? If not and it is then decided that not all the suggested housing need should be met in the HMA, where else should the remainder be met?
- Are some settlements much more constrained? Are some settlements more suited to growth than others? If so, which ones would be and why?
- Is there scope to bring about more re-use of brownfield sites to limit the loss of greenfield land? If so, how could this be realised?
- What would be the effect on commuting patterns of higher rates of house building? Looking to 2036, what should be the key investments in transport?

What are considered to the strategic issues in relation to the Salisbury Housing Market Area?

The Salisbury Housing Market Area comprises the south and east of Wiltshire and borders with Dorset and Test Valley Borough. It includes the principal settlement of Salisbury, and the market towns of Amesbury, Tidworth and Ludgershall.

The Salisbury HMA broadly aligns with the Salisbury/Amesbury/A303 FEMA.

In summary, the strategic issues for the Salisbury housing market area at this stage are:

- The SHMA suggests a modest decrease in housing needs in the Salisbury HMA, but the FEMAA states that a shortfall of labour could result. Could economic growth be hampered by insufficient housing over the plan period and should housing provision instead exceed assessed needs?
- A central proposal for Salisbury contained in the Core Strategy, and therefore for the HMA as a whole, is the redevelopment of Churchfields, should this proposal be reconsidered? How can this opportunity be realised?
- Important business clusters in the HMA are quite detached from main settlements. Environmental constraints in the HMA might also possibly restrict further significant expansion of these main settlements? Is there a need to re-think where and how growth takes place in the HMA?

What are considered to the strategic issues in relation to the Swindon Housing Market Area?

The Swindon Housing Market area stretches across the north east of Wiltshire and encompasses all of Swindon Borough. In addition to the large town of Swindon, it also includes the market towns of Marlborough and Royal Wootton Bassett.

The Swindon HMA broadly aligns with the Swindon/M4 Functional Economic Market Area. However, the south west of the HMA also overlaps with the A350 and West/Central Wiltshire Towns FEMA.

In summary, the strategic issues for the Swindon housing market area at this stage are:

- How much of the additional housing needs of the HMA could and should be planned for within and/or at the urban area of Swindon? How can this be balanced against the objectives of respecting the environmental quality of the area for existing communities and maintaining a diversity of uses needed to support a thriving economy? Is infrastructure a constraint to such growth?
- How can we deliver high quality employment land in the right locations to support existing businesses and take advantage of inward investment opportunities in the Functional Economic Market Area?
- What is the role of the market towns and other rural settlements within the Housing Market Area?

What are considered to the strategic issues in relation to the Trowbridge Housing Market Area?

The Trowbridge Housing Market Area encompasses the area around the principal settlement of Trowbridge and the market towns of Bradford on Avon, Westbury and Warminster.

The Housing Market Area lies within the A350 and West/Central Wiltshire Towns Functional Economic Market Area. The southern part of the HMA also lies within the Salisbury/Amesbury/A303 FEMA.

In summary, the strategic issues for the Trowbridge housing market area at this stage are:

- The SHMA suggest a modest increase in housing needs, but a surplus of workers compared to jobs within the area, should housing needs be met in the HMA? And if not where else?

- Should the extent of the green belt be reviewed to enable development needs to be met?
- What are the relationships (1) between settlements within the HMA and (2) with settlements outside; and how might transport infrastructure attract inward investment or influence commuting patterns?

Consultation Question 6:

The Housing Market Area profiles present the current Plan's vision for each settlement based on its role and function. Do you think this should change? Please tell us which settlement(s), and explain your answer.

For each settlement identified in the Housing Market Area Profiles there are also a number of key findings and issues identified. Do you think these are correct and how should the Councils respond to the questions raised? Please tell us which settlement(s), and explain your answer.

Consultation Question 7:

For each Housing Market Area, strategic issues are also identified. Do you think these are correct and how should the Councils respond to the questions raised? Please explain your answer by reference to a specific housing market area.

Consultation Question 8:

Are there any specific development constraints that you think should be taken into account in the preparation of the Joint Spatial Framework that have not been identified in the Housing Market Area Profiles? Please explain your answer by reference to a specific housing market area or settlement.

Consultation Question 9:

Are there any specific development opportunities that you think should be taken into account in the preparation of the Joint Spatial Framework that have not been identified in the Housing Market Area Profiles? Please explain your answer by reference to a specific housing market area or settlement.

Consultation Question 10:

Do you have any comments on the advantages or disadvantages of any of the following concepts for growth alone or in combination? Are there other options not considered. Please explain your answer by reference to a specific housing market area or settlement.

