

Appendix 1: Part 4

Swindon Housing Market Area

**Individual Settlement and Housing Market Area
Profile**

DRAFT

Committee Draft

October 2017

Introduction

This document is one of four Housing Market Area Profiles which have been prepared to inform the Swindon and Wiltshire Joint Spatial Framework: Issues Paper. It provides an assessment of the main settlements in the Swindon Housing Market Area and the strategic issues they face. This is a first step to understanding the opportunities and constraints of growth before considering how each place could develop sustainably; whether its role continues as currently planned or how it should change.

In combination with profiles for the Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge Housing Market Areas, this better understanding of our main settlements can inform the assessment of whether and how the housing and employment needs in each market area can be met.

The profiles contained in this document draw on existing published data sources such as the current understanding of the role and function of each main settlement, the 2011 Census, the Council's own monitoring reports and other local area documents such as neighbourhood plans.

Each profile presents a snapshot assessment of progress with the current strategy included in the Wiltshire Core Strategy, a picture of environmental constraints, the local community's vision (where there is neighbourhood plan) and the position from providers of underlying infrastructure (transport, water and education) which is essential to every settlement but which has the potential to also be a significant barrier to further growth.

The main findings for each settlement are summarised below followed by a set of issues specific to each settlement. These identify where the current development plan strategy may need to change. They are phrased as questions because the vital part of this stage in the Local Plan review is to invite community and stakeholder input on how the current strategy should change; what issues it should address and how future needs can be met by sustainable development.

Swindon Housing Market Area

The Swindon Housing Market Area extends from Swindon in the north-east to Marlborough in the south-east and the rural villages of east Wiltshire in the west.



The 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) forecasts objectively assessed need for housing (including the overall balance between market and affordable housing). The study identifies the need for housing in this market area over the period 2016-2036 to be 28,000 dwellings. Taking account of altered boundaries, this would represent a modest decrease on the annual levels of new house building planned for in the Wiltshire Core Strategy for the period 2006-2026 and in the Swindon Borough Local Plan for the period 2011-2026.

The Swindon/M4 Corridor Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) broadly aligns with the Swindon Housing Market Area. The Swindon/M4 Corridor FEMA has notable business concentrations in motor vehicle manufacture,

pharmaceuticals and electronics. Science, Research & Development and financial and high value services are also concentrated in the FEMA as well as warehousing and logistics. The Swindon/M4 Corridor FEMA has the lowest concentration of public services employment of the three Wiltshire FEMAs. The Swindon/M4 FEMA has a strong eastward focus, into the Thames Valley and towards Oxfordshire, and is dominated by Swindon, which is the largest urban centre in the area. There remain issues of the levels of educational attainment in the FEMA being below the national average, particularly in Swindon itself. The SHMA suggests that planning for housing growth on the basis of demographic and migration trends alone could result in a marginal shortage of new workers in the Swindon HMA in comparison to the projected number of new jobs based on economic projections. Accordingly, the SHMA adjusts the projected need for housing upwards to compensate for this.

The 2017 Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (FEMAA) forecasts that 15,000 new jobs will be created in 2016-36 within the Swindon/M4 Corridor FEMA, with the main growth occurring in business support services, construction, retail and food & beverage services. The study forecasts for 2016-36 the following levels of demand for additional business floor space by type:


Use class	Growth in floor space (in m2)
B1a offices	48,740
B1b research and development	28,780
B1c light industrial	7,490
B2 industrial	-62,110
B8 storage and distribution	43,320

Taking into account churn, re-use of employment sites and accounting for additional land requirements, the FEMA forecasts a total of up to 47.9 ha for office space and 87 ha for industrial. This equates to up to 2.4 ha and 4.3 ha annually respectively for the entire Swindon/M4 FEMA. The quantum of floor space required will depend upon where the new employment buildings are built. For example, office buildings in town centres tend to be multi-storey have smaller car parks, in comparison to single-storey offices built on business parks on the urban periphery or in rural areas.

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Swindon

The town of Swindon is the largest settlement within the historic county of Wiltshire, more than four times the size of the next largest (Salisbury). In 2011 the population of the Swindon urban area was 185,609, making up approximately 27% of the total combined population of Wiltshire and Swindon Borough (Census 2011) and 85% of the population of Swindon Borough.

 <p>Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 Swindon: Planning for our future Adopted 5th March 2018</p>	<h3>The Swindon Borough Local Plan Vision</h3> <p>The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026's vision relates to the Borough as a whole, rather than the town of Swindon exclusively, but parts of its text are specifically applicable to the town of Swindon:</p> <p><i>"The Borough of Swindon will become a place where people choose to live, visit and invest. As an important regional centre, Swindon's appeal will stem from having an attractive and well-equipped town that has successfully blended traditional architecture with high quality contemporary buildings that incorporate sustainable design and construction principles.</i></p> <p><i>The achievement of a high quality public realm in the heart of the town linked to the countryside will provide a real focal point for visitors and Swindonians alike. Swindon will become one of the best business locations in the UK, offering a high quality of life, not just to its residents, but also to those from a much wider catchment area. New jobs will be created and there will be the fullest range of employment opportunities for the whole community. Swindon will be at the centre of a network of multifunctional green spaces linking the town to the wider countryside. Swindon will have responded to the needs of a growing population in a way that has protected and enhanced our natural and historic environment. People in Swindon will have the opportunity to live active, healthy and learning lifestyles."</i></p>
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Economy

Swindon has a high GVA (gross value added, a measure of productivity) per head, but has not been able to grow GVA in line with benchmark areas in recent years. However, the FEMAA's analysis identifies that Swindon's competitiveness is increasing and it has both high productivity and a high proportion of private sector employment, together with globally significant firms in UK priority sectors (e.g. Honda, BMW, Nationwide).

Weaknesses are identified as relative high price of rail services and distance from neighbouring cities and towns to Swindon, the poor perception of Swindon's town centre and its limited range of good quality cultural and leisure assets, the lack of executive style housing in the town and the weakness of its town centre office market.

The large urban expansions to the town, town centre regeneration and rail electrification are identified as opportunities for economic growth.

Self-containment

	2001	2011	change
% of employed residents working in the town	83.7%	73.4%	-10.3%

Between 2001 and 2011 the number of people working Swindon Borough increased by 0.4%, whilst over the same period, the working age population of the Borough increased by 18% increase. The consequence of employment growth not keeping pace with housing growth has been a decline in self-containment and an increase in out-commuting, particularly to Oxfordshire, West Berkshire and Reading.

