



Working towards a Core Strategy for Wiltshire

# Topic paper 3: Settlement strategy

Wiltshire Core Strategy  
Consultation January 2012

### Topic Paper 3: Settlement Strategy

This paper is one of 16 topic papers, listed below, which form part of the evidence base in support of the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy. These topic papers have been produced in order to present a coordinated view of some of the main evidence that has been considered in drafting the emerging Core Strategy. It is hoped that this will make it easier to understand how we have reached our conclusions. The papers are all available from the council website:

Topic Paper 1: Climate Change

Topic Paper 2: Housing

Topic Paper 3: Settlement Strategy

Topic Paper 4: Rural Signposting Tool

Topic Paper 5: Natural Environment

Topic Paper 6: Retail

Topic Paper 7: Economy

Topic Paper 8: Infrastructure and Planning Obligations

Topic Paper 9: Built and Historic Environment

Topic Paper 10: Transport

Topic Paper 11: Green Infrastructure

Topic Paper 12: Site Selection Process

Topic Paper 13: Military Issues

Topic Paper 14: Building Resilient Communities

Topic Paper 15: Housing Requirement Technical Paper

Topic Paper 16: Gypsy and Travellers



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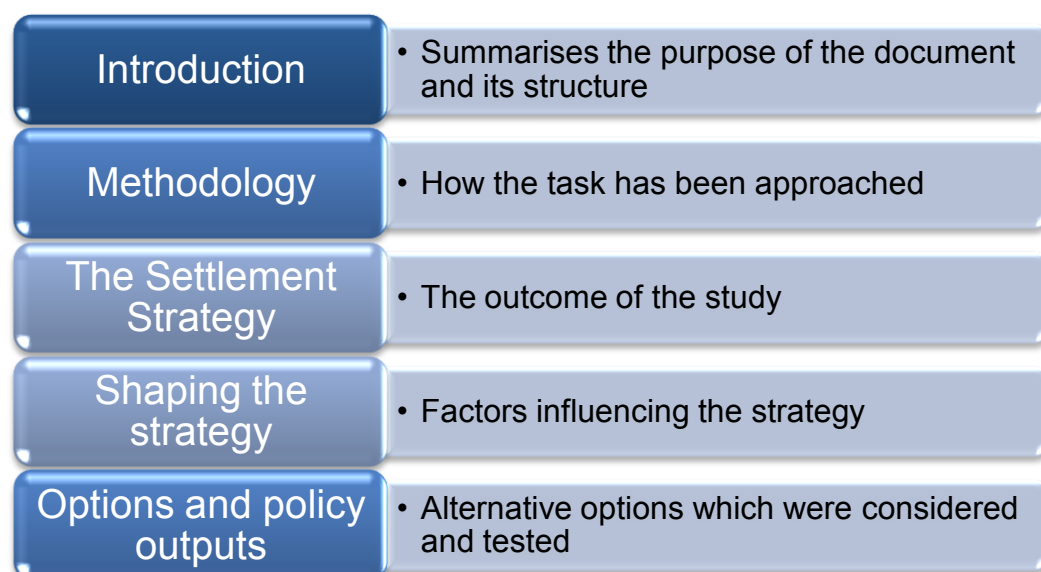
# Introduction

## Purpose of document

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to explain the approach and evidence that has been used to identify the current role of settlements in Wiltshire. This evidence has provided the background to defining a sustainable settlement strategy in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. The settlement strategy will form the backbone of how the settlements of Wiltshire can be classified and may choose to evolve in the future.
- 1.2 One of the key issues for the council's Core Strategy will be to identify broad locations for future development. Options for such a spatial strategy are set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy Consultation Document under Core Policy 1. The settlement strategy is an important tool for identifying the most sustainable locations for growth and allows future plans to be made in a manner that encourages close links between jobs, housing and services thereby reducing the need to travel. As such it is a fundamental component of trying to achieve greater resilience and self-containment in Wiltshire's settlements.
- 1.3 This topic paper has been published to accompany the main Wiltshire Core Strategy Consultation Document and it will be updated as the Core Strategy is progressed and will provide the "evidence base" for supporting and justifying the spatial strategy for the location/distribution of new development in Wiltshire.

## Structure of document

- 1.4 Producing a settlement hierarchy is a complex task and requires sifting through much information which indicates the role and function of a settlement. We have endeavoured to keep this paper as simple as possible by using an easy to follow format and keeping the majority of the background statistics to the appendices. That way you can read as much or as little as you wish. The basic structure of the document is set out in the flowchart below.



## A settlement strategy

- 1.5 Planning Policy Statement (PPS12, 2008) makes it clear that a successful settlement strategy is vital in achieving a sustainable pattern of development for an area. However, the settlement strategy must also assist in the delivery of the Core Strategy's vision and provide a framework for a variety of other ambitions. This will include making a significant contribution to tackling spatially distinctive issues faced by Wiltshire such as tackling hidden pockets of deprivation, bridging the gap between low incomes and high house prices, reducing CO2 emissions (Wiltshire currently has the highest emissions in the South West), providing for an increasingly ageing population, reducing the high levels of out-commuting and improving access to employment and quality of services.
- 1.6 The settlement strategy provides an overarching framework that outlines the type of development individual settlements across Wiltshire can expect, whilst recognising that every neighbourhood (be it village, town, or ward) is different, with distinctive strengths and needs. A successful settlement strategy needs to promote sustainable development, encouraging more self containment by creating better links between homes, jobs, services and facilities. This is achieved by establishing which settlements have a good level of services, facilities and employment opportunities, and which settlements are accessible. Development of local plans (such as Neighbourhood Plans) and strategies will be assisted by a successful settlement strategy. Local communities can build a vision for the long term development of their settlement, providing this conforms to policies with the Wiltshire Core Strategy (including those policies which set out the settlement strategy).
- 1.7 The settlement strategy needs to provide a framework within which communities can create distinctive local priorities and allows room for local innovation. The settlement strategy needs to provide certainty for inward investment about the location and scale of growth in a manner that effectively manages development for the benefit of the community. The aim of the settlement strategy has been summarised as
- 'The settlement strategy must set out policies that allow local people to achieve positive outcomes for their settlement through sustainable development that delivers high quality development and assists in the outcomes of the strategic objectives of the core strategy.'*
- 1.8 This settlement strategy should be read in conjunction with the topic paper 17 Housing requirement technical paper, topic papers 2 (housing) and 8 (employment) and the spatial strategy background paper that accompanied the Wiltshire 2026 consultation. The main policy output from this topic paper is Core Policy 1 (Settlement strategy). The technical paper outlines how the spatial strategy has affected the details of Core Policy 2 (Delivery strategy), which explains the distribution of development and has also been influenced by the objectives and strategies set out in the employment and housing topic papers.



# Chapter 2 - Methodology

## Introduction

- 2.1 This chapter sets out the approach that led the council to an accurate understanding of Wiltshire's settlements. The settlement strategy has undergone a number of iterations as it has been formed in a changing policy context brought about by political changes at both local and national levels. Early work by the former individual District Councils and Wiltshire Council was heavily influenced by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The government's intention to abolish the RSS, and the changes proposed within the Localism Bill, have had a significant influence on the revision of the settlement strategy for the Wiltshire Core Strategy Consultation Document.
- 2.2 The methodology followed in arriving at the settlement strategy is set out below. It is split into two parts: the identification of those settlements capable of significant growth and development, and the identification of those smaller settlements capable of limited development to support the communities within the rural areas of Wiltshire.
- 2.3 The government's intended revocation of the RSS has allowed a fresh approach to the non-strategic rural settlements and to delivering growth and development at the strategic settlements. The Localism Bill proposes to give a renewed prominence to parish/neighbourhood plans the new settlement strategy is designed to provide an overarching framework within which local ambitions can be realised.

## What is a role and function study?

- 2.4 Role and function studies look at moving beyond simple descriptions of places, normally found in settlement hierarchies, to use a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data. They are used to illustrate the inherent strengths and weaknesses of each settlement, understand and define the functional relationships that affect each settlement and identify opportunities and future changes. The settlement strategy, using role and function analysis, sets out how each neighbourhood, be it village, town or city as a whole, can achieve the vision and objectives it aspires to.
- 2.5 A key part of understanding the role and function of a settlement is that objective and statistical data and analysis, while important, needs to be supplemented by subjective data, and this has been fundamental to the process that has informed the preparation of the settlement strategy. Information gathered in formal and informal consultation has helped define the characteristics of each settlement and its functional relationships: this helps provide a better picture of each settlement. This new approach by Wiltshire Council has also been adopted in response to the Localism Bill. This has ensured that community participation has been incorporated into the development of the settlement strategy from the outset.

## Wiltshire 2026 Role and Function Analysis

- 2.6 The Wiltshire 2026 document provided a detailed role and function analysis for each settlement, where 'strategic growth' was proposed. The majority of

respondents appeared to be satisfied with the detail of this analysis and the outcomes of this work. The work following this consultation has focused on refining these descriptions and interpreting the policy outputs in terms of growth and development at each town.

- 2.7 However, a more conventional approach was used to identify the smaller settlements in Wiltshire 2026. This model relied on indicators such as key services, transport links or simply settlement size, and then grouped settlements into two categories and produced policies based on these categories. This model was criticized, due to the generally narrow parameters by which settlements were categorised, and because this was largely a top down model that failed to understand the aspirations of the communities themselves.

## **Identification of the strategic settlements – Wiltshire 2026 Role and Function Analysis.**

- 2.8 The role and function analysis of the principal settlements and market towns for Wiltshire 2026 used a wide range of sources. Traditional data sets such as the Census and Annual Business Inquiry statistics were used, alongside evidence specific to each settlement such as conservation statements and town plans/vision statements. This led to a broad description of the Market Towns and Principal Settlements by understanding the key indicators that underlined their current status (role), and explaining how they operate in the context of the area that surrounds them (functionality).
- 2.9 The existing community plans were a key source of information. Although, these are being updated, they formed a basis for understanding a community's own sense of place and the ambitions that each community held. Through consultation, and using such community-led documents, the description of each settlement has evolved further to represent the outputs of the data analysis, and, as far as possible, reflect the community's own perception and aspirations. Appendix C summarises the approach taken and data used in the role and function analysis prepared for the Wiltshire 2026 document. Appendix C includes the main data outputs for all of the strategic settlements and Local Service Centres.
- 2.10 Further refinement of the role and function analysis has been led by consultation and interaction with the community. Our developing and expanding knowledge of how individual communities relate to each other has led to changes to the strategy, and we have worked with Wiltshire's communities in developing the approach taken for each settlement. The Wiltshire Core Strategy Consultation Document is the output of this consultation work.
- 2.11 A key stage of this work was a round of meetings about the Localism Bill which, along with the consultation on the Wiltshire 2026 document, played an important role in informing the proposed approach to each individual strategic settlement. Details of these Localism meetings can be found on the council website.

- 2.12 The outcomes of this work in refining the role and function analysis for the Principal Settlements and Market Towns appears in the community area strategies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy Consultation Document. The original role and function analysis carried out for Wiltshire 2026 can be found at: [http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire\\_2026\\_spatial\\_strategy\\_background\\_paper\\_october\\_2009.pdf](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire_2026_spatial_strategy_background_paper_october_2009.pdf)

## **Non-Strategic settlements**

- 2.13 A new method of identifying the smaller settlements that will support Wiltshire's rural communities was developed for the Wiltshire Core Strategy Consultation Document. The new model proposed a broad and flexible set of policies so that communities themselves can decide on the best way forward for their neighbourhood. The revised settlement strategy creates a framework within which the ambitions of Wiltshire's rural communities can be realised.