- Urban capacity (maximising the potential for growth within Chippenham, Salisbury, Swindon, Trowbridge and market towns in Wiltshire)
- Urban extension (focussing growth on extensions to Chippenham Salisbury, Swindon and Trowbridge and market towns in Wiltshire.
- Transport-based development (locating development where it will have the best access by a range of transport modes)
- More development at the larger, better served rural settlements
- New settlement(s) (the development of one or more new settlements within the area)

Consultation Question 11:

Do you have any further comments to make on the proposed Joint Spatial Framework or matters raised in this Paper?

Appendix 1: Programme of Work

1 Joint SHMA and FEMAA

- 1.1 Preparation of Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Functional Economic Market Area Assessment as evidence to inform the Swindon Borough and Wiltshire Local Plan reviews.

2 Revise Local Development Schemes

- 2.1 The Councils' respective Local Development Schemes have been updated to reflect the proposed approach to joint working and the timetables for preparation of the Swindon Borough and Wiltshire Local Plan reviews.

3 Strategy Review - Main Settlement Assessment

Objective: To identify strategic issues relating to individual settlements and Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires that local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for their area and Local Plans should include strategic policies to deliver them. The starting point for review is therefore the current set of strategic policies in the existing plans.
- 3.2 The 'main settlements' of Chippenham, Salisbury, Swindon, Trowbridge and the designated Market Towns deliver a wide range of strategic priorities, as the principal locations for homes and jobs, the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development, as well as transport, education, health, cultural and other infrastructure. They are therefore the primary focus for review.
- 3.3 Elsewhere the foremost priorities of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and Swindon Local Plan are broadly to support rural communities by development geared towards meeting local needs or to constrain it in order to preserve the countryside and ensure a sustainable pattern of growth across the plan areas that minimises the need to travel by car.
- 3.4 Further evidence and choices later on in the plan preparation process may reconsider this approach depending upon what issues are identified and what the evidence suggests (See stage 5, step 1). For example, a specific rural settlement may take on a more important strategic role if evidence suggests this could be an element of a reasonable alternative development strategy.

- 3.5 Assessments will identify strategic issues affecting each main settlement both currently and looking to the future. Issues are considered to be strategic, for example, when there are circumstances that may prevent growing the economy to its full potential or hinder building strong communities. Limited land supply may be restricting economic growth. Environmental constraints may limit the amount of land capable of acceptable development. These are both instances of strategic issues. Strategic issues affecting the main settlements may affect the wider delivery of the strategic priorities for the area (as defined in the NPPF).
- 3.6 In Swindon, the review will involve the scope and success of regeneration at targeted areas in need of renewal and the implementation of the Swindon Central Area Action Plan. This will help understand the deliverable capacity of the urban area to accommodate growth.
- 3.7 Issues at main settlements may affect the HMA or FEMA's overall capacity to accommodate projected need. Strategic issues may also highlight relationships between main settlements as well as with other rural settlements.
- 3.8 This stage will comprise 4 steps that are summarised below.

Step 3a - Role and function review

- 3.9 Each settlement will be reviewed by comparing the changes envisaged by the current plan with what has taken place by undertaking:
- I. A quantitative assessment of the potential to deliver the current strategy
 - II. A qualitative assessment of current strategy
 - III. A review of other strategies that will affect each settlement's future

Step 3b - Infrastructure review

- 3.10 This step would identify committed infrastructure improvements, shortfalls that might constrain growth and known aspirations at each main settlement that could be addressed through the review of the Plan. It would also seek to identify any critical infrastructure items that would be essential to support future growth.

Step 3c - Review constraints

- 3.11 The purpose of this step is to identify possible environmental obstacles to the growth of main settlements. A constraints mapping exercise will not consider specific sites. It will gauge the potential extent of locations able to accommodate development.

Step 3d - Identification of strategic issues

- 3.12 The outcome of steps 3a to 3c for each main settlement provides a description of need and demand on one side and opportunities and constraints on the other. A comparison of the two provides a concise set of strategic issues for each main settlement and their prospects for growth. Some issues may also be shared between settlements or may affect the whole HMA or FEMA.
- 3.13 The results of this stage would be published in a short Issues Paper and will include a review of current Plan objectives to draft objectives for the Joint Spatial Framework. It may also outline possible broad approaches that the Joint Spatial Framework may explore as a means to stimulate public discussion.