The SBC Local Plan Policy SD2 identifies that 90,000sqm of office space will be delivered in Swindon’s central area for the period 2011-2026. Analysis for the Employment Lane Review suggests that between 2011 and 2014 office floor space in Swindon Borough declined by a net 3,590sqm. A significant amount of the reduction has been as a result of the introduction of permitted development rights to convert offices to homes. There is a significant amount of office development land allocated in the Wichelstowe and Commonhead urban extensions and at the Kimmerfields development in the town centre. On current forecast, office supply would exceed estimated requirements for the period to 2036. However, there is evidence of a short term office land supply shortfall, particularly Grade A premises. Any allocation of a new office/business park at Swindon should be balanced against the need to support town centre regeneration.

The SBC Local Plan identifies a total of 115 hectares of additional employment land outside of Swindon Town Centre. However significant amounts are locked within the strategic allocations and will be difficult to deliver in the short-medium term. Also there is continued pressure for employment allocations to be developed for alternative uses such as homes and schools. To meet future needs there is potentially a need for an allocation of industrial land with good access to the M4.

Town centre: Swindon Borough Council’s Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment (2017) (RLNA) provides projections for the need for main town centre uses in Swindon and Swindon Borough in the period 2016 to 2036. The RLNA projects an oversupply by 2021 in floorspace for the retail of comparison goods. However, in the longer-term additional comparison goods capacity will be required to meet demand at Swindon Town Centre. By contrast, no additional requirement for convenience goods retail floorspace is identified for Swindon to 2036.

The RLNA states: “*The aspirations for Swindon Town Centre should be to significantly enhance the retail and leisure offer of the centre, building on the existing foundation of core retail and complementary uses, extending the evening offer and increasing the overall attraction and draw of the centre, to the benefit those living, working and visiting the centre*”.

Housing

Swindon’s ratio of house prices to earnings rose from 6.28 to 7.24 (+15%) between 2011 and 2016, but Swindon remains more affordable than the south west and England averages (for 2016, 8.40 and 7.58 respectively).

The population age structure of Swindon is notably younger than the age structure for Swindon and Wiltshire as a whole, with proportionately more residents aged 20 to 44 and fewer aged 60 or over. However a significant proportional increase in elderly persons is forecast to 2036/

The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 Policy SD2 identifies a housing requirement (2011-2026) for Swindon's central area of about 1,000 and for the remainder of Swindon's existing urban area of 4000. In addition, specific requirements are identified for the urban extensions to Swindon totalling about 16,500 dwellings. Trajectories for the anticipated delivery of housing are provided in Appendix 5 to the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026.

Monitoring shows that whereas completions in the urban area are in line with the Local Plan trajectory, completions on the urban extensions are significantly less than anticipated. (1,991 compared to 4,023). This shortfall has impacted on the supply of houses to the extent the Council cannot presently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing.

Infrastructure

Transport: The Swindon Borough Local Plan and accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies significant infrastructure in association with the current growth plans, including a new bus interchange in Swindon's central area, express bus links between Wichelstowe, the New Eastern Villages and Tadpole Farm to Swindon town centre, a link to Junction 16 of the M4 and improvements to Junction 16, improvements to the gateway junction at White Hart, improvements to Oxford Road/Drakes Way and Covingham Road/Dorcan Way transport corridors, a new road link to the Commonhead Roundabout, a 'green' bridge across the A419, and a vehicular bridge across the A419 to connect the Kingsdown development to the Swindon urban area.

Some of the improvements will be funded by developers through the development management process. Other improvements are being assisted by government funding, for example Local Growth Fund funding through the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership has been obtained to upgrade Greenbridge roundabout and for building transport infrastructure around the New Eastern Villages.

Schools: A new secondary school is under construction as part of the Tadpole Garden Village urban extension. The School Place Planning Study identifies the need for two further primary schools in north Swindon to support planned growth, one at Tadpole Garden Village and another at Abbey Farm.

In the central and southern area, to meet primary school requirements a further 2 primary schools will need to be provided at the Wichelstowe development. Establishing at least one new school and expanding an existing primary school in the central and south area will meet the remaining pressure in this area. A secondary school is under-construction within the Wichelstowe urban extension.

In east Swindon, development of the Commonhead, Kingsdown and New Eastern Villages urban extensions will generate need for an additional secondary school at the New Eastern Villages and additional primary schools comprising: a new primary school at the Commonhead development; 4 to 5 new primary schools at the New Eastern Villages; and a new primary school in the Kingsdown development area

In west Swindon there are no surplus primary places, indicating that any further growth in this area would require expansion of existing schools or additional schools.

Health: The Swindon NHS Health Centre opened in June 2017 as part of the Kimmerfields town centre development. New health care facilities are planned as part of the Wichelstowe and New Eastern Villages developments. Land is allocated at Commonhead for an expansion of the GW Hospital.

In the NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group in 2016 there were 1,529 persons per GP (or 0.65 GPs per 1,000 people). This compares to an average for England of 0.58 GPs per 1,000 people.

Water infrastructure: The Swindon Water Cycle Study (2014) concluded that with demand management measures there would be sufficient water supplies to deliver the anticipated level for population growth in Swindon Borough up to 2026. The Thames Water Resources Management Plan 2015 – 2040 proposes demand management to address a supply/demand balance shortfall. Thames Water are currently working on a new Water Resources Management Plan. Additional Wastewater facilities may be required to meet future growth and meet river water quality standards.

Neighbourhood Plan

At present no made neighbourhood plans are in place for neighbourhoods within the Swindon urban area. The parish of Stratton St Margaret has been designated as a neighbourhood planning area for the purposes of preparing a neighbourhood plan.

From 1 April 2017 four new parishes were created covering previously unparished parts of the Swindon urban area: West Swindon, Central Swindon North, Central Swindon South and St Andrews Parish.

Air Quality

No Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) are currently designated within the Swindon urban area.

Constraints

See map.

There is potential for development within the existing urban area on brownfield and under-used land, but there may be issues and in terms of the impact of this on diversity of uses and environmental quality including traffic levels. In addition, relatively low house prices may present an issue in terms of the viability of brownfield development in some parts of the Swindon urban area. There are conservation areas in the railway heritage area and in Old Town.

To the south east of Swindon, the North Wessex downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting abuts the urban area.

The M4 motorway runs to the south of the Swindon urban area, creating a significant physical barrier.