## **Identification of local service centres**

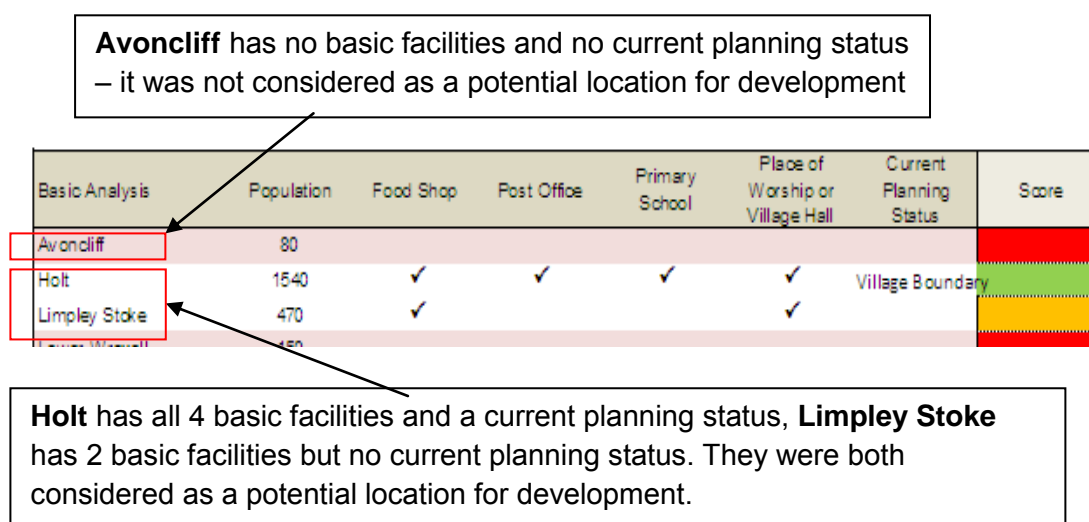
- 2.14 A small number of settlements were considered to have a pronounced role in the rural area. These settlements were seen as having the potential to act as Local Service Centres. There were a number of towns and villages that had characteristics and/or facilities that highlighted the potential for that settlement to have a service centre role, particularly in line with guidance in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 (see chapter 4 of this document).
- 2.15 Five settlements were identified as having the potential to be identified as a Local Service Centres: Cricklade, Lyneham, Market Lavington, Pewsey and Purton. The settlements identified have a number of similar characteristics; most have some or all of the following characteristics:
- A large population (over 2,000) and significant employment base
  - A very good range of facilities
  - A secondary school
  - Excellent transport connections
  - Potential to support development in the rural area
  - Was the largest settlement in a community area
- 2.16 The settlements identified as having the potential to act as a Local Service Centre were subjected to a role and function analysis. This looked at similar themes to the analysis carried out on Market Towns and Principal Settlements, although often the data available was not as comprehensive. Appendix A summarises this role and function analysis and the conclusions as to whether or not each settlement should be identified as a Local Service Centre.

## **Identification of villages**

- 2.17 The approach taken to the identification of villages in Wiltshire 2026 was influenced by the draft RSS for the South West. The RSS had a narrow set of parameters for identifying rural settlements that should be considered acceptable locations for limited development. The approach to identifying villages has been overhauled in response to both the government's intended revocation of the RSS and the responses received to the Wiltshire 2026 consultation. This work is summarised below, Appendix B has the full results of all of the settlements assessed by community area. At the end of this chapter the assessment of the settlements in the Bradford-on-Avon Community Area is

presented as an example to provide an understanding of the output of the assessment summarised below.

2.18 The new approach to identifying villages began with the application of an initial filter, to identify locations where development would be inappropriate. This filter was applied to all the settlements in each community area. Settlements that had no basic facilities (see list of basic facilities below) beyond a meeting place (place of worship or village hall) or no current planning status (either a settlement boundary or another policy that identified the settlement an appropriate location for development) were removed from consideration. Figure 1 overleaf summarises the approach to the initial filter



**Figure 1: Initial settlement filter – See Appendix B for details**

2.19 Having applied the filter, and removed some settlements from consideration, a new set of indicators was used to identify Large and Small Villages. This new set of indicators have been developed based on best practice and measures of sustainability that have been indicated as important by community plans and various other policy statements (see the Wiltshire Town and Country Themes report reviewed in chapter 4). For this reason emphasis was placed on employment, transport and access, and recognition of areas of environmental value.

2.20 The indicators used have five themes:

- **Basic analysis:** This looked at the 4 ‘basic facilities’ (food shop, post office, primary school and meeting place – either a place of worship or a village hall) and whether a settlement had any current planning status. This analysis is summarised in figure 1 above.
- **Population and employment:** This looked at the villages’ relative size and self containment. Employment potential has been identified by communities as key driver to development. Understanding the level of employment relative to population size and a settlement’s self containment (the proportion of working people who both live and work in that settlement) is vital to understanding employment potential.
- **Transport and communications:** The indicators for this theme looked at public transport, highway capacity and broadband and mobile connections.

Modern working patterns have placed a renewed emphasis on modern communication methods and rural communities have indicated that more value should be placed on good access to these types of communication. The thresholds used for this theme focused on identifying areas that had poor access to public transport and modern communications in order to ascertain settlements where it would be inappropriate to locate more than very limited development.

- **Leisure, recreation and other facilities:** This theme established whether other facilities were available in the rural settlements. An emphasis was placed on recreational facilities, again in response to representations from the community, alongside other important parts of rural life such as public houses and libraries. The thresholds were based on identifying settlements that had a good range of facilities, to understand which settlements play a more prominent role in the rural areas of Wiltshire (this is in contrast to the thresholds used for transport and communications, where the aim was to identify settlements which would not be suitable for any more than very limited development).
- **Developable land and constraints:** These indicators were used to try to understand where development could be limited by either a high level of recent development or a number of places with sensitive environmental constraints. This theme also included indicators concerned with suitable development sites, to understand which locations had more potential than others.

2.21 A traffic light system was used in scoring the settlements: settlements with good scores under each indicator received a 'green score' and villages with poor scores on the indicators received a 'red score'. Figure 2 below shows how each theme has been summarised and illustrates the traffic light scoring system.

Theme	Indicators						Score
Population & Employment	Population	Population Group	Employed residents	No of jobs in Village	No residents who live and work in Village	Self Containment	Scoring
Holt	1540	Large	507	442	138	28.8	Green
Limpley Stoke	470	Medium	80	107	50	28.8	Yellow
Monkton Farleigh	250	Medium	203	112	76	37.4	Red
Staverton	220	Small	95	517	23	24.2	Red

**Figure 2: Summary of how each theme is analysed – See Appendix B for details**

2.22 It is important to note that this system was not designed to differentiate between each individual settlement, but to understand from a strategic perspective which of the rural settlements represented the most sustainable locations for some limited development (the Large Villages), and which settlements had limited opportunities and should be subject to very limited development (the Small Villages). An individual analysis, which would be tailored to the individual settlement, could be undertaken as part of a community-led Neighbourhood Planning process.

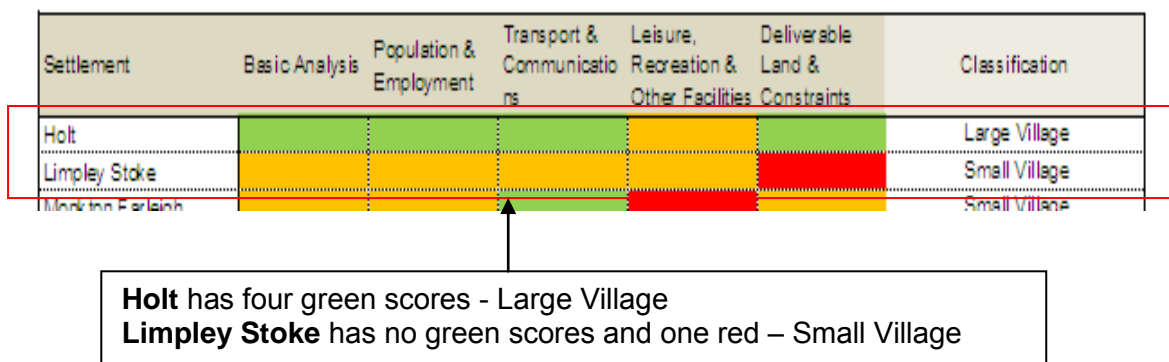
2.23 A summary of the indicators used in identifying non-strategic rural settlements for the Wiltshire settlement strategy is set out in table 1 overleaf. Table 1 also

lists the data sources used and the thresholds applied to understand the role and potential of each settlement to accommodate development. Thresholds are listed for each theme. These thresholds were used to determine the appropriate ‘traffic light’ score for a settlement under that theme. The only theme with a specific amber score is the basic analysis, for the rest of the themes an amber score is registered where a settlement does not score either green or red (a good or bad level of sustainability as assessed by the indicators). The full results of this analysis are presented by community area in Appendix B.

2.24 The settlements which remained under consideration following the ‘initial filter’ stage were identified as Large Villages, Small Villages, or locations which would be inappropriate for development and hence should not be designated as a Large or Small Village. Large Villages possessed a level of employment, facilities and services that could be supported by limited development. Small Villages had a very limited range of services and facilities and would only be appropriate for very limited infill development.

2.25 Figure 3 below describes how settlements were classified for the settlement strategy.

- Large Villages: More green scores than red scores
- Small Villages: All settlements taken forward from the basic analysis (having passed the ‘initial filter’ stage) were identified as a Small Village unless they scored three or more red scores and no green scores in the remaining themes.



**Figure 3: Analysis of small settlements by theme – See Appendix B for details**

Theme	Indicators	Source	Threshold	Explanatory Notes
Basic Analysis	Population, Food Shop, Post Office, Primary School Meeting Place (Place of Worship or Village Hall), Current Planning Status.	Wiltshire Small Population Estimates 2009, Rural Facilities Survey 2008 & Current Local Plans	Green – 3 or 4 facilities and current planning status  Amber – At least 2 facilities or 1 facility and a planning status.  Red – Settlements which did not meet the criteria above were not taken forward for assessment	Current planning status refers to a settlement having a status in a current local or district plan.
Population & Employment	Population, Population Group, Employed residents, No. of jobs in Village, No. of residents who live and work in Village, Self Containment.	Wiltshire Small Population Estimates 2009 & Census	Green – Large or medium population, over 250 jobs in Village and a self containment score of at least 20%  Red – Small population, less than 100 jobs in the village and a self containment score of under 30%	Population groups as defined in the Rural Facilities Survey: either large medium or small.  Self containment is the % of employed residents who live and work in the village
Transport & Communications	Journey To Work Service, Daily Service, Link Scheme, Community Minibus, Demand Responsive, Highway Capacity, Potential Broadband Speed, Mbps, Average Mobile Signal.	Rural Facilities Survey 2008	Green – At least a Level 1 journey to work service, two types of community transport scheme, highway capacity over 2, broadband above 3 mbps and mobile signal above 2  Red – No daily service, only one community transport scheme, broadband below 3 mbps and mobile signal under 2	Journey to work service can either be level 1 or 2 or none.  Highway is scored from 0 – 9  Average mobile signal is scored from 0 – 5  All these measures are taken from the Rural facilities survey

Leisure, Recreation & Other Facilities	Recreation Field, Children's Play Area, Sports Pitches (Indoor & Outdoor), Sports/Social Club, Public Houses, Mobile Library, Petrol Station, GP.	Rural Facilities Survey 2008	<p>Green – has at least one of each type of recreation space (field, play area &amp; sport pitches), a sports club, a public house and at least two of a library, petrol station or GP</p> <p>Red – does not have at least one of each type of recreation space, no sports clubs or public houses and less than two of a library, petrol station and GP</p>	
Deliverable Land & Constraints	Dwellings, Completions since 2006, Commitments, Growth as % of total households, No of Sites in the SHLAA, No of Sites Identified as Suitable & Available, Total Area Sites Considered Suitable & Available, Greenbelt, AONB, Flood Zone, Wildlife Site.	Wiltshire Housing Monitor Data, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment & Various GIS data sets held by the council.	<p>Green –At least 300 dwellings, less than 25% recent growth as percentage of total households, a suitable and available SHLAA site and two or less environmental constraints</p> <p>Red – Under 100 dwellings and a growth rate above 25% or over two environmental constraints</p>	Growth as percentage of total household refers to development from 2006 onwards.

**Table 1 – Summary of Indicators used in the assessment of villages in Wiltshire**

\* It should be noted that output data from the 2001 census does always correlate exactly to each settlement. Data presented is a best estimate.

\*\* The Wiltshire Housing Monitoring data is used to complete the Housing Availability Assessment report, totals for individual non-strategic settlements are not presented in this report.

Over the page is the Bradford-on-Avon Community Area settlement analysis. An analysis of each community can be found in appendix B.