4 Issues Consultation (Initial concurrent Regulation 18 consultations)

Objective: To raise awareness and seek views on the approach to Plan review

- 4.1 The proposed scope for the consultation is outlined in each authority's Local Development Scheme. The consultation would run for a minimum of 6 weeks in winter 2017 concurrently in each local authority area.
- 4.2 The consultation will:
- Seek comments on the proposed scope of the Local Plan reviews;
 - Invite comments on the proposed objectives and approach to developing the Joint Spatial Framework;
 - Invite comments on the strategic issues identified as a result of main settlement review;
 - Invite the submission of sites for consideration through a call for sites (this would only apply to additional sites not previously considered through the Swindon Borough SHELAA and Wiltshire SHLAA);
 - Raise awareness of the completed SHMA/FEMAA; and
 - Ask consultation questions to obtain opinions on broad spatial options.
- 4.3 The authorities will undertake consultation on their respective Sustainability Appraisal scoping reports as part of the Regulation 18 consultations.
- 4.4 A central part of the consultation would be the publication of an Issues Report produced from the preceding step. Comment would be invited on these issues and suggestions on how they should be addressed. The result of this stage would help identify where further evidence would be needed.

- 4.5 The outcome of consultation will be a refined set of strategic issues. Plan objectives will be reviewed. Detailed project briefs for further work on the Joint Spatial Framework and Local Plans will identify further evidence that needs to be gathered to address gaps identified in understanding and to help develop alternative development strategies.

5. Develop Alternative Development Strategies

Objective: To create a number of Alternative Development Strategies each capable of meeting Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN)

- 5.1 The aim of this stage will be to establish and assess the sustainability of different strategies for growth in each HMA. Different development strategies will contain indicative requirements for employment and housing land for each of the main settlements. They will also include estimates for growth in the rural area and an allowance for windfall. One or more alternative development strategies may also consider requirements at significant rural settlements (In Wiltshire defined as Local Service Centres and Large Villages, and in Swindon, Highworth and Wroughton and the larger villages within Swindon Borough).
- 5.2 Developing a set of alternative development strategies will draw on the SHMA and FEMAA (stage 1), responses to the Issues consultation (stage 4), and the main settlement assessment (stage 3).

Step 5a - Assess whether the OAN can be met in each HMA based on step 3 conclusions and, if necessary, estimate unmet need

- 5.3 This step determines the amount of additional housing and employment land that needs to be allocated in order to meet OAN for each HMA and FEMA
- 5.4 Based on evidence and assessments of step 3 it will be possible to judge
- an indication of the potential contribution each main settlement may make to meeting needs
 - the prospects of assessed needs being met within each respective HMA and FEMA
- 5.5 The scope of alternative development strategies may not be restricted to those involving the expansion of main settlements and could include:
- extending settlement analysis to consider whether specified significant rural settlements may appropriately accommodate growth greater than that geared to solely meeting local needs; apportioning unmet housing and employment needs to be in one or more adjoining HMAs or FEMA; or

- by the creation of a new community

Step 5b - Develop Alternative Development Strategies

- 5.6 This step develops alternative development strategies that can accommodate growth in each HMA. The output will be clear, justified alternative strategies for growth expressed to include requirements for housing and employment at each main settlement. These strategies will draw on the analysis and public consultation of previous stages. They will each address the strategic issues, refined by responses to the Issues Paper, and be informed by further evidence that will have been gathered. Alternative development strategies may also test different quanta of development for each HMA.
- 5.7 Directions for possible growth at main settlements will be considered using step 3c constraints mapping. The suitability of the areas involved could be considered in more detail in the preparation of local plan options (stage 8).
- 5.8 Specific significant rural settlements may also be considered as locations for growth alongside locations in and around main settlements if evidence suggests this course could be an effective means to address strategic issues and achieve a sustainable pattern of development. If appropriate, particular rural settlements would be considered in a similar manner to main settlements in stage 3⁶
- 5.9 An alternative development strategy that accommodates unmet housing and employment needs from an adjoining HMA will be guided by evidence of economic relationships and accessibility to where those needs arise.
- 5.10 This stage will generate a manageable set of alternatives that are a reasonable reflection of strategic choices for future patterns of growth in each Plan area.

Step 5c - Sustainability Appraisal

- 5.11 The strategy options identified in step 5b will be subject to comparative assessment against the sustainability themes set out in a draft sustainability appraisal framework (to be consulted on and agreed with the statutory consultation bodies the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage) to identify the likely significant effects of each one. Assessment will identify the likely significant positive or adverse effects of the various spatial alternatives, and also the relative performance of each alternative against one another. The likely infrastructure requirements and mitigations measures needed to support each of the spatial options will be commented upon. The appraisal will recommend the alternative development strategies with the most sustainability benefits.