To the west of the Swindon urban area Lydiard Park, a Registered Park and Garden containing nationally significant heritage assets. There are also significant areas of flood risk around the River Ray to the west of Swindon.

To the north east of Swindon is Stanton Country Park. Beyond the planned New Eastern Villages, to the east of Swindon, are further significant areas of flood risk.

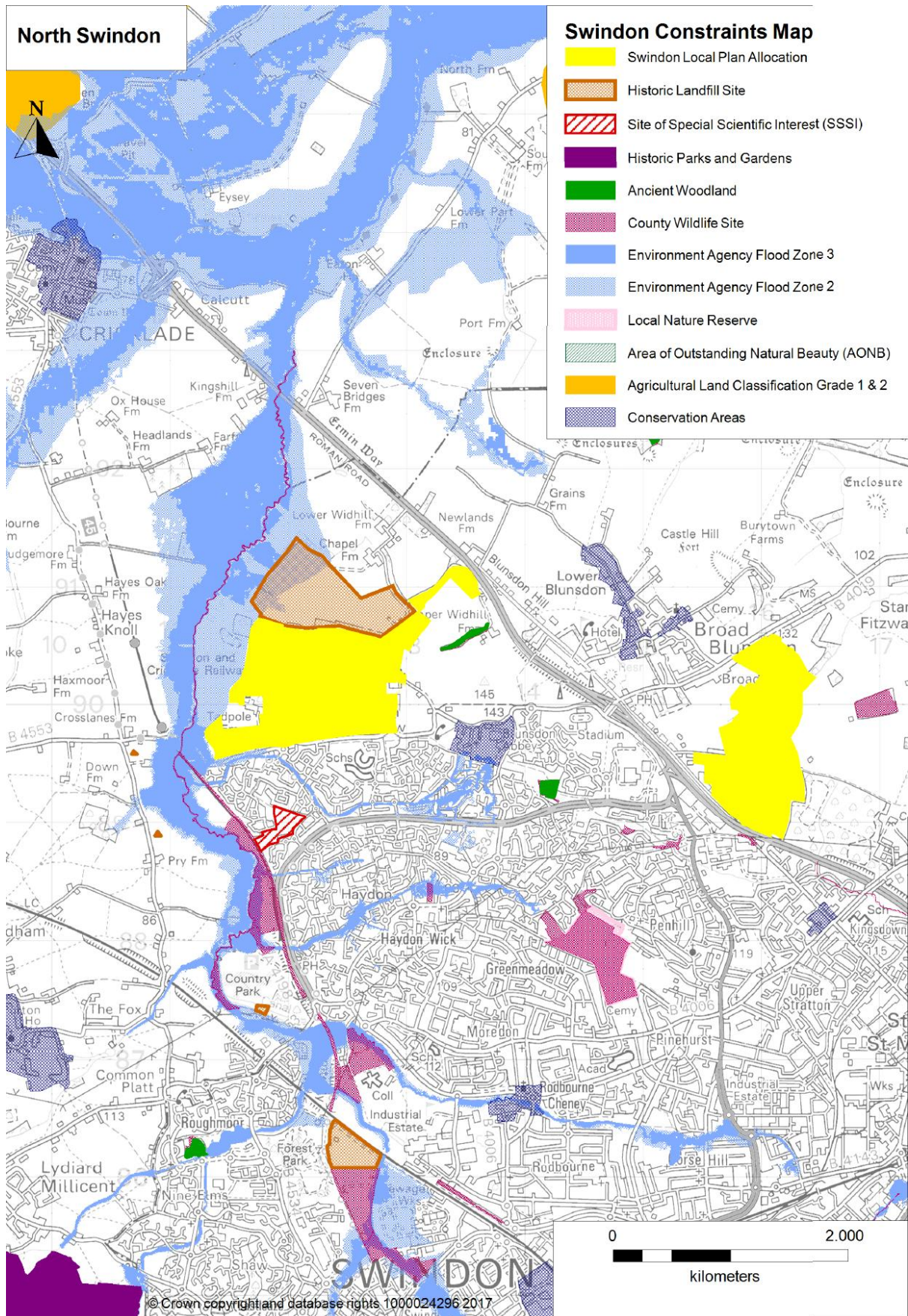
Settlement Strategic Issues

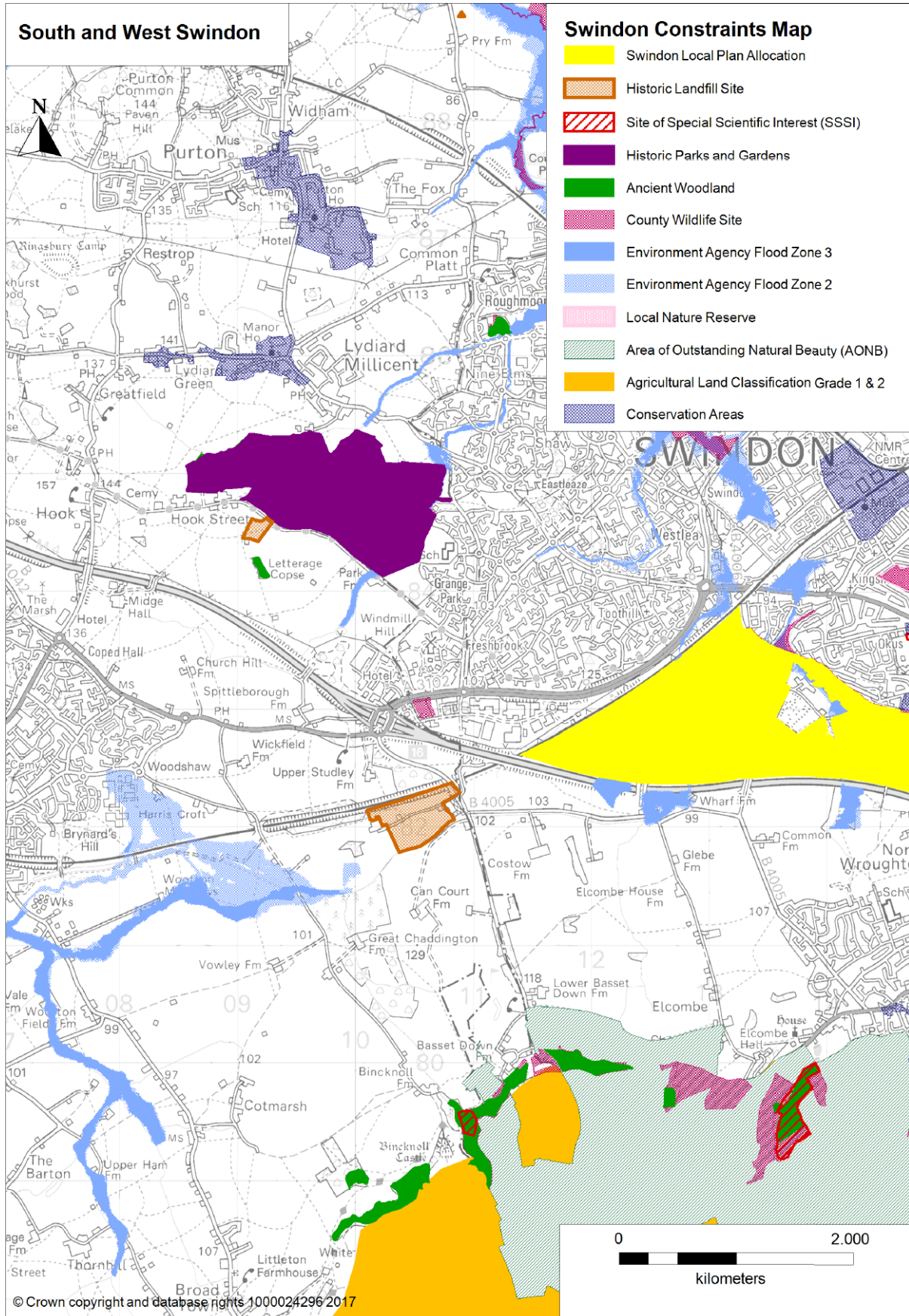
Key findings

- Overall housing delivery at Swindon has not kept pace with that projected in the Local Plan 2026, due largely to delays in the Kingsdown, New Eastern Villages and Wichelstowe urban extensions to Swindon.
- Very significant new infrastructure, including transport, education and health infrastructure is required to provide for existing planned levels of growth under the Local Plan 2026.
- There are significant employment land commitments, but delivery issues have led to a reported short-term shortage of high quality industrial land and office accommodation to meet demand from businesses.
- Job growth has not occurred at the same pace as housing growth, leading to increased out-commuting to neighbouring districts.
- There are significant economic opportunities at Swindon associated with growth sectors and rail electrification.
- Town centre regeneration will be vital to improving the town's image and realising its economic potential.
- The role of Swindon's town centre is changing, with non-retail uses likely to play an important role.

Issues

1. How much future housing can and should be built within the urban area? How can this be balanced against the objectives of protecting the environmental quality of the area for existing residents and maintaining a diversity of uses needed to support a thriving economy?
2. How can Swindon Borough ensure short-term delivery of housing land while the larger, more complex urban extensions come forward.
3. What are the infrastructure constraints for future growth at Swindon and how can they be overcome.
4. Where should high quality employment land be delivered to support existing business growth and take advantage of inward investment opportunities?
5. How can planning policy support the advancement of the regeneration of Swindon's central area and the enhancement of its role, to improve the image of the town?