## Bradford-on-Avon Community Area settlement analysis

Basic Analysis	Population	Food Shop	Post Office	Primary School	Place of Worship or Village Hall	Current Planning Status	Score
Avoncliff	80						
Holt	1540	✓	✓	✓	✓	Village Boundary	
Limpley Stoke	470	✓			✓		
Lower Wraxall	150						
Monkton Farleigh	250	✓	✓	✓	✓		
South Wraxall	100				✓		
Staverton	220	✓		✓	✓		
Turleigh	130						
Westwood	960	✓	✓	✓	✓	Village Boundary	
Wingfield	130	✓		✓	✓		
Winsley	1370	✓		✓	✓	Village Boundary	

Population & Employment	Population	Population Group	Employed residents	No of jobs in Village	No residents who live and work in Village	Self Containment	Scoring
Holt	1540	Large	507	442	136	26.8	
Limpley Stoke	470	Medium	80	107	50	26.8	
Monkton Farleigh	250	Medium	203	112	76	37.4	
Staverton	220	Small	95	517	23	24.2	
Westwood	960	Large	485	157	97	20.0	
Wingfield	130	Small	155	131	56	36.1	
Winsley	1370	Large	650	257	131	20.2	

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Transport & Communications	Journey To Work Service	Daily Service	Community Transport			Highway Capacity	Potential Broadband Speed, Mbps	Average Mobile Signal	Scoring
			Link Scheme	Community Minibus	Demand Responsive				
Holt	Level 1	Yes	✓	✓	✓	3	6.5	2.6	
Limpley Stoke	Level 1	Yes	✓			2	6.5	2	
Monkton Farleigh	Level 1	Yes	✓		✓	3	3	2.2	
Staverton	Level 1	Yes	✓				5.5	2.4	
Westwood	Level 1	Yes	✓			2	1.5	2.6	
Wingfield	Level 1	Yes	✓			3	2.5	2.6	
Winsley	Level 1	Yes	✓			2	4	2.4	

Leisure, Recreation & Other Facilities	Recreation Field	Children's Play Area	Sports Pitches (Indoor & Outdoor)	Sports/Social Club	Public Houses	Mobile Library	Petrol Station	GP	Scoring
Holt	0	1	1	7	2	✓			
Limpley Stoke	1	0	1	10	2	✓	✓		
Monkton Farleigh	1	1	0	5	1				
Staverton	1	3	4	9	1	✓			
Westwood	1	1	3	7	1	✓			
Wingfield	0	0	1	2	1	✓			
Winsley	2	1	6	24	1	✓		✓	

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Deliverable Land & Constraints	Dwellings	Completions since 2006	Commitments	Growth as % of total households	No of Sites in the SHLAA	No of Sites Identified as Suitable & Available	Total Area Sites Considered Suitable & Available	Other Constraints				Scoring
								Greenbelt	AONB	Flood Zone	Wildlife Site	
Holt	679	48	20	10%	7	2	3.58ha	✓				
Limpley Stoke	197	0	0	0%	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Monkton Farleigh	104	0	0	0%	0	0	0	✓	✓			
Staverton	103	1	1	2%	0	0	0	✓		✓		
Westwood	423	7	0	2%	0	0	0	✓	✓			
Wingfield	52	2	0	4%	0	0	0	✓	□			
Winsley	598	0	2	0%	1	0	0		✓		✓	

Settlement	Basic Analysis	Population & Employment	Transport & Communications	Leisure, Recreation & Other Facilities	Deliverable Land & Constraints	Classification
Holt						Large Village
Limpley Stoke						Small Village
Monkton Farleigh						Small Village
Staverton						Small Village
Westwood						Large Village
Wingfield						Small Village
Winsley						Large Village

# Chapter 3 – The settlement strategy

## The settlement strategy

- 3.1 The settlement strategy for Wiltshire has been formed through extensive research, collaboration and consultation. A range of evidence, both empirical and anecdotal, has been used to determine the role and function of each settlement. The very nature of a settlement strategy, a way of understanding what sustainable development means in its broadest sense, is unique to the area it defines. The Wiltshire settlement strategy is based on principles of national policy and best practice alongside an understanding and analysis of the settlements within Wiltshire and consultation with our communities.
- 3.2 The basis of the settlement strategy is a role and function analysis of the towns, city and villages of Wiltshire. A role and function analysis looks at the key characteristics of a settlement and attempts to understand how it functions with the surrounding settlements and communities, and to understand the settlement's significance within a wider hinterland. The settlement strategy, as with the Core Strategy, is based on community areas. This enables it to respond to the distinct local issues. The community areas in Wiltshire have been drawn up to reflect, as far as possible, "natural" communities which share patterns of local life.
- 3.3 This chapter begins by describing the context within which Wiltshire's settlements operate and goes to describe the settlements themselves. The different tiers of the settlement strategy are then summarised with information about the policies which accompany the different type of settlements identified. There is a full list of settlements identified as appropriate locations for varying levels of development at the end of chapter.

## Wiltshire context

- 3.4 Wiltshire Council is one of the largest unitary authorities in England with a population of approximately 458,291 covering some 3,255 square kilometres situated on the eastern periphery of the South West Region of England. It adjoins 15 different local authorities, including Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset and Dorset to the west and West Berkshire, Hampshire and the New Forest National Park to the east. Wiltshire is a largely rural area containing many historic features which make it distinctive, including more than 16,000 listed buildings, more than 240 conservation areas, a World Heritage Site and three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 3.5 Around half of the people living in Wiltshire, live in towns or villages with fewer than 5,000 people, reflecting the rural nature of the county. The largest centres of population across the county include Salisbury (44,478), Trowbridge (37,208), and Chippenham (34,827). These along with the other sizeable market towns accommodate a significant proportion of the population (66%). However, the rural population of Wiltshire (29%) is proportionally greater than that of England (7%) according to the 2001 Census. This highlights the rural nature, particularly of the eastern part of the county.
- 3.6 Despite population increases and a stable employment base, economic patterns indicate that residents increasingly travel further afield for employment, higher order retail and leisure services. Different parts of the county look toward different centres in these respects, which is unsurprising given the size of Wiltshire. Those in the north and west of Wiltshire use the facilities and employment opportunities of Bristol, Bath and Swindon and other destinations along the M4 corridor. In the south Salisbury has a

more dominant role, but residents still travel beyond the New Forest to Southampton, and down to Poole and Bournemouth. The more rural parts of Wiltshire depend on a number of larger settlements that lie just beyond the county boundary. South west Wiltshire has links with Shaftesbury and Gillingham, while the eastern fringe looks towards Andover and Newbury.

- 3.7 The northern part of Wiltshire, and particularly the Chippenham area, has benefitted greatly from its location near to the M4 corridor. The strategic transport links of the M4 and the inter-city rail link between London and Bristol have enabled strong relationships to develop with Bristol, Swindon, Reading and London. To the south, the A303 corridor provides an important east-west route linking the South East via the M3, including southern parts of Greater London, with the far South West via Exeter and the M5. However, the A303 has known capacity issues that have remained unresolved for a number of years.
- 3.8 The A36 provides a strategic route through western and southern Wiltshire linking Bristol and a number of major cities along the south coast, including Portsmouth and Southampton, although this route does not have the same significance as the two major east-west routes identified above. A number of other primary roads provide north-south road linkages including the A350, which is strategically important for Wiltshire, and links Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge, Westbury and Warminster with the M4 to the north and Bournemouth and Poole to the south. As well as, the highway network various railway lines provide links with the south east and the far south west and South Wales, Bristol and cities along the southern coast. Significantly though, the rail links between the north and south of Wiltshire are routed via Bristol and London and rail travel going north to south in Wiltshire is not very accessible.



**Map 1 – Context of Wiltshire**  
**The settlements of Wiltshire**

- 3.9 Wiltshire is characterised by a series of varying historic market towns which serve numerous surrounding village and rural settlements. To the north and west there are a number of larger market towns, while the east and south are characterised by smaller towns and a more rural setting, apart from the historic cathedral city of Salisbury, which is the largest settlement in the Wiltshire Council administrative area.
- 3.10 The market towns in the northern part of Wiltshire have benefitted from employment growth, particularly around the Chippenham area, due in part to their proximity to the M4 corridor. In contrast the western market towns are less economically buoyant. A decline in the traditional manufacturing industries has seen some major employment losses. Both the north and the west have seen significant increases in net out-commuting given the easy access to employment opportunities in the larger centres of Bath, Bristol and Swindon, and to other cities further afield such as Reading, Cardiff and London.
- 3.11 Chippenham is the largest town in north Wiltshire and contains a busy but compact town centre and, in recent decades, an expanding urban area. Chippenham benefits from its M4 location and has direct transport links with the towns of west Wiltshire along the A350. Several other market towns act as service centres in the northern part of the county including Calne, Wootton Bassett, Corsham, Malmesbury and Cricklade, although the nature and role of these settlements is quite diverse. A number of these settlements have also experienced high levels of growth in recent decades and this has led to an increasing dormitory role for majority of these settlements, and the villages and rural settlements in and around the north, with people commuting to the large urban areas outside of the county that lie along the M4.
- 3.12 To the west Trowbridge is the largest town, it is the County Town and provides a sub-regional administrative hub as well as acting as a service and employment centre in its own right. The western part of the county has traditionally relied on industrial manufacturing and other production employment. Significant decline in this type of industry, locally and nationally, has seen sectoral employment changes in this area. Westbury, Melksham and, to a certain extent, Warminster have a similar industrial history to Trowbridge and are large service and employment centres in Wiltshire terms. This area is heavily influenced by Bristol and Bath with a high level of out commuting to these cities. This area is connected by transport links on the A36 to Bristol and the A350 to the M4. Each of the five main towns within the west Wiltshire are contains a railway station.
- 3.13 The eastern and southern areas of Wiltshire are essentially rural in character. To the south, the city of Salisbury is the dominant retail, cultural and employment centre. The employment base in the south is similar in size to that of the north and west. However, there is significantly less out-commuting from the southern part of Wiltshire.
- 3.14 Salisbury serves a large surrounding rural area. The city is a very popular tourist destination, particularly due to its Cathedral and close proximity to the internationally famous World Heritage Site of Stonehenge. Salisbury is unique in Wiltshire in that despite being influenced by larger settlements to the south and east it plays a dominant role across a large area acting as the retail and employment hub for a number of settlements and communities. Beyond Salisbury, Amesbury, including a number of surrounding settlements, acts as a second significant settlement in the south of the county and has a large employment centre based on the A303. The role of Amesbury in supporting the growth of Salisbury and the need to resolve an acute shortage housing land in the south is expected to benefit the development of services and retail in Amesbury. Mere, Tisbury and Downton also act as service centres for the

surrounding rural communities, although these settlements are significantly smaller than those in the north and west.

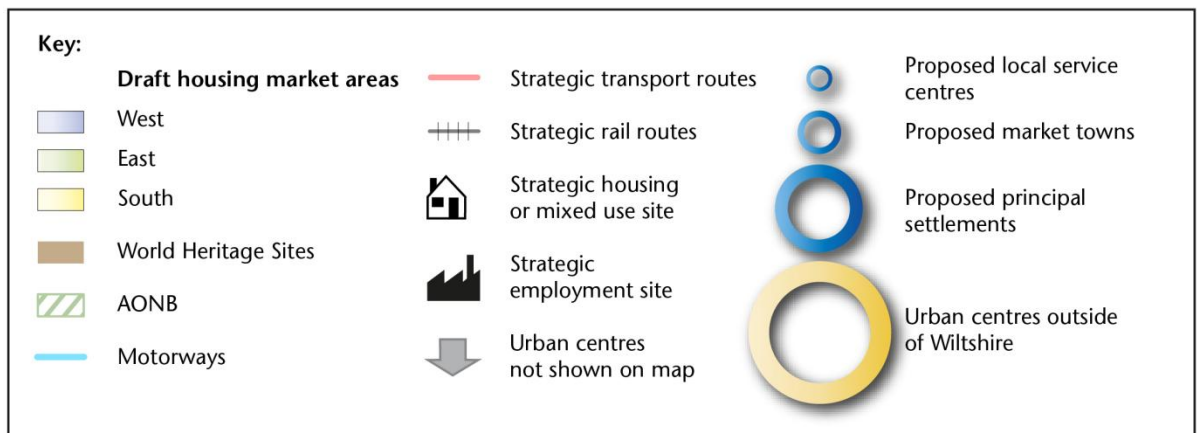
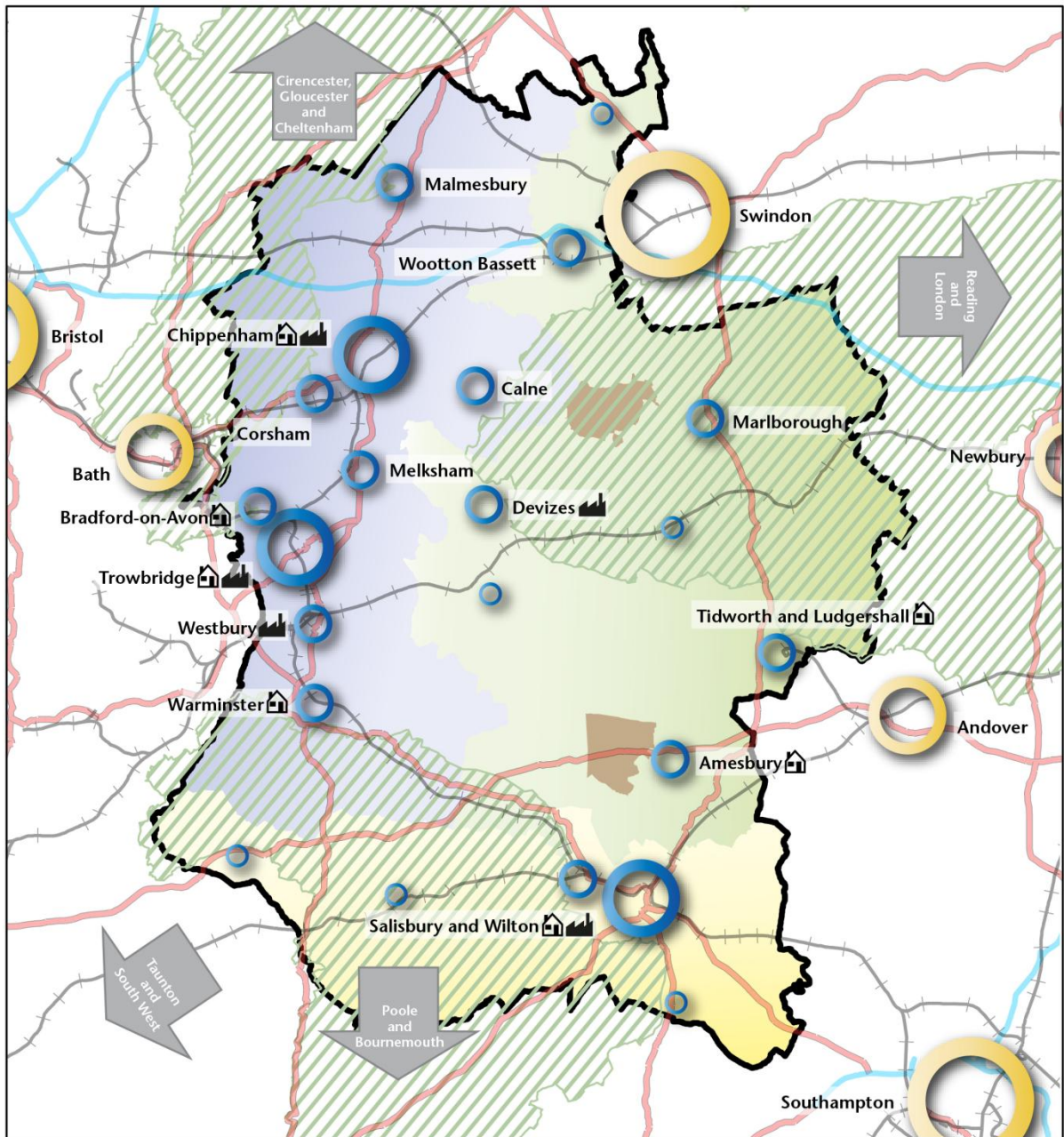
- 3.15 The eastern part of Wiltshire has the smallest population base, fewer large employment opportunities and has traditionally seen higher levels of out-commuting than the other areas of the county. Devizes is the largest settlement in east Wiltshire and is centrally located with an attractive town centre which is well regarded. The town of Marlborough is popular for tourism, shopping, leisure and retirement, as well as business. Marlborough is the centre of an affluent residential and sporting rural area and the location of a school of national renown. Pewsey, Tidworth and Ludgershall are smaller centres which provide for surrounding communities, and can be described as having very differing issues and ambitions.