⁶ Steps 3.1- 3.3 could be carried out for specified significant rural settlements.

Step 5d - Policy Assessment

- 5.12 The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each alternative development strategy will be assessed. This SWOT assessment will use the JSF objectives as its framework.

6 Selection of Preferred Strategy and Preparation of the Joint Spatial Framework

Objective: To identify a preferred strategy that delivers JSF objectives informed by Sustainability Appraisal.

- 6.1 Alternative development strategies will be compared on an equitable basis using the results of sustainability appraisal and SWOT assessment gathered in stage 5. Selection of a preferred strategy will have the goal of achieving the best overall balance of social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 6.2 Preparation of the draft JSF will articulate the preferred Alternative Development Strategy. The proposed scope of the Joint Spatial Framework was outlined in Section 2: Approach to Joint Working in the main report. In short, the draft Framework will identify a preferred broad approach to the development requirement and a strategy for growth in each HMA.

7 Draft Joint Spatial Framework consultation (Regulation 18 consultation)

Objective: To review and refine the content of the Joint Strategic Framework

- 7.1 The Joint Spatial Framework consultation would be run concurrently across Wiltshire and Swindon. It may use a shared consultation platform.
- 7.2 Responses to the consultation will assist in refining Local Plan options (step 8 below) as well as the main purpose of moving towards a final Joint Spatial Framework.

8 Local Plan Options

Objective: to identify and assess reasonable site options that could deliver the preferred development strategy approach as set out in the Joint Spatial Framework

Step 8a - Identify reasonable site options

- 8.1 This will be used to create a list of potentially reasonable site options for further assessment that are developable over the plan period. The register of Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) sites held by each council will be the starting pool of land from which site allocations will be selected. This stage will, however, also examine whether

there are additional site options and will include a review of existing employment allocations. The selection of site options will also be guided by the result of assessments of a settlement's potential for delivery carried out in stage 3.

Step 8b - Assessment of site options

- 8.2 Officer judgment will be used to assess the scale of housing and employment development that a site option can reasonably accommodate, drawing on SHELAA methodologies where applicable.
- 8.3 The purpose of step 8b is to augment SHELAA site analysis with more detailed information on the sustainability of site options. Sites will as necessary be subject to detailed assessments on such aspects as accessibility, landscape assessment and site viability. A proportionate approach will be taken, with the stages of assessment used as filters to refine and distinguish between reasonable site options. Not all sites will be subject to all stages of assessment. A template will be devised for the assessment. This will state the reasons for those sites rejected.

Step 8c - Sustainability Appraisal of Site Options

- 8.4 Detailed evidence gathered through site assessment will be used to inform a Sustainability Appraisal of reasonable site options. Draft decision aiding questions will be consulted on at Regulation 18 stage. Results will be presented through RAG (red, amber, green) analysis combined with qualitative discussions of the site options at each settlement.

Step 8.4 Selection of Preferred Sites

- 8.5 Informed by sustainability appraisal, site options will be selected to achieve the indicative housing and employment land requirements of each settlement referred to in the Joint Spatial Framework. Sites will be selected according to how well they address issues identified at the end of step 4 and achieve plan objectives. Together all the selected sites will be the preferred Local Plan options.

9 Consultation on Local Plan Options (Regulation 18)

Objective: To refine and review preferred Local Plan options

- 9.1 The consultations will be undertaken separately but concurrently by the two authorities. The consultation materials could take the form of consultation booklets outlining preferred options for site allocations (using site proformas), rather than the form of a draft plan, if necessary.

- 9.2 The final Joint Spatial Framework will confirm the strategic distribution of housing and employment growth which will be reflected in the Local Plan reviews.
- 9.3 Preferred sites will be reviewed and selections may be amended as a result of consultation.
- 9.4 At this stage each Local Plan may also include reviews undertaken of other topic areas such as green infrastructure strategy and town centre boundaries, where the approach of current Local Plans is in need of updating. Each Council will consult on such suggested changes to their existing plans.

10 Preparation and Sustainability Appraisal of Draft Local Plans

- 10.1 Draft Local Plans will be prepared in the light of consultations in stage 9. Separate Sustainability Appraisals will then be prepared to support the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Plan reviews. This will continue to use a shared Sustainability Appraisal Framework to ensure consistency across HMAs.
- 10.2 Each Sustainability Appraisal will recommend changes to the Plan based on addressing the in-combination effects of proposals and in order to ensure each Plan can achieve the most sustainability benefits.

11 Pre-submission consultation of Draft Local Plans (Regulation 19)

- 11.1 Each Plan is published for consultation prior to submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.