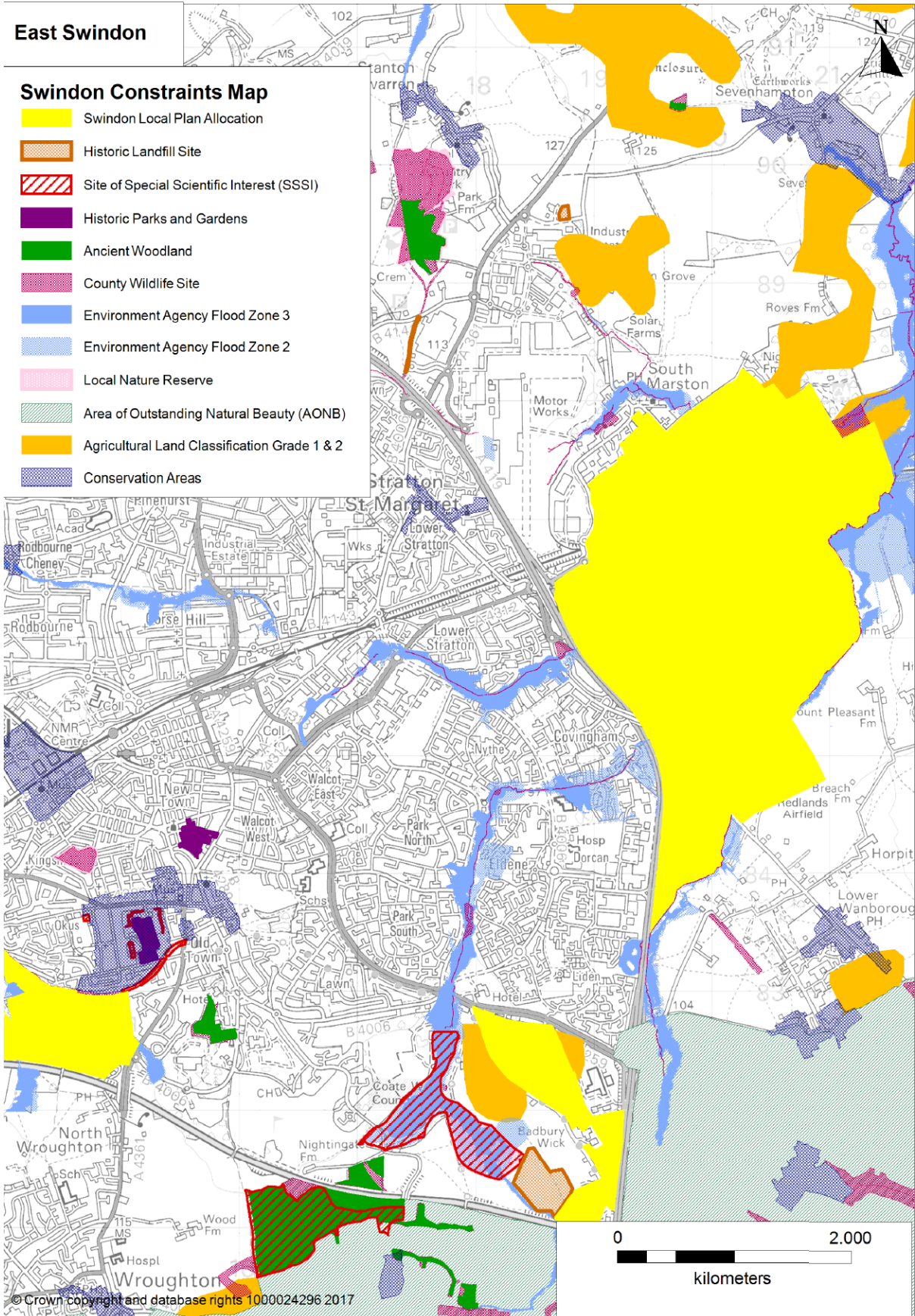




East Swindon

Swindon Constraints Map

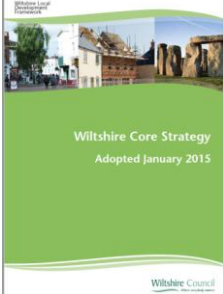
- Swindon Local Plan Allocation
- Historic Landfill Site
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Ancient Woodland
- County Wildlife Site
- Environment Agency Flood Zone 3
- Environment Agency Flood Zone 2
- Local Nature Reserve
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Agricultural Land Classification Grade 1 & 2
- Conservation Areas



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Marlborough

The market town of Marlborough has a rich built environment with an attractive and thriving retail centre with a good amount of independent retailers. It is designated as a Market Town in the WCS.



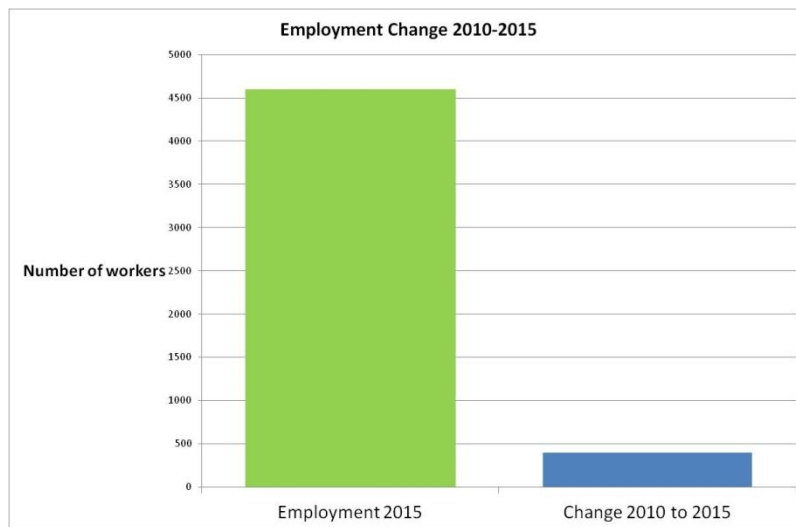
Wiltshire Core Strategy
Adopted January 2015

Wiltshire Council

The Wiltshire Core Strategy Vision

“A modest and sustainable level of development within the Community Area will have provided for a range of housing appropriate to the local needs and incomes of residents. The Community Area will have continued to benefit from high standards of housing, health, education and culture in the context of a growing economy in the area as a whole. Development will have protected and enhanced the Community Area’s rich natural and historic assets including the Avebury element of the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site. The Kennet and Og Rivers and Savernake Forest will continue to provide social, environmental and economic assets to the area as part of a wider green infrastructure which will be used sustainably.”

Economy



Self-containment

	2001	2011	change
% of employed residents working in the town	50.8%	49.4%	-1.4%

The WCS allocates 3 ha of new employment land over the plan period. Marlborough is not identified as a location for new strategic employment growth. Since 2011, 0.1 ha of employment floorspace have been completed at the town.

Marlborough has a relatively small but strong employment base with a reasonable level of self-containment that has declined more slowly than other areas. The Marlborough Business Park has provided an important new location for employment growth and new business. The