### **The rural communities**

- 3.16 Wiltshire is characterised by extensive rural areas. These areas, and the communities within them, have undergone significant changes whilst trying to balance the competing demands of development and conservation. Rural businesses have had to change and diversify as a decline in agricultural industries has reduced employment opportunities in rural areas. The countryside has also experienced increasing demands from recreation and leisure, as well as from housing development. In small towns and villages the nature of employment, retailing and leisure have seen important changes, brought about in particular by the ease of travel to larger centres for employment and other purposes. This has led to significant decline in the availability of local shops and other services and facilities, and a perceived erosion of traditional rural values. There is also growing concern over the availability of housing, especially affordable housing, for local people, despite significant levels of house building in recent years.
- 3.17 Much of Wiltshire has an exceptional natural landscape. About 70 percent is designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Special Landscape Area (SLA) or Green Belt. Wiltshire is home to important areas for biodiversity, including Salisbury Plain, and much of the authority's administrative area is recognised for its nature conservation value at an international level. There are also many areas of archaeological interest, including the World Heritage Site of Stonehenge and Avebury. However, there are continued threats to the natural environment from intensive farming methods, including the use of phosphates, together with climate change and urban expansion. Environmental protection does not just extend to the rural areas, and Salisbury City has long had environmental protection policies, which have sought to balance development pressures with the need for conservation. The expanding market towns will need to continue to apply similar environmental protection policies to ensure that Wiltshire's valuable historical and environmental heritage is not further eroded.

### **Ministry of Defence (MoD) land**

- 3.18 The relatively limited supply of previously developed land in urban areas within Wiltshire has also led to the loss of productive agricultural land and land degradation. However, there are extensive areas of land in Wiltshire in Ministry of Defence (MoD) ownership, some of which is likely to become redundant in the plan period. The military constitutes an important presence in many parts of Wiltshire, including Warminster in the west, Tidworth and Ludgershall to the east, and Bulford and Durrington to the south. There is a proposal for these military establishments to form a "Super Garrison". There are also a number of programmes of rationalisation taking place in the north of the county and sites at Corsham and Lyneham are subject to uncertain futures.



Map 2 – The key diagram including a summary of the main settlements in Wiltshire



## The tiers of the settlement strategy

3.19 The settlement strategy has identified 5 tiers of settlement that could be suitable for some development. Any settlements not included in the tiers of the settlement hierarchy are considered unsuitable for further development, and development at these settlements will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. The tiers of the settlement strategy have been developed to reflect the findings of national policy and best practice, and are considered to be the best way to describe the different settlements of Wiltshire. The different tiers represent a broad description of the role of a settlement and make clear the amount of development that is likely to be appropriate at a settlement based on the role and function of each settlement and community consultation. The settlements at the upper levels of the strategy have been identified as the most sustainable and they are expected to accommodate the highest levels of development as a result.

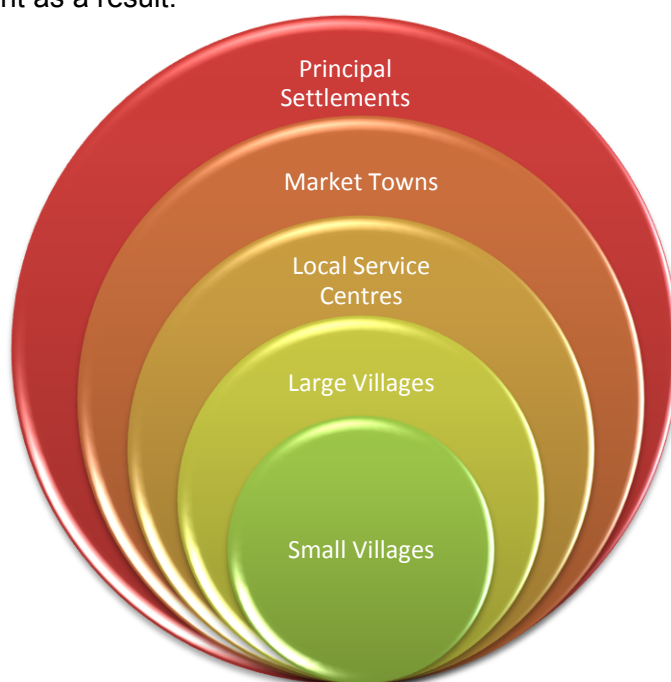


Figure 4 – Diagram of the tiers of the settlement strategy

## Strategic settlements

3.20 The settlement strategy defines two levels of settlement that can be described as 'strategic'. These form the upper tiers of the strategy and have been identified as the most sustainable settlements with potential for significant development over the plan period. The settlements identified as strategic have a number similarities including a significant employment base and retail offer, a good level of facilities and a 'critical mass' of population that provides the opportunity to support functioning sustainable development. The settlements are described as strategic as they provide the best opportunity to absorb growth, without damaging the environmental quality of Wiltshire, while meeting wider aims of the Core Strategy, particularly that of reducing the need to travel.

3.21 The majority of housing and employment development is expected to come forward at the strategic settlements. Sites have been identified at these settlements where they are vital in supporting the overarching aims of the Core Strategy. Development will also come forward at these settlements through existing planning permissions, saved local plan allocations, windfall sites and a number of regeneration sites and smaller non

strategic development sites. These non strategic development sites may be identified through community led neighbourhood plans, or a subsequent development plan document.

### **Principal Settlements**

- 3.22 The Principal Settlements are Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury. They have been defined as Principal Settlements to maintain and enhance their role as housing and employment centres, but also to enhance their cultural, education, retail, health and other services and facilities, and to improve in their role as strategic public transport hubs. This will help support the economy, and improve social cohesion and transport in Wiltshire without damaging the environment, making effective and efficient use of land.
- 3.23 These three centres are the most significant settlements within Wiltshire and will be the primary focus for development. The role and function analysis identified that these settlements have a number of similarities that indicate their potential to be the focus of development in Wiltshire. These settlements can be considered to have a regional importance, and offer the best potential to improve self-containment and enhance the economic performance of Wiltshire. There are also numerous regeneration opportunities at each of these settlements and all of them have had a 'vision board' set up to manage this process in partnership with local communities.
- 3.24 The vision boards consist of a number of public and private partners who have begun to develop a strategy to deliver regeneration, improved town centre links, and a better environment in each of the town centres. The regeneration opportunities that exist within the town centres will improve both the retail offer and the urban environment. The significant allocation of both housing and employment land at these settlements, together with supporting community infrastructure and facilities, will safeguard and enhance their role as the Principal Settlements in Wiltshire.

### **Market Towns**

- 3.25 The Market Towns are Amesbury, Bradford-on-Avon, Calne, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Melksham, Tidworth & Ludgershall, Warminster, Westbury, and Wootton Bassett. Proposals for locally significant development at these towns should be based on a clear understanding of their role and function. Proposals should aim to increase the self containment of the Market Towns, and enhance their roles as local service centres.
- 3.26 The role and function analysis has identified the Market Towns collectively as a group of settlements where there is an existing concentration of employment and a realistic potential to expand employment opportunities. They also have retail facilities, cultural, faith, educational, health and public services that meet the needs of the settlement and the surrounding area. In this way they have the ability to support sustainable patterns of living in Wiltshire through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities. The other important factor in identifying these settlements as Market Towns was a focus on sustainable transport: each of these towns has sustainable modes of transport (either bus or rail or both) that form part of the strategic network across Wiltshire, and has the ability to develop and support the wider sustainable transport network across Wiltshire.
- 3.27 Market Towns will be the focus of locally significant development that will not only increase the housing and employment offer of each town, but will also help to sustain services and facilities and promote better levels of self-containment and viable sustainable communities.

## **Non-strategic settlements**

- 3.28 The settlements identified in the strategy as 'non-strategic' are of a rural nature. Development that takes place at these settlements still forms a fundamental part of the overall strategy of the Core Strategy, but will be significantly less than that at the strategic settlements. Development at the non-strategic settlements is expected to meet local needs. It is expected that a number of mechanisms will bring forward development at these settlements, such as community-led Neighbourhood Plans, a Site Allocations DPD, or applications that include a robust Statement of Community Engagement.
- 3.29 The fundamental principles of development that will be supported at these rural settlements will be set out in detailed design and environment policies. However, in general development must be in character with the scale and appearance of the existing settlement, and will need to take account of a number of other factors, including the maintenance or enhancement of environmental quality, due consideration to landscape and local design statements, affordable housing need and community support.

### **Local Service Centres**

- 3.30 Local Service Centres are defined as smaller towns and larger villages which serve a surrounding rural hinterland and possess a level of facilities and services that, together with improved local employment, provide the best opportunities outside the Market Towns for greater self containment.
- 3.31 Local Service Centres will provide for modest levels of development in order to safeguard their role and to deliver affordable housing. Development will consist predominantly of sites within current settlement boundaries. However, development well related to the existing settlement boundaries that supports wider community aims, and is of the correct scale, character and function, will be appropriate.
- 3.32 The level of development at Local Service Centres will be closely linked to their current and future role of providing for a significant rural hinterland. This will consist of significantly less development than that at the Principal Settlements and Market Towns. Significant development at Local Service Centres must provide contributions to local employment opportunities, improved communities facilities and/or affordable housing provision. This will safeguard the role of these settlements and support the more rural communities of Wiltshire.

### **Large Villages**

- 3.33 At the settlements identified as Large and Small Villages a limited level of development will be permitted in order to sustain the needs of these communities.
- 3.34 Large Villages have been defined as settlements with a limited range of employment, services and facilities. The majority of development will take the form of small housing and employment sites within existing settlement boundaries, although some limited development may be appropriate adjacent to current settlement boundaries. Development at Large Villages will meet the housing needs of the local community, and where possible safeguard the existing facilities and employment.

### **Small Villages**

- 3.35 Small Villages are the lowest level of settlement that has been identified as appropriate for development: they have a low level of services, facilities and employment opportunities. Development at Small Villages will be limited to that which meets purely

local needs. This will take the form of limited infill and will consist of new and replacement or redevelopment of small sites only. At small villages development of limited sites will meet the housing needs of the existing local community and where appropriate increase employment and facilities.

- 3.36 Development at these settlements will only consist of limited infill which does not:
- elongate the existing built form of the village causing any ribbon style development or
  - consolidate an existing sporadic, loose knit area of development.
- At settlements other than those identified in the hierarchy, new development will be restricted and will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

## Settlement boundaries

- 3.37 The role of settlement boundaries has been reviewed as part of this topic paper. This review fulfils a commitment made in November 2009, in the council's report to the submission of South Wiltshire Core Strategy (see <http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeeld=130&MeetingId=1213&DF=10%2f11%2f2009&Ver=2> for details). At the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages current settlement boundaries will be saved. At Small Villages and those not listed in the strategy settlement boundaries will not be saved.
- 3.38 Settlement boundaries in need of updating can be reviewed by community-led Neighbourhood Plans, where they come forward, or through a subsequent DPD. Where proposals for improved local employment opportunities and/or new services and facilities at small villages occur to create a more sustainable settlement, an opportunity for that settlement to become a large village will be addressed by the Community in a Neighbourhood Plan or similar mechanism.
- 3.39 This approach on settlement boundaries has been influenced by best practice and a recognition that an inconsistent approach currently across small settlements means that the same policy would not be able to be applied effectively or consistently in rural areas. The removal of settlement boundaries at small villages should allow those communities to decide where and when development comes forward without artificially imposed boundaries.
- 3.40 At all other settlements where existing boundaries are to be retained they serve as a useful point of reference as development is expected to take place beyond the current boundary. Where these are reviewed by a subsequent DPD or neighbourhood plan it is expected that the review would then provide for development beyond the current settlement and the new boundary would again form the limit of development.

- 3.41 The table below summarises each tier of the settlement strategy and the policy output for that type of settlement. Over the page is list of settlements by community area.

Settlement	Level of Development	Settlement Boundary
Principal Settlement	Strategically important centres and the primary focus of development	Retain
Market Town	The focus of locally significant development	Retain
Local Service Centre	Modest levels of development acceptable to	Retain

	safeguard their role within the rural area	
Large Village	Small sits acceptable primarily within existing settlement boundaries to reflect the level of jobs and services available	Retain
Small Village	Only limited infill allowed to reflect very limited jobs and services available	Removed
Not identified	No development	Removed

## List of settlements by Community Area

### Chippenham Community Area

Principle Settlement: Chippenham

Large Village: Christian Malford, Hullavington, Kington St Michael, Sutton Benger and Yatton Keynell.

Small Village: Biddestone, Burton, Kington Langley, Langley Burrell, Lower Stanton & Stanton St Quintin, Nettleton & Seagry/.

### Trowbridge Community Area

Principle Settlement: Trowbridge

Large Village: North Bradley, Southwick and West Ashton.

Small Village: Yarnbrook.

### Bradford on Avon Community Area

Market Town: Bradford-on-Avon

Larger Village: Holt, Westwood and Winsley.

Small Village: Limpley Stoke, Monkton Farleigh, Staverton & Wingfield.

### Calne Community Area

Market Town: Calne

Large Village: Derry Hill/Studley.

Small Village: Bremhill, Cherhill, Compton Bassett, Heddington and Hilmarton.

### Corsham Community Area

Market Town: Corsham

Large Village: Colerne & Box.

Small Village: Gastard, Lacock, Neston, Rudloe and Westwells.

### Devizes Community Area

Market Town: Devizes

Local Service Centre: Market Lavington

Large Village: Bromham, Great Chevell, Potterne, Urchfont, West Lavington/ Littleton Pannell & Worton.

Small Village: All Cannings, Bishop Cannings, Easterton, Erlestoke, Etchilhampton, Marston & Rowde.

### Malmesbury Community Area

Market Town: Malmesbury

Large Village: Ashton Keynes, Crudwell, Great Somerford, Oaksey & Sherston.

Small Village: Brinkworth, Charlton, Corston, Lea, Luckington, Milbourne, Minety & Upper Minety.

### Marlborough Community Area

Market Town: Marlborough

Large Village: Aldbourne, Baydon, Broad Hinton and Ramsbury.

Small Village: Avebury/ Trusloe, Axford, Beckhampton, Chilton Folliat, East Kennett, Froxfield, Fyfield, Lockeridge, Manton, Ogbourne St George, West Overton, Winterbourne Bassett & Winterbourne Monkton.

### **Melksham Community Area**

Market Town: Melksham

Large Village: Atworth, Keevil, Seend, Semington, Steeple Ashton & Whitley

Small Villages: Broughton Gifford, Bulkington, Poulshot, Seend Cleeve & Shaw.

### **Pewsey Community Area**

Local Service Centre: Pewsey

Large Village: Burbage, Great Bedwyn, Shalbourne and Upavon.

Small Village: Alton Priors/Alton Barnes, Chirton, East Grafton, Easton Royal, Ham, Hilcott,

Little Bedwyn, Manningford Bruce, Marden, Milton Lilbourne, Oare, Rushall, Stanton St Bernard, Wilcot, Wilsford, Woodborough, Wootton Rivers

### **Tidworth Community Area**

Market Town: Tidworth/Ludgershall

Large Village: Netheravon and Collingbourne Ducis.

Small Village: Collingbourne Kingston, Enford and The Chutes (Chute Standley/Cadley, Lower Chute & Upper Chute).

### **Warminster Community Area**

Market Town: Warminster

Large Village: Codford, Corsley & Heytesbury.

Small Village: Chapmanslade, Chitterne, Crockerton, Horningsham, Longbridge Deverill, Maiden Bradley, Stockton & Sutton Veny

### **Westbury Community Area**

Market Town: Westbury

Large Village: Dilton Marsh and Bratton.

Small Village: Edington

### **Cricklade & Wotton Bassett Community Area**

Market Town: Wootton Bassett

Local Service Centre: Cricklade

Large Village: Lydiard Millicent, Lyneham & Purton

Small Village: Bradenstoke, Broad Town, Hook, Latton & Purton Stoke.

# Chapter 4 – Factors shaping the strategy

## Introduction

- 4.1 A settlement strategy is by its very nature unique to the geography and issues it is addressing. However, there is a strong basis, led by national policy and strategies and informed by best practise and academic work, for local planning authorities to deliver a settlement strategy based around the idea of sustainable communities. The recent focus on localism, partnership working and the improved mechanisms and impetus for local communities to create their own neighbourhood or local plans provides a renewed emphasis on achieving a successful settlement strategy.
- 4.2 This chapter summarises national planning policy relating to the settlement strategy, previous approaches to the settlement strategy taken by Wiltshire Council and the former district councils of Kennet, North Wiltshire, Salisbury and West Wiltshire, and consultation responses received during the Wiltshire 2026 consultation undertaken in 2009. This review of policy, previous approaches and consultation responses has been included at this stage in order to explain the progression of the settlement strategy.
- 4.3 This chapter also summarises a literature review of the approaches taken by neighbouring authorities, best practice and other key research documents. It attempts to outline how the information in these documents has contributed to the principles used in the formation of the policies in the settlement strategy, rather than simply repeat policy from each document.
- 4.4 This literature review has been split into three subsections:
- Approach by Neighbouring Authorities
  - Best Practice and Key Research on Rural Development
  - Key Wiltshire Documents
- 4.5 The documents chosen provide a full spectrum of learning available. The approach of neighbouring authorities forms an important consideration as their approach is likely to have an effect on Wiltshire's settlements and vice-versa, and with the withdrawal of the RSS better partnership working is vital to be achieved the right outcomes for Wiltshire's settlements and ensure a degree conformity in approach in the wider area. Key documents on rural policy have been reviewed alongside national examples of best practice to understand approaches taken across the country and an academic understanding of the best approaches to rural areas. Finally this paper looks at two key documents concerned with rural areas in Wiltshire.

## National policy

- 4.6 This section reviews national planning policy that relates to the settlement strategy. The government's intended revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) places a renewed emphasis on national planning policy and local planning policy to form a 'strategic' view of the settlements within the local authority area. This section highlights the importance of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Local Spatial Planning before outlining aspects of other national planning documents that are also relevant.

- 4.7 The importance of a successful settlement strategy is highlighted in a number of national planning documents, including Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12, PPS 3 and PPS 4. Policy Green Paper No.14, Open Source Planning, made it clear that upper-tier authorities (county & unitary councils) must help neighbourhoods develop their visions within 'a rational and coherent plan for the area as a whole'. The document further states that local strategic priorities must still be set so that long-term challenges such as public health, climate change and demographic fluctuations are addressed, alongside ensuring continued economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

### **Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning**

- 4.8 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Local Spatial Planning outlines the process of preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) and provides detailed guidance for the production of the Core Strategy. PPS12 describes the basic requirements for the spatial strategy, stating that "Every local planning authority should produce a core strategy which includes ... a delivery strategy for achieving ... [the strategic objectives]. This should set out how much development is intended to happen where, when, and by what means it will be delivered" (Paragraph 4.1 (3)).
- 4.9 PPS 12 further clarifies the need for a settlement strategy by stating in paragraph 4.5 that "It is essential that the core strategy makes clear spatial choices about where developments should go in broad terms". It is clear from PPS12 that a settlement strategy is a fundamental part of a successful Core Strategy.
- 4.10 Beyond PPS12 a number of other Planning Policy Statements/Guidance (PPS/G) provide a set of guiding principles which underpin the approach taken in developing this settlement strategy. The national planning policy documents which include particularly relevant policies, and which have been used to inform this settlement strategy, include:

PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (including Supplement to PPS 1: Planning and Climate Change)

PPS 3: Housing

PPS 4: Sustainable Economic Development

PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

PPG 13: Transport

PPS 22: Renewable Energy

PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk

This list of PPS/Gs is not extensive, but the policies outlined in the documents listed above are the main policies that have a direct influence on the settlement strategy.

### **Principle - sustainable development**

- 4.11 PPS 1 is clear that sustainable development should be a guiding principle for planning. This is backed up by a number of other planning policy statements (in particular PPS 3, 4, 22 and 25). PPS 1 makes it clear that development should be planned so that it contributes towards sustainability objectives. Local planning policy should deliver:
- safe, healthy and attractive places to live
  - sustainable economic development
  - protection and enhancement of the environment
  - the prudent use of natural resources



- resilient, successful communities.

4.12 The settlement strategy must set out the preferred location for new development. It must ensure that the preferred locations are able to contribute to the over-arching goal of enabling sustainable development. PPS 22 and PPS 25 also make it clear that important considerations for sustainable development plan policies include large scale infrastructure requirements to assist with climate change mitigation and adaptation. The spatial strategy must recommend development at locations that can fulfil these fundamental principles of sustainable development.

#### **Principle - establish the quantity of development**

4.13 The main thrust of this principle comes from PPS 12 (see paragraphs above) but it is also specifically referenced in PPS 3, 4 and 7. The Core Strategy should guide patterns of development and seek to manage change in the area it covers by using development that positively benefits the community. In identifying the amount of development that should be planned for in Wiltshire, and where and when this should take place, the spatial strategy should take account of the wider implications of development.

4.14 This can be achieved by defining the network of centres, understanding existing infrastructure and future infrastructure requirements, ensuring effective use of previously developed land (PDL), and ensuring that community facilities support housing and employment development.

#### **Principle - significant development should be focused at Market Towns and Service Centres**

4.15 National policy is clear that significant development should be directed to larger settlements. PPS 4 and PPS 7 both include particularly strong recommendations in regard to focussing economic development at major centres that have a range of facilities. Settlements should only be considered suitable locations for development where they offer a range of community facilities, with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.

4.16 Outside the larger urban areas of Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury, the spatial strategy will focus most new development at Market Towns and Local Service Centres, where a range of facilities and jobs, as well as affordable housing, can be provided both for the local community and the wider rural communities of Wiltshire.

#### **Principle - protect rural communities**

4.17 PPS 7 is the main guide in regard to rural areas, although PPS 3 and PPS 4 also include a number of recommendations for rural areas. PPS 7 is clear that, when identifying villages that are not designated as Market Towns, issues of self-sufficiency should be paramount. The focus of development in rural areas should be linked to service provision, local businesses and community needs in order to meet needs and maintain the vitality and viability of these communities.

4.18 The spatial strategy will provide the opportunity, where appropriate, for some limited development in, or next to, rural settlements to contribute toward the sustainability of rural communities. However, with the changes to the planning system that are being sought through the Localism Bill, the final decisions at a local level are likely to be at the discretion of the local community.

### Principle - improve sustainable transport

- 4.19 Transport forms a key part of most policies in regards to location of development in the majority of Planning Policy Statements. PPG 13 deals specifically with the requirements of the transport authority and also promotes ways of developing better transport options. It makes it clear that the development plan should look to reduce the need and length of journeys by making services accessible. Investment in local transport services and provision must be considered as a fundamental part of new development.
- 4.20 The spatial strategy must consider the presence, or lack, of sustainable transport options and any opportunities to enhance these options as a key part of directing development. The need to look at larger infrastructure requirements when allocating specific sites should also be a consideration of the spatial strategy.

### Principle - promote social inclusion

- 4.21 Social inclusion is a key part of all government strategies when considering planning policies. In terms of the settlement strategy, when establishing patterns of development, social inclusion should be promoted to ensure that resilient, sustainable communities are maintained and enhanced in both urban and rural areas. This can be achieved through addressing the vitality and viability of existing centres, reducing isolation using sustainable transport, managing development for the benefit of the community, and recognising and encouraging the role of economic development.
- 4.22 The spatial strategy must respect the distinctive identity of our local communities and encourage development that can provide attractive, safe, accessible, functional and inclusive towns and villages. The strategy must promote and enhance the communities in Wiltshire.

## Previous approaches to the settlement strategy

- 4.23 The approach to identifying the previous settlement strategies has been based on analysis and consultation work carried out by the former district councils and Wiltshire Council. A number of documents have been detailed this work and consultation exercises. The table below summarises the documents and when consultation was carried out. This work was undertaken between 2007 and 2010.