town has some unusual employment patterns with a strong representation by the education sector and there is no indication that this sector will weaken. The WCS points to the town being overshadowed due to its proximity to Swindon and too far away to benefit from spin-off activity. This is confirmed by more recent work. Although Marlborough falls into the Swindon/M4 Corridor FEMA it is located on its southern extremity. The WCS concluded that due to its strong economic base and lack of current employment land supply, evidence identifies that there is likely to be some demand for new employment space over the plan period.

Town centre: The WCS states that the strategy supports Marlborough’s town centre to continue to function as a prominent retail centre within east Wiltshire and serve as a locally important employment centre; and that proposals for retail provision outside of Marlborough are likely to have an adverse impact upon the town centre. Any additional comparison retailing should be located within the town centre.

Actual compared to anticipated average rates of house building 2006-2017

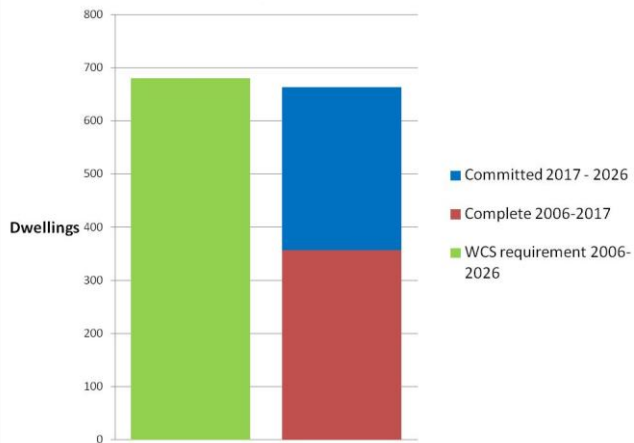


Housing

House building has been in accordance with anticipated rates. Land with planning permission for 175 dwellings west of Salisbury Road is a significant component of future housing supply.

Affordable housing was 15% of all homes built, substantially below target levels. The ratio of house price to earnings rose from 12.3 to 15.4 between 2011 and 2016. This ratio is the highest of all the settlements in Wiltshire.

Dwellings already completed or committed compared to WCS requirement 2006-2026



Infrastructure

Transport: Through traffic detracts from the attractiveness of the town centre and harms air quality. Recent measures have focussed on encouraging cycling.

Schools: Primary provision has little or no capacity and caters for immediate forecast needs only. Primary schools do not have the potential to expand. This current “at capacity” situation for primary aged pupils is likely to feed through to the secondary level over the next 7 years to challenge capacity. Secondary provision already needs expanding. Expansion beyond

current forecast needs would require a feasibility study and land acquisition.