Council	Document Title	Date
Wiltshire Council	Wiltshire 2026	Dec-09
Consultation papers and outputs available at: <a href="http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire2026">www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire2026</a>		
Kennet District Council	Making Places for the Future	May-08
Consultation papers and outputs available at: <a href="http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ldfissuesandoptions">www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ldfissuesandoptions</a>		
West Wiltshire District Council	Issues and Options Paper	Dec-07
Consultation papers and outputs available at: <a href="http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ldfissuesandoptions">www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ldfissuesandoptions</a>		
North Wiltshire District Council	Second Issues and Options Paper	May-07
Consultation papers and outputs available at: <a href="http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ldfissuesandoptions">www.wiltshire.gov.uk/ldfissuesandoptions</a>		

- 4.24 Comprehensive consultation on the role of each town, options for the distribution of growth between the towns, and the role of larger and smaller settlements in the overall development of Wiltshire has been an ongoing between the community and the council.
- 4.25 The documents and consultation work identified in the table above led to the identification of the Principal Settlements and Market Towns, outside South Wiltshire<sup>1</sup>. These Principal Settlements (previously identified as Strategically Significant Towns) and Market Towns (outside South Wiltshire) were presented as part of the Wiltshire 2026 consultation in 2009: a summary of the Wiltshire 2026 consultation responses is provided below.

### **Summary of responses to Wiltshire 2026**

- 4.26 The consultation showed there to be general agreement with the towns identified to be the focus of development and growth over the plan period, namely the Market Towns and the then Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs). In particular the proposed role of the strategically significant major settlements of Chippenham and Trowbridge was supported. The policy of locating development at settlements best suited to improving their self-containment was also considered appropriate and there was widespread support for overall approach to the larger settlements across Wiltshire.
- 4.27 In terms of the issues raised, where people were objecting to the strategy at larger settlements, the majority of comments related to the distribution of development rather than position in the overall strategy.
- 4.28 However, at the smaller settlements in the strategy, the villages, there were some strong objections to the approach taken. The policy was considered to be a rigid and inflexible system that did not allow sufficient room for rural communities to develop. The prescriptive nature of a 'settlement hierarchy' meant that villages not identified would have no chance of any development, yet there seemed to be a general feeling that a number of settlements not identified would be an appropriate location for some limited development. The proposed policy of blanket restraint at settlements not identified was likely to suffocate settlements and stop them evolving.
- 4.29 The majority of respondents asked that there be more flexibility in policies governing villages as there is a need to accommodate 'organic' and natural growth in the rural areas. It was also clear that the way the settlements had been assessed was not felt to be a true application to assess sustainable development or fully justified in the weightings it gave to certain indicators.
- 4.30 At the smaller settlements there were also a lot of comments objecting to the classification of individual settlements rather than the overall strategy.

#### **Statistics: responses received supporting or objecting to the settlement hierarchy**

Supporting or supporting, with conditions: 48%

Objecting: 35%

General comments: 17%

### **Distribution of development**

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the South Wiltshire Core Policy Topic Paper 3: Settlement Strategy (and Addendums) for the identification of settlements in the south Wiltshire area.

- 4.31 The Wiltshire 2026 consultation also presented a potential distribution of development which was heavily linked to the settlement strategy. The distribution presented in Wiltshire 2026 was heavily influenced by the Draft revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS), and the government's intended revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies has meant that a new distribution has been developed alongside the re-drafting of the settlement strategy. The new distribution is covered by the technical paper on housing numbers. However, the comments received on the proposed distribution in Wiltshire 2026 do not have direct relevance to the settlement strategy.
- 4.32 The comments can roughly be categorised into three types. Firstly, objections to the overall development quantum of housing numbers which were at that time being determined by the RSS. This has been addressed by the technical work detailed in the technical paper.
- 4.33 The second and third comment types are directly relevant to the settlement strategy. A number of comments concerned the proposed distribution at the Market Town level and suggested changes in this distribution. While people generally supported the listed Market Towns as suitable for development, some respondents stressed that they were not all the same. It was, for example, generally felt that Devizes, Calne, Warminster, Westbury and Melksham should have an enhanced role compared to towns such as Marlborough and Bradford on Avon.
- 4.34 The final comment type regarding distribution of development concerned the village settlements. This echoed comments about the strategy and overall policy in that it was felt the distribution was restrictive and denied opportunities for natural growth.

### **Kennet District Council**

- 4.35 The former Kennet District Council document *Making Places for the Future* presented a number of spatial options for development across east Wiltshire. The results of the consultation exercise were reported to the Kennet District Planning Policies Executive Committee. The preferred option identified Devizes, Marlborough and Tidworth/Ludgershall as Market Towns. The preferred option also identified Pewsey and Market Lavington as Policy C settlements (rural settlement definition from the RSS), and suggested that a number of large villages might be appropriate for small scale development.
- 4.36 *Making Places for the Future* also presented a number of different figures for how much housing should be developed at each of the proposed Policy B settlements. A preferred option was identified relating to the scale of development and this was taken to the Planning Policies Executive Committee.

### **West Wiltshire District Council**

- 4.37 The former West Wiltshire District Council identified a preferred spatial strategy based on consultation responses to its *Issues and Options Paper*, which was published in December 2007. The council's Cabinet met to discuss the report on the consultation responses and the identified preferred spatial strategy. The preferred strategy proposed Melksham and Warminster as Policy B (Market Towns) settlements. Bradford-on-Avon and Westbury were also identified as Policy B (Market Towns) settlements, but subject to constraints, and were therefore considered suitable for lower levels of growth. It was also recommended that a limited number of larger villages, particularly those most closely related to nearby towns, should be included as Policy C settlements. These villages included Bratton, Broughton Gifford, Codford, Dilton Marsh, Heytesbury, Hilperton, Holt, Southwick, Westwood and Winsley.

4.38 The spatial strategy also suggested indicative ‘ranges’ for possible future housing allocations for each of the five main towns, with a collective allocation for some of the villages. The Cabinet resolved to give authority for officers, with appropriate oversight, to develop further an outline spatial strategy for West Wiltshire based on the consultation responses.

### North Wiltshire District Council

4.39 The former North Wiltshire District Council consulted on a potential spatial strategy as part of its *Second Issues and Options Consultation Paper*. The proposed spatial strategy was based on the approach taken by the RSS. The strategy outlined the role of the towns and villages in order to give a clear indication of the scale of development to be directed to specific settlements. However, the *Second Issues and Options Consultation Paper* did not allocate specific numbers or ranges of future housing distribution between the settlements. This work was undertaken at a later stage.

4.40 Three development options were outlined. Options 1 and 3 identified Calne, Wootton Bassett, Malmesbury and Corsham as Tier 2 settlements, reflecting the Policy B (Market Town) criteria in the emerging RSS. Option 2 identified Calne as the only Tier 2 settlement. The *Second Issues and Options Consultation Paper* also identified a range of settlements to be considered as Tier 3, reflecting Policy C criteria. As a minimum, this paper identified Ashton Keynes, Box, Colerne, Cricklade, Derry Hill, Hullavington, Lyneham, Purton and Sherston within this category. It also considered that the settlements of Wootton Bassett, Cricklade, Lyneham and Purton performed a dormitory function in relation to Swindon and that this should not be exacerbated.

## Approaches by neighbouring authorities

4.41 The next part of this chapter summarises the approach adopted by neighbouring authorities. There were 5 authorities chosen and they have all submitted their Core Strategies (although Test Valley’s has been withdrawn) and are authorities in both the former South West and South East regions, thus their development was influenced by different Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). For the purposes of this paper the documents listed below are the most relevant, however as with the Wiltshire Core Strategy a raft of documents have been produced by each authority and details can be found on their websites. These summaries are in two parts summarising the approach to identifying the settlement strategy and the policy outputs in terms of settlement boundaries and types of development.

4.42 The approaches by the neighbouring authorities are set out in the tables below. Local Authorities analysed for this topic paper are;

- Bath and North East Somerset (BANES)
- South Wiltshire Core Strategy (former Salisbury District Council)
- South Gloucester Council
- Test Valley District Council

<b>BANES</b> (Settlement Classification Paper October 2009, Draft Core Strategy Jan 2011)
<b>Overview</b> The main paper setting out the strategy was written in 2009 to support the Spatial Option Consultation in autumn 2009. In autumn 2010, a draft Core Strategy was produced which has since been submitted for inspection.
<b>Settlement Strategy</b> Bath is identified as the main settlement in the District. This is consistent with the analysis from the RSS and has been retained for the purposes of the draft Core Strategy. Keynsham and Midsomer

Norton & Radstock were classified as settlements capable of being the focus of new housing, jobs and community facilities. In the rural areas two types of smaller settlements were identified as capable of limited development. However development will be focused at villages under policy 'RA1'. Villages define in policy RA1 have been identified as having at a at least 3 of the following key facilities within the village: post office, school, community meeting place and convenience shop; at least a daily Monday-Saturday public transport service to main centres, and that local community support for the principle of development can be demonstrated. Outside these villages, development is more restricted.

**Methodology**

In terms of the larger settlements a critique of the fundamental requirements of the RSS was included to demonstrate how these settlements were identified as capable of delivering development. This has not be re-examined in light of the RSS being withdrawn as the settlements have the draft core strategy outlines that the policy is still consistent with national policy.

The smaller settlements were identified through an assessment of the facilities, sustainable transport and where appropriate identified constraints that could not be overcome. The type of facilities was split into key facilities and other facilities. Settlements needed to have at least 3 key facilities and a range of other facilities as well as comparatively good levels of transport options. In response to the consultation and the abolition of the RSS the number of settlement identified as smaller settlements has been expanded.

**Type of Development at Rural Settlements**

The Core Strategy policy simply says that proposals for residential and employment development of a scale, character and appearance appropriate to the village and its setting. It says that development will be acceptable in and adjoining to current housing development boundaries. Developments of up to and around 30 dwellings are seen as acceptable at larger villages (RA1 settlements), limited infill is allowed at other settlements identified.

**Settlement Boundaries**

Development in rural areas is expected to come forward through a detailed 'Placemaking Plan'. Until this time the 'Housing Development Boundaries' will be saved from the existing Local Plan and reviewed as part of the 'Placemaking Plan'.

**Salisbury District Council** (Topic Paper 3 including 2 additional addenda SDC, June 2007, September 2008 & November 2009)

**Overview**

The original topic paper was written in 2007, since then there have been two addendums in 2008 & 2009. The latest paper was produced for the draft Core Strategy which was submitted in July 2009, the Core Strategy is still under public examination due to the withdrawal of the RSS.

**Settlement Strategy**

The hierarchy defined five levels of settlements. Salisbury and Amesbury, including the garrison towns of Bulford, Durrington & Larkhill, will absorb the majority of growth in the former district. The settlement strategy then identified three type of rural settlement below these two strategic settlements. These were designated as local service centres, large villages and small villages. On submission the overall strategy was guided by the RSS, although there were key differences in defining a number of subcategories outside the main settlement described in the RSS.

**Methodology**

Although the approach modified RSS policies, the topic papers begin by looking and population and facilities for all of the settlements. Early in the process Salisbury and Amesbury are identified as the strategic settlements (the location of significant growth) and the local service centres are identified.

The first topic paper identifies the population and facilities for the rural settlements and then the first addendum goes on to refine this approach and look at potential need. In the second paper a small number of settlements are identified in rural areas, this is refined and expanded in the final addendum in response to consultation. The different levels of the hierarchy were ultimately identified using a mix between the response to consultations and to the number of facilities present.

**Type of Development at Rural Settlements**

The local service centres were considered large villages rather than towns (with the exception of Wilton) and therefore the scale of growth will reflect their constraints as well as the opportunities they offer for sustainable development. Detailed explanation of their role and function was included in

separate chapters in the core strategy. At large villages a limited level of development was considered appropriate where levels of growth proportionate to their size, character and environment will be supported in these settlements. The smaller villages were restricted to only infill and exception development. At any settlements not listed new growth and hence new development was not be permitted.

**Settlement Boundaries**

Settlements with housing policy boundaries that have been identified in the strategy will keep current boundaries, settlements not listed will have boundaries removed.

**South Gloucester Council (Issues and Options 2008 & Draft Core Strategy 2011)**

**Overview**

The South Gloucestershire Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2011. The main document in terms of the settlement strategy was published in 2008 as part of the Issues & Options consultation. It was updated in 2011 to reflect the abolition of the RSS and changes in the national planning context.

**Settlement Strategy**

A large part of the Bristol Urban Area lies within South Gloucester and this is where the majority of development will take place. Beyond the Bristol fringe the towns of Yate/Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury are identified as strategic settlements. There is no distinction of rural settlements and all settlements classed below the strategic centres are identified as villages. The strategy has remained the same since the withdrawal of the RSS.