Neighbourhood Plan

An area designation for Marlborough Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2016. A number of working parties support the Steering Group working towards the submission of a draft plan to Wiltshire Council by summer 2018. The Steering Group is working to establish the housing and business needs of the plan area, the need for new or improved medical, educational and recreational facilities, the need to manage traffic and new car parking facilities, along with a focus on the use of the surrounding countryside and efforts to support nature conservation. Work has included a Housing Needs Survey, Business Survey and Car Parking Study.

Air Quality

An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) covers the whole of the built up area and immediate surroundings. There are local concerns that further development will lead to mandatory limits being exceeded.

Constraints

See map.

The overall potential for significant urban regeneration is high. The settlement lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and natural beauty. Important woodland and designated Historic Park and Garden abuts the town to the south east. Designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest are also located in close proximity to the town.

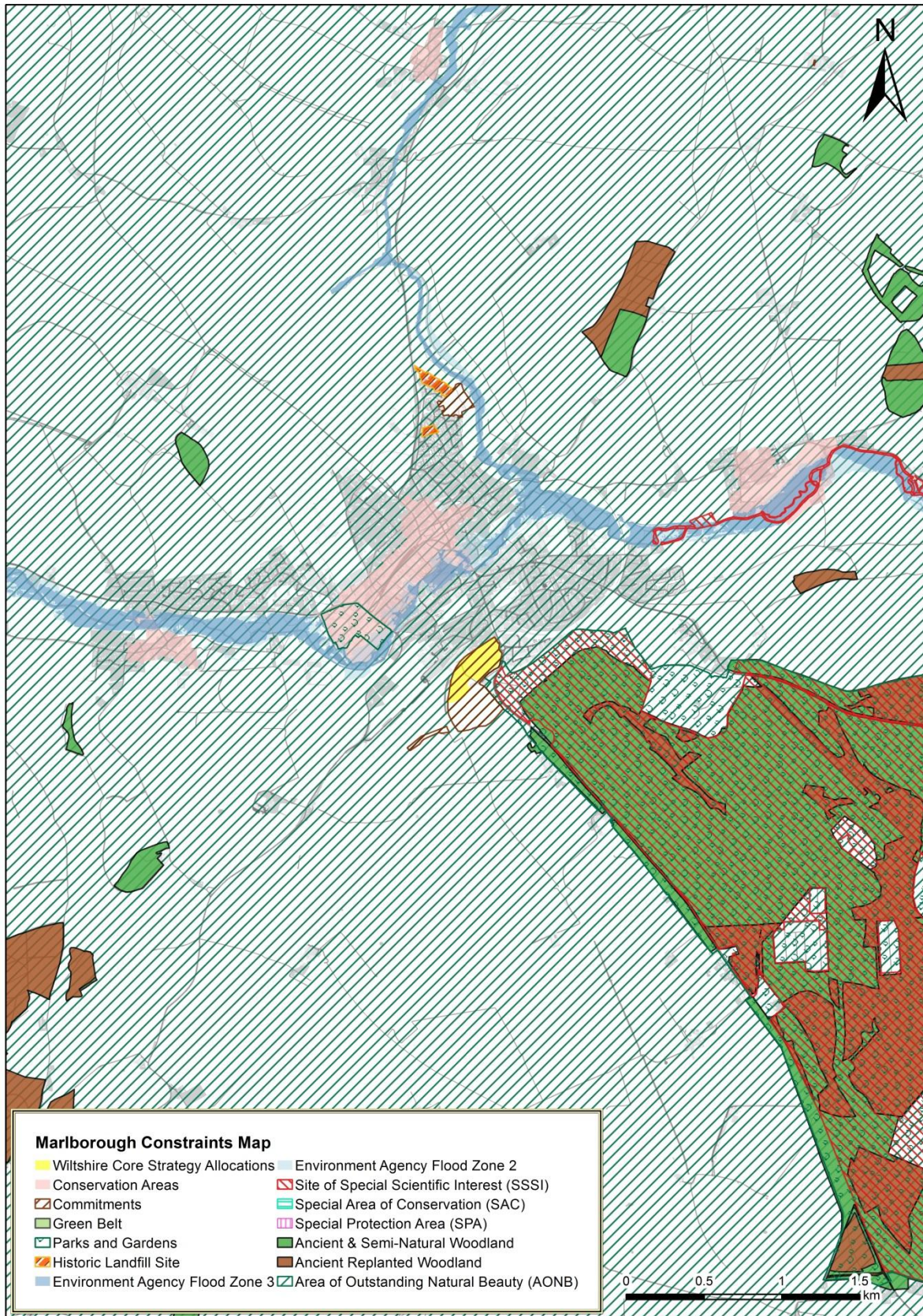
Settlement Strategic Issues

Key findings

- Expansion of the town is highly constrained by the priority to conserve the landscape and natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- The affordability of housing is the worst in the County and relatively few affordable homes have been delivered
- Traffic congestion and air quality are significant local concerns

Issues

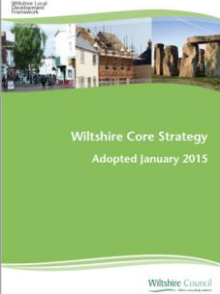
1. Should the current strategy continue or could some additional measures ensure more affordable homes and/or address traffic issues affecting the town?



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Royal Wootton Bassett

The historic market town of Royal Wootton Bassett is six miles from Swindon and has a dormitory role. The town currently has a diverse but smaller employment base than might be expected for a town of its size. It is designated as a Market Town in the WCS.



Wiltshire Core Strategy
Adopted January 2015

Wiltshire Council

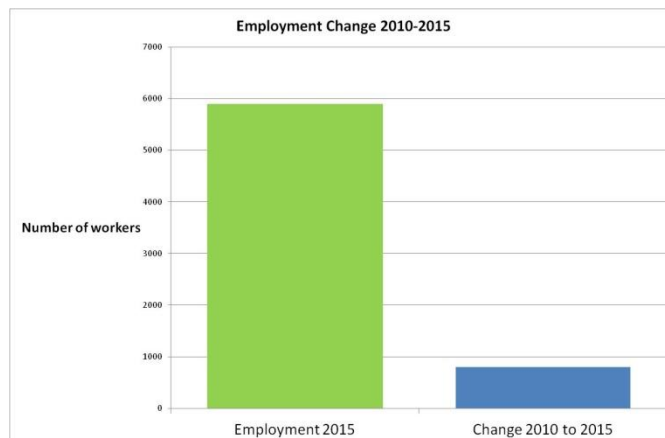
The Wiltshire Core Strategy Vision

“Royal Wootton Bassett will continue to function as the main service centre within the Community Area. Cricklade will perform a similar role, but with a more local focus.