**Methodology**

Every settlement in South Gloucestershire has undergone a detailed analysis including population, range of facilities, transport (including car availability, travel to work data, public transport) health, education, economic indicators, crime and open space. There is a detailed profile of each settlement included in the settlement paper. However, the majority of the data used is from the census and supplemented with various studies and data sets held by the council. The work is the most thorough analysis of each individual settlement of the papers reviewed, although there is no specific definition to define where rural development is appropriate.

**Type of Development at Rural Settlements**

At the settlement defined at villages small scale development will take place within the defined settlement boundaries of villages. Settlements washed over by the Green Belt will be limited in scale and be no more than infilling. In villages and other settlements without defined settlement boundaries, and in the open countryside, new development will be strictly limited.

**Settlement Boundaries**

Defined settlement boundaries will be maintained around rural settlements for the first 5 years of the Core Strategy. A review of the approach to the distribution of housing in the rural areas will be undertaken which will include engagement with the local community and other stakeholders/parties and slowly these boundaries will be renewed or replaced.

**Test Valley (Housing Topic Paper 18 2008 & draft Core Strategy 2009)**

**Overview**

The Test Valley Core strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2009. However it was subsequently withdrawn. The main paper concerning the settlement strategy is the Settlement Hierarchy Topic 18 published in January 2008 alongside a Preferred Options consultation.

**Settlement Strategy**

The strategy describes four types of settlement that it considers suitable for development. Andover and Romsey are considered the major centres alongside a number of Key Service Centres that are considered strategic settlements. Key Service Centres are considered suitable for strategic employment development only. Below the strategic settlements two types of rural settlement are identified key rural villages and small rural villages. There is no distinction in terms of development but due to a review of boundaries (see below) different levels of development are likely to be appropriate.

**Methodology**

A broad criterion was used in assessing the individual sustainability of settlements. This used 8 indicators including population, a range of facilities including health and leisure facilities beyond the basic facilities and local job opportunities (a job ratio based on the census). Generally the level of facilities, transport and job ratio gave rise to identification of a settlements status. There were a number of exceptions to this rule.

**Type of Development at Rural Settlements**

Infill opportunities to be defined through a review of the settlement and village boundaries in the Rural Settlements Area Action Plan. All other settlements Open Countryside Exception sites, replacement Dwellings
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<b>Settlement Boundaries</b>
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Review of settlement boundaries, windfall, exception sites, replacement dwellings.
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## Conclusions of the neighbouring authorities

### Settlement strategies and methodology

4.43 In terms of the strategy while there are some differences the strategies invariably promote the majority of development at only the largest of settlements as these are seen as the most sustainable settlements with the best opportunities to deliver growth and development. At smaller settlements there are a number of different approaches although there is often a clear difference between settlements that are seen as rural centres, those settlements with a limited level of services and facilities, and smaller less sustainable settlements

4.44 The majority of the authorities have used a bespoke analysis of facilities, and more often than not transport, to indicate settlements that would be the most sustainable locations. The complexities of the approaches varied, although many included the basic facilities model as either a basis for assessment or a major part of the assessment

### Type of development and settlement boundaries

4.45 The general theme was on broad definitions of development. Only BANES have put a figure on what limited development means. The various hierarchies did not tend to differentiate and only made a definition between limited and very limited development. The majority of approaches by neighbouring authorities with regards to settlement boundaries was simply to retain those that existed.

## Key research reports and best practice

4.46 A number of exemplars in rural development were reviewed as part of the process of preparing the settlement strategy. The most influential have been summarised below. These reports informed the policies and helped set out the principles for assessing development in rural areas. The reports summarised have challenged conventional thinking about rural issues and stimulated debate about the best way forward for policy and assessment of rural areas.

4.47 The reports summarised are:

- Mathew Taylor Report
- Planning for the Role and Future of Smaller Settlement in Cornwall
- Shropshire rural sustainable Communities

<b>Mathew Taylor Report (2007)</b>
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<b>Overview</b>
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Published in 2007 this report set out 48 recommendations about sustainable development in rural areas. The report has been subject to wide acclaim from numerous bodies including the Commission for Rural Communities who also contributed to the report. The report advocates development that will meet the social, economic and environmental needs of rural communities.
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The report defines rural areas as those as defined by the Government's 'rural/urban' definition and one of the recommendations promotes the use of this definition by local policy makers. The recommendations in the report cover all aspects of rural life from markets towns to the smallest rural settlements. The report also includes a number of definitions and summaries of rural life which are designed to assist local policy makers in understanding their rural communities. The report is explicit
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that fundamental changes in policy are needed to ensure the survival of rural communities.

**Policy Recommendations**

The report helps identify what we understand and define to be rural communities, for example it defines large rural settlements as those settlements with a population of over 3,000. Other examples of rural issues that are given some clarification in the report are the nature of affordable housing in rural areas, the importance of employment and the changing nature of the economy in rural areas.

The recommendations are split into 5 themes, two of which are relevant to this policy review – Living working villages: community-led affordable housing and living, working rural economies. These themes cover recommendations 12 through to 30. The report recommends that at all rural settlements where sustainable development is located opportunities should be pursued beyond the current settlement. This will be vital in providing for all types of housing in rural area and better economic prospects for these communities. The recommendations also cover a raft of issues from delivery of housing to unblocking the planning system.

**Lessons**

The report has been seen as a fundamental event in rural policy. Essentially the report argues against policies of blanket restraint and does not believe that these policies have provided the right balance between protection and development. In terms of the settlement strategy it is clear that more flexibility needs to be provided in rural areas to give those communities the best chance of retaining unique aspects of rural life. Issues such as affordable housing delivery and development of alternative economies, away from traditional rural sectors, is key to maintaining thriving rural communities.

The Taylor reports notes that there is no such thing as an unsustainable rural community. The scale of the challenge is certainly greater for some than for others, but there needs to be an answer for all.

**Planning for the Role and Future of Smaller Settlement in Cornwall (2009)**

**Overview**

This report set out exploring planning for smaller settlements in the LDF in Cornwall. The report chose to define the objectives by using the vision as set within that of The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy , which has four leading principles:

- Living Within Environmental Limits
- Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society
- Achieving a Sustainable Economy
- Promoting Good Governance.

**Policy Recommendations**

The report identified five broad types of smaller settlement function in Cornwall:

- town with strong hinterland
- town with weak hinterland
- clusters of smaller settlements
- unconnected smaller settlements
- settlements under urban influence.

The report concluded that to achieve greater localisation approaches to each type of settlement will need to have regard to that settlements function.

A broad set of spatial objectives and guidance for the distribution of development across each of the five broad types of smaller settlement was recommended

This involved a three tier approach:

- an overarching strategic objective for small settlements of greater functional localisation in order to achieve more sustainable communities
- the spatial application of this objective through the five functional typologies
- a policy 'menu' setting out the detailed outcomes required to achieve more sustainable communities.
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**Lessons**

Ultimately, the report concludes with the policies in the Core Strategy are unlikely to 'tie all of the loose ends required for delivering sustainable smaller settlements in Cornwall'. The report looks to the Core Strategy to provide a framework for rural communities to develop in line with their defined role. It recommends further work as spatial planning cannot make smaller settlements sustainable on its

own, and neighbourhood plans, or other types of plan, will need to provide the right policy environment for sustainable rural development.

### **Positive Planning with Rural Communities – Lessons from the Shropshire LDF (2010)**

#### **Overview**

This report concluded on work by Shropshire Council that looked to develop a more sophisticated approach to the assessment and understanding of the sustainability – current and future - of rural settlements. A tool kit was designed as a means of reaching a common understanding about the performance of local settlements against a 'benchmark' of sustainability. The aim was to provide a robust and collaboratively generated local evidence base that would provide a framework for dialogue and assessing the likely impact of change, or lack of change on the future sustainability of place.

#### **Policy Recommendations**

The report used a set of indicators to assess sustainability based on the work completed at the Bristol Accord. The Accord used 8 characteristics to describe sustainable communities:

- Active with a strong sense of community.
- Well run and well represented.
- Well served in terms of facilities and services.
- Well connected in terms of low carbon transport and ICT.
- Care for their environment and live within its limits.
- Well designed with appropriate and affordable housing.
- Support local businesses and provide opportunities for local employment.
- Fair and inclusive for everyone.

The recommendations were designed to address the 'sustainability trap' and embed localism into the process. The process was described as a way of enabling self determination by the community and using the toolkit as a means of deciding how best rural development could be located collaboratively.

#### **Lessons**

The report has some interesting conclusions about the process. In view of this work it is important to recognise that the community view is only part of the overall assessment and a need to factor in local "lobbying" against policy was part of this collaboration with communities. In using a toolkit there was a need to be flexible and focus on the outcomes while resist temptation to focus on solutions.

The process also gave rise to the conclusion that the core strategy could only deliver a framework within which assessments like this could further refine the size and type of development in rural areas. This level of detailed work would need to be carried out as a follow up to Core Strategy work as the ultimately despite a detailed picture emerging of each individual settlement this analysis did not add policy outcomes of the Core Strategy

## **Key Wiltshire documents**

4.48 Two key pieces of Wiltshire research have heavily influence the policy outputs of this work. These two documents provide a comprehensive summary of Wiltshire's rural areas. They provide both the statistical and quantitative data and the qualitative analysis of the subjective data. The two reports are summarised below.

### **Wiltshire Town & Country Themes**

#### **Overview**

This report was a comprehensive analysis of community needs and aspirations from Community Area Plans, Parish Plans & Village Design Statements. Data was gathered from the following plans:

- Community Plans - All 22 community area plans were reviewed.
- Parish Plans - A total of 39 published Parish Plans were reviewed
- Village Design Statements - 27 existing VDSs were reviewed.

The report analyses each plan through a number of themes to understand what types of facilities and services were most valued and/or aspects of life that considered to be the most important to quality of life in Wiltshire. The report analysed each plan by topic and then added analysis of the most frequently mentioned topics as well as concluding on each theme and issues within each theme.

#### **Outputs**

This report has contributed heavily to the themes in the methodology for small settlements. By understanding what was valued by our rural communities. In particular, it highlighted the importance of broadband and modern communications. The environment and leisure facilities were also high on the list of what the community valued. The new method for assessing the role and function of rural areas reflects the outcomes of this report.

#### **Rural Facilities Survey 2008**

##### **Overview**

The rural facilities survey covered a whole range of data analysis about Wiltshire's rural settlements. They collected a raft of data from sources, although much of the data is gathered from a simple survey form asking for the number of a range of different facilities within each settlement. This survey was first sent out in October 2008, with most forms being returned before the end of the year.

##### **Outputs**

The data from this report has underpinned our assessment of the non-strategic settlements in Wiltshire.

# Chapter 5 – Options and policy outputs

## Introduction

5.1 The chapter then summarises the challenges arising from the previous settlement strategy, as set out in the Wiltshire 2026 consultation material. As stated at the beginning this paper should be read in conjunction with topic paper 17 which sets out the housing numbers and distribution and topic papers 2 & 8 which set out the strategy for housing and employment. A separate SA/SEA process has been undertaken for this round of the Core Strategy consultation and the key issues directly relevant. Please see the SA for details.

## Challenges, options and policy issues

5.2 Clearly the pressing issue for the spatial strategy following the Wiltshire 2026 consultation was to re-examine the approach to the non-strategic settlements. In terms of the strategic settlements it was considered appropriate to refine and update the role and function analysis where appropriate, to assist with the technical work on distributing the numbers, but unnecessary to alter the settlements identified as strategic.

5.3 There was also a necessity to review the approach to settlement boundaries, in accordance with a commitment made in November 2009 as part of the decision to submit the South Wiltshire Core Strategy (see <http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeeld=130&MeetingId=1213&DF=10%2f11%2f2009&Ver=2> for details). The issue of settlement boundaries has not been addressed in previous drafts of the Core Strategy and also has implications on the type of development that would be acceptable at different settlements.

<b>Settlement strategy</b>	<p><b>Challenge SS1</b> Re-examine the approach to the rural non-strategic settlements defining a strategy that allows the communities to meet their needs in the most sustainable manner.</p>
	<p><b>Challenge SS2</b> Define the types of development which should come forward in general terms at non-strategic settlements.</p>
<b>Settlement boundaries</b>	<p><b>Challenge SS3</b> Outline a consistent approach to settlement boundaries that allows the right level of protection to the open countryside without restricting appropriate development.</p>

## Options and policy response

5.4 This section presents the proposed policy approach to respond to each of the challenges identified in above, and also sets out the options considered in arriving at this proposed approach. The policy approach was developed based on an analysis of best practice, evidence, the knowledge of the settlements within Wiltshire, and current planning policy. The output of this proposed policy approach is summarised in table 1 in chapter 3.

<b>Challenge SS1</b>	Re-examine the approach to the rural non-strategic settlements defining a strategy that allows the communities to meet their needs in the most sustainable manner.
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5.5 A review of best practice relating to policies in rural areas has identified a number of priorities that should be considered when approaching the location of development in the rural area. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 still forms the framework within which the majority of best practice is based. The idea of locating the majority of development at 'service centres' with the facilities and services able to cope with that development, and understanding access using sustainable transport, are important factors. However, best practice has shown that for a Core Strategy, a document concerned with the strategic planning issues, a true understanding of each small rural community is unlikely to be achievable. Issues such as governance and aspects of community life that are key to understanding each settlement are difficult to interpret at a strategic level. This type of deeper understanding should be left to more appropriate documents such as Neighbourhood Plans or parish plans. Nevertheless, all of the best practice examples and key research documents have identified, to some extent, which settlements will be appropriate locations for development.