The separate identity of both Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade and the villages, especially those closest to Swindon, will have been maintained and enhanced where appropriate. The retail offer of Royal Wootton Bassett will have been enhanced and the town will enjoy a good supply of housing including affordable dwellings. The town will have an appropriate level of facilities for its size, with a hub for sports provision at Ballards Ash. People within the Community Area will have access to a range of jobs within the towns, which will have helped to alleviate the existing high levels of out-commuting. Along with the Rivers Key and Ray, the restored and enhanced Cricklade Country Way will provide social, environmental and economic assets to the area as part of a wider green infrastructure network linking Cricklade with Swindon and the Cotswold Water Park, which will continue to be a valuable recreational resource for visitors and local communities.”

Economy

- Global digital businesses Plantronics and Dolby have an ongoing presence at Interface Park.
- Babcock International operates the training contract for Defence School of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering at nearby Lyneham.



Self-containment

	2001	2011	change
% of employed residents working in the town	39.2%	35.9%	-3.2%

The WCS allocates 5 ha of new employment land over the plan period including:

- Land to the West of Templars Way: 3.7 ha
- Brickworks, Purton 1.0 ha remaining

Since 2011, no employment floor space has been completed and 500m2 of employment floorspace remain committed as of 2017.

The town has a smaller employment base than might be expected for a town of its size. The WCS notes the settlement is located approximately six miles from Swindon and two miles from the M4, and as such is well located to develop into a more important employment centre. The town is identified as a location for new strategic employment growth, particularly to help reduce out-commuting, as the town currently has a dormitory role to Swindon.

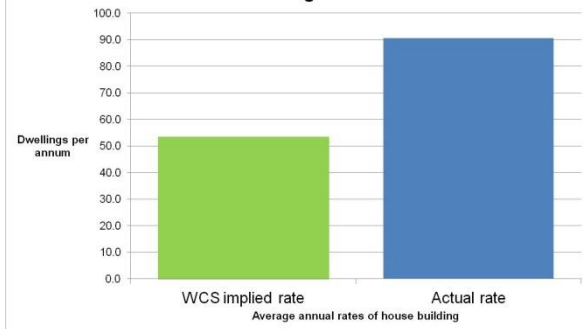
Town centre: The WCS states that Royal Wootton Bassett currently loses main food shopping trips to neighbouring towns. Although there is no quantitative need for additional convenience retail in the town, additional floorspace may be appropriate to address qualitative need and improve the retention of convenience trade if a suitable site is identified. There is limited capacity for up to 400 sq m of comparison retail in the town.

Investment to create a Defence School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering at former RAF Lyneham is locally significant as it is just four miles to south west of the town.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports additional retail development in the town centre subject to meeting policy criteria on car parking, congestion and character/appearance.

The Wiltshire Council Retail Review (2015) confirms that there is no capacity for additional convenience goods floorspace, but a small capacity for comparison goods floorspace.

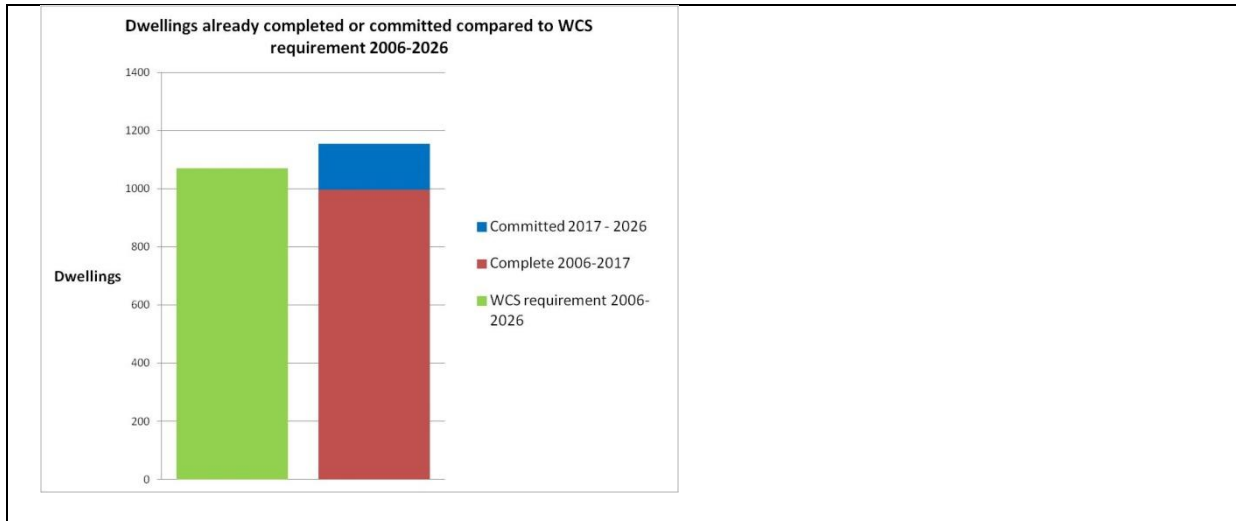
Actual compared to anticipated average rates of house building 2006-2017



Housing

House building has been substantially higher than anticipated rates. Nearly all the housing planned for 2006 to 2026 has already been built.

Affordable housing was 24% of all homes built, substantially below target levels. The ratio of house price to earnings rose from 8.6 to 10.4 between 2011 and 2016. This is below the average for settlements in Wiltshire.



Infrastructure

Transport: Commuting to and from Swindon evidenced by capacity issues at nearby junction 16 of the M4. There are also local concerns regarding the impacts of HGVs on the local road network. WCS supports provision of a railway station and additional development might raise this further as a priority.

Schools: Primary provision has no capacity and schools do not have the potential to expand. Growth would need to involve allocations large enough to provide new primary provision. The Secondary School has some potential to expand. A new secondary school in south Swindon may serve some local needs but the extent is unknown. Demand from Lyneham is a particularly difficult element in planning provision because of military movements into and out of the catchment.

Water Network: Wessex Water states that assets are predicted to require investment & capacity between 2025 – 2036

Neighbourhood Plan

The Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Council in March 2017 and has yet to undergo independent examination and referendum. The draft Plan identifies a site for the development of up to 110 dwellings with integrated community facilities to serve its needs. The need for necessary community and transport infrastructure to keep pace with the town’s growth is a theme of the Plan and it identifies a set of infrastructure priorities. The Plan also safeguards the separate identity and character of the town and identifies an area east of the built up area to remain open and in agricultural use. The Plan identifies options for a new railway station and safeguards other areas for leisure and recreation uses.