5.6 The examples of best practice from neighbouring authorities all relied on a number of indicators as an assessment tool. The most thorough of these was South Gloucestershire's assessment of each settlement, although this was heavily based on the 2001 census. The Shropshire example showed that other sustainability indicators, such as those relating to governance, community life, and relative changes in the standard of the natural and built environment, play a part in understanding what comprises a 'sustainable community', but were unnecessary and unachievable for a Core Strategy.

5.7 Three options were considered to respond to challenge SS1:

- Only identify strategic settlements.
- Identify a full hierarchy of settlements and locations where development is not appropriate. A caveat should be added to allow settlements to change their role through other planning documents.
- Identify strategic settlements and other settlements but do not define hierarchy.

Option	Sustainability Appraisal outcome	Conformity with national and regional policy and/or regulation	Deliverability	Community aspirations met	Other	Conclusion
Only identify strategic settlements	This option is likely to see significant benefits although it may lead to increased development, with housing provision and employment. There would be significant pressures on the natural environment and substantial development in rural locations.	Possibly contrary to PPS 12 in that the broad location of development is not set out. Does not conform with policies in PPS7 as service centres and the most sustainable settlements not identified.	The community area approach means that some community areas would not have any settlements identified for development. It is likely to lead to development pressure in these locations.	Offers direct response to community criticism about rigid hierarchy and allows other settlements to choose the level of development they feel is appropriate	It is possible that this option will put a burden on parish/other community representatives to have neighbourhood plans. Potential resource issues.	This option will provide certainty about locations for strategic growth in Wiltshire. However it does not provide certainty on the role and function of smaller settlements which could cause development pressure in rural locations. Best practice suggests this option is unlikely to found sound at examination.
Identify a full hierarchy of settlements and locations where development is not appropriate. A caveat will be added to allow settlements to change their role through	Option 2, being more restrictive in nature, will not allow development in areas where it would be inappropriate. This means that there may be benefits for	This option conforms to policies set out in national documents and supports the competing demands of environmental protection and development.	This will give certainty to settlements across Wiltshire and help support a number of core policies, including employment, transport and	Has implications for neighbourhood planning and may not reflect the wishes of the community.	Could restrict housing and employment in rural areas.	This option will provide certainty about locations for strategic growth in Wiltshire and some flexibility for other settlements but still identifies inappropriate locations for development.  This option has been chosen due to the need for the Core Strategy to 'broadly outline where development will be appropriate' and the lessons of best practice where this approach has been

other planning documents.	biodiversity and landscapes.  Therefore, Option 2 would be the preferable option.		environmental policies.			shown to be sound, while offering the highest environmental protection this strategy can offer.
Identify strategic settlements and other settlements but do not define hierarchy	As option 1	This would appear to satisfy the basic requirements of PPS12 but would not conform to PPS1 and PPS7 in that rural development is not properly addressed.	Similar to above although less certainty about exact locations	Without certainty in rural areas there is a possibility that development pressure may occur in rural locations.	It is possible that this option will put a burden on parish/other community representatives to have Neighbourhood Plans. Potential resource issues.	Although this option does provide some certainty in regard to rural areas it does not define a hierarchy at non-strategic settlements, meaning that development may work against some of the overall objectives of the strategy. Development needs to be located at the most sustainable locations as this offers the best opportunity to sustain services and facilities.

<b>Challenge SS2</b>	Define what types of development should come forward in general terms at non-strategic settlements.
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5.8 Best practice and key research has shown that the most appropriate approach to development is linked to the idea of settlements having different roles and development needs, and is essentially based on an understanding of the role and function of a settlement. The majority of neighbouring authorities have simply talked about limited development and infill being appropriate at non-strategic settlements. BANES make reference to developments of ‘up to 30 dwellings’ at larger settlements. However, historically there have been larger developments coming forward at non-strategic settlements in Wiltshire.

5.9 In defining what is appropriate at non-strategic rural settlements it is pertinent to understand the objectives of the Localism Bill. An overly prescriptive approach to development may not only contradict the communities own ambitions, but could also leave the approach contrary to the eventual legislation that is formed from the Bill. Nevertheless there are no indications that a Neighbourhood Plan will be mandatory, and those communities with neither the desire nor the resources to complete a plan will need the right balance of development and protection. A successful settlement strategy should provide this.

5.10 Three types of settlement have been identified based on best practice and an understanding of Wiltshire’s settlements. The table below describes these settlement types and the justification for this.

Type of Settlement	Description of Settlements	Justification
Local Service Centre	These settlements all have a population in excess of 2,000, have a good employment base and include more facilities not common in rural settlements.	PPS7 in particular is clear that local authorities approach to rural areas should include the identification service centres which serve rural hinterlands. Identifying these locations for a modest level of development will help to sustain the facilities and continue to provide services for a rural area.  This designation affords these settlements the opportunity to grow in line with their role and function without providing for large scale strategic growth.
Large Village	These villages are generally larger rural settlements, with a population in excess of 250. They generally have at least 3 basic facilities and have medium to good scores on the other indicators used to assess the role and function of villages (see chapter 5).	The majority of these villages do not have enough facilities or an employment base to act as a service centre. Nevertheless, these settlements are the most sustainable locations for development and offer the best opportunity to address rural issues, such as affordable housing and loss of services and facilities.  The approach to these villages follows best practice advice by affording communities the opportunity for limited development which will bring about the right benefits without compromising the outstanding environmental quality of the rural areas.
Small Village	This group of settlements have a limited level of facilities,	PPS1, 3 and 7 are clear that the location of development, particularly housing, should be



	<p>generally two or less basic facilities. These villages had medium to poor scores on the indicators used to assess the role and function of villages (see chapter 5).</p>	<p>strictly controlled in the countryside to avoid damaging the natural environment. It is therefore important that Wiltshire identifies the smallest level of settlement where development will be appropriate to ensure that inappropriate development at unsustainable locations does not occur.</p> <p>There is a need to identify small villages in this policy in order to ensure that there is no policy 'gap' which could lead to development pressure at small villages in an absence of local community plans.</p>
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5.11 Consultation has demonstrated that Wiltshire's communities would like a better understanding of the types of development being promoted at rural settlements. In looking at best practice it is clear that on the whole the development being promoted is limited. The table below describes the types of development being promoted in Wiltshire and the settlements at which each type of development will be appropriate.

<b>Type of Development</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Appropriate Locations</b>
Large rural sites	<p>PPS3 places a minimum threshold for affordable housing in rural areas at 15 dwellings. The development of economic policies for Wiltshire has identified that employment sites of 0.25 ha should be the minimum threshold where the loss of employment land needs to be replaced. These two measures are being used as Wiltshire's definition of large development in rural areas.</p>	Local Service Centres & Large Villages (only where there is a proven need for a large development).
Limited development	<p>Limited development refers to development that will meet the needs of settlements/communities without causing any harm to the natural or built environment of that settlement or community. It is expected that limited development would generally refer to sites substantially smaller than the large rural sites described above.</p>	Local Service Centres & Large Villages
Infill only	<p>This type of development refers to small sites within the urban form. This will include the replacement of existing dwellings or the re-use/redevelopment of existing buildings. Infill development must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- elongate the existing built form of the village causing any ribbon style development; or</li> <li>- consolidate an existing sporadic, loose knit area of development.</li> </ul> <p>The two statements about development that will not be acceptable have been included in order to assist in defining policies on settlement boundaries at small villages (see Challenge SS3 below).</p>	All rural settlements

<b>Challenge SS3</b>	Outline a consistent approach to settlement boundaries that allows the right level of protection to the open countryside without restricting appropriate development.
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5.12 Settlement boundaries are currently defined in Local/District Plan can be described as emotive issue. In many settlements they have proved a successful planning tool as they offer protection for the natural environment and a definitive boundary within which development is acceptable. However, it could be argued that in a number of cases the boundaries that exist are not fit for purpose as development has occurred outside beyond the boundary, and the existing boundary does not accurately reflect the current urban form of the settlement.

5.13 There are a number of issues with the boundaries as they currently exist in Wiltshire.

- National planning policy is clear that development can take place in or adjacent to settlements. This will cause considerable pressure along settlement boundaries where an obvious extension to a settlement is proposed for development.
- The boundaries that exist were drawn under previous planning legislation and were not subject to same level of consultation or scrutiny that the LDF system or the emerging Localism Bill require in the creation of policy. This has led to boundaries not accurately reflecting the urban form of settlements.

5.14 The final issue with current boundaries in Wiltshire concerns the nature of current planning policy in Wiltshire. There is an inconsistent approach across Wiltshire, due to policy being provided by saved policies from the four former district councils and the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan. We are proposing that 144 settlements should be identified as villages (not including South Wiltshire), and 101 of these villages have existing development boundaries. All of the proposed strategic settlements and local service centres have existing boundaries. The lack of boundaries at some settlements may lead to an inconsistent approach to development if the same policies are applied to settlements with or without settlement boundaries.

5.15 The majority of the neighbouring core strategies opted to keep existing boundaries and review these in subsequent documents. The only authority that opted for a different approach was Test Valley which looked at reviewing boundaries, however they have chosen to withdrawal their submitted core strategy. The key research and best practice were consistent in their criticism of restrictive policies in regard to development but were not clear as to the best mechanism in locating development.

5.16 Three options were considered:

- Retain existing settlement boundaries – This option would mean that current boundaries, as they appear in local plans, would be retained.
- Identify new settlement boundaries – This would mean redefining all settlement boundaries.
- Remove settlement boundaries – This would mean that all settlement boundaries would be removed.

Option	Sustainability Appraisal outcome	Conformity with national and regional policy and/or regulation	Deliverability	Community aspirations met	Other	Conclusion
Retain existing settlement boundaries	Settlement boundaries may need to be revised but removing them all together would lead to increased pressure to develop in inappropriate locations.	National policy is not specific about settlement boundaries. PPS3, 4 & 7 all make reference to placing development in or adjacent to settlements.	This would simply require certain local plan policies to be saved.	In some areas settlement boundaries have continued to offer the right balance between protection and development. Existing boundaries were not subjected to rigorous consultation and often do not accurately reflect the settlement.	Identifies through policy where development will be appropriate. Decisions on applications are informed by a rigid policy.	<p>Existing boundaries offer protection to the countryside and guard against urban sprawl/ribbon development. However given that existing boundaries are out of date and do not reflect the current urban form there are development pressures along the boundaries. If current boundaries are retained they will need to be reviewed later to ensure that they are fit for purpose.</p> <p>At settlements where it is appropriate to develop beyond the current settlement it will be important to keep the existing boundaries until they can be properly reviewed. Once reviewed it would be expected that appropriate sites adjacent to settlements would be included within boundaries.</p> <p>Retention of settlement boundaries will be applied to settlements designated as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• principal settlements,</li> <li>• market towns,</li> <li>• local service centres,</li> <li>• and, large villages.</li> </ul>

<p>Identify new settlement boundaries</p>	<p>This option is considered the most sustainable option. It will allow settlements to expand in an acceptable and agreed manner. Boundaries can be amended where it is necessary and where boundaries do not need amending they can be left as they are.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>It is unlikely that a redrawing of the settlement boundaries could be achieved with any accuracy within the preparation of the Core Strategy.</p>	<p>New settlement boundaries would only meet community aspirations if they were truly developed in conjunction with the community.</p>	<p>Identifies through policy where development will be appropriate. Decisions on applications are informed by a rigid policy and not on their merits.</p>	<p>It is clear that for the list of settlements where boundaries are to be retained a new boundary would be the ideal solution. However, it is unlikely that sufficient community consultation can be undertaken as part of the core strategy.</p> <p>It should also be noted that given the emerging Localism Bill it is questionable whether the core strategy is the right policy document to address settlement boundaries.</p>
<p>Remove settlement boundaries</p>	<p>Significant adverse effects are considered likely through this option. The removal of settlement boundaries could lead to a significant amount of inappropriate development as decisions on applications are made on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>This would require the removal of existing local plan policies.</p>	<p>Community aspirations would only be met if they were properly consulted on these applications.</p>	<p>Removal of boundaries allows decisions on applications to be made on a case by case basis. Where boundaries are no longer up-to-date or were created on an arbitrary basis, this will allow communities the freedom to make decisions on development without artificially imposed boundaries.</p>	<p>Removing boundaries could lead to urban sprawl/ribbon development and loss of environmental quality along the edge of settlements. Nevertheless removing boundaries offers flexibility for decisions to be made about applications on their merits alone.</p> <p>Where development is expected to only consist of infill sites removing boundaries will allow communities to make decisions about the location of very limited development without an artificially imposed boundary.</p> <p>Removing boundaries will only be appropriate at Small Villages where a very limited amount of development will</p>

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