Constraints

See map.

The overall potential for significant urban regeneration is high. There is a wide area of flood risk (zone 2) to the east, but there are relatively few environmental constraints compared to

other main settlements in the plan area.

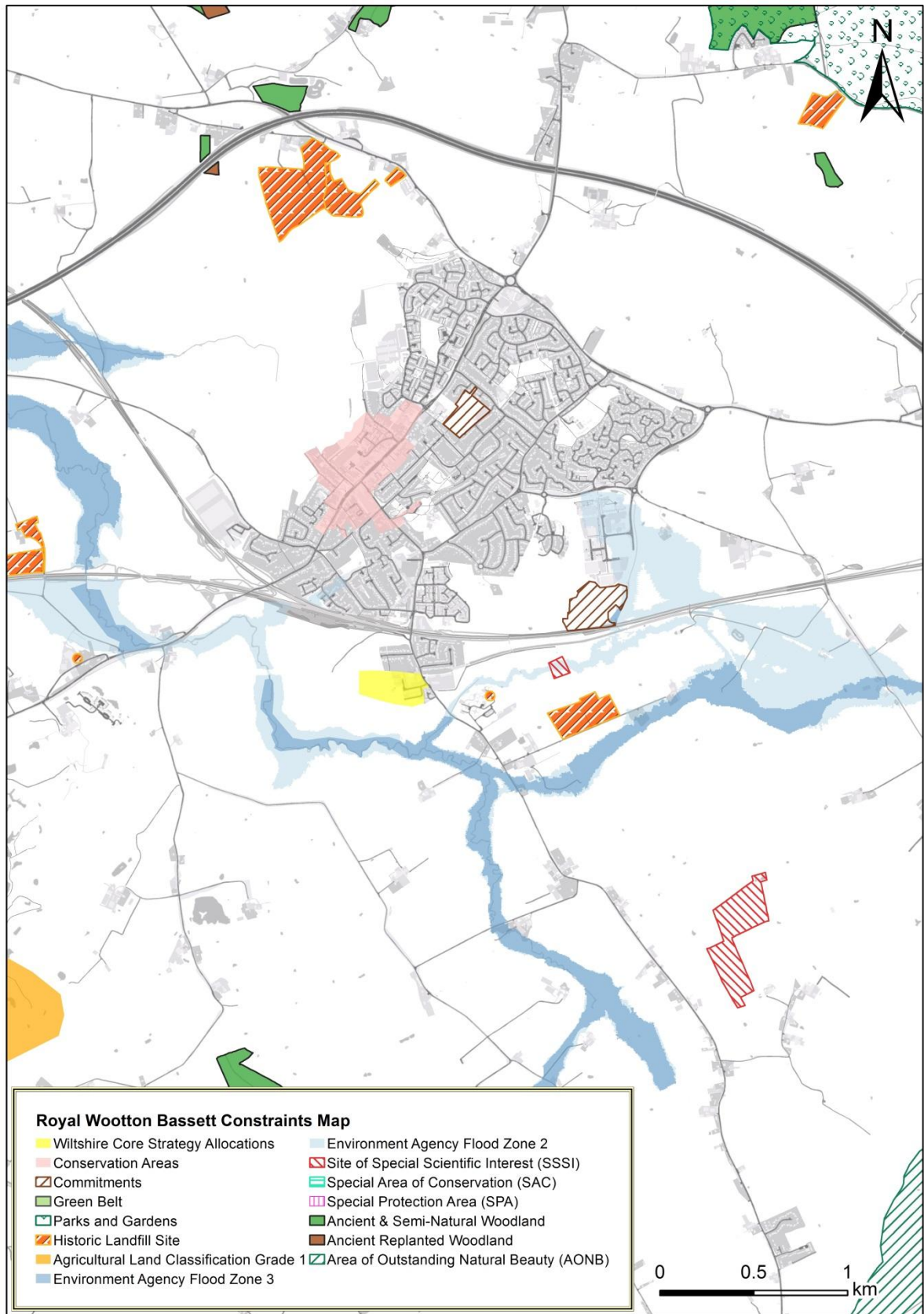
Settlement Strategic Issues

Key findings

- There have been high rates of housebuilding, but no significant development of employment land or significant inward investment
- The town as a low level of self containment indicating a pronounced dormitory role
- There is a need to retain the individual character and separate identity of the town
- Further expansion might need a scale sufficient to support a new primary school
- There is the potential to provide a railway station

Issues

1. The dormitory function of the town is increasingly pronounced, what is a realistic strategy and role for the future of the town?
2. How can more infrastructure, local services and jobs be provided?



Swindon Housing Market Area – Strategic Issues

The Swindon Housing Market Area is centred on the regional town of Swindon. This is reflected in commuting relationships, particularly between Royal Wootton Bassett and other smaller settlements within the HMA and Swindon.

Although the economy of the Swindon/M4 Corridor Functional Economic Market Area is relatively strong, recent growth has underperformed Wiltshire as a whole. This is reflected in an increase in out commuting from Swindon. Significant levels of new employment land are planned for in Swindon, but delivery issues have led to reported short-term shortfalls in high quality office and industrial land.

There are significant economic opportunities for the area connected with the electrification of the Great Western railway and the potential for new stations, including at Royal Wotton Bassett. There may also be growth opportunities connected with business clusters of knowledge intensive business services, pharmaceuticals and high-tech manufacturing in the FEMA. A significant drag on the economy of the FEMA remains the poor image of Swindon's central area, although regeneration is proceeding.

The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 sets an ambitious strategy of housing growth, centred on new communities on the periphery of the Swindon urban area. Although new house building at Swindon has been high in absolute terms, the rate of construction has not kept pace with the levels planned for in the Swindon Borough Local Plan for the period 2011-2026. This is principally due to delays in the building of several of the planned urban extensions, and it has resulted in a shortfall in five year housing land supply in comparison with the Swindon Borough Local Plan target. In consequence, central government policy's 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' has led to permission being granted for dispersed, unplanned housing development at the Borough's villages.

Thus, the levels of planning permissions and housebuilding in rural areas of Swindon Borough have exceeded the plan targets. Similarly, new house building at Royal Wootton Bassett has been high.

Marlborough, which lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, has high house prices and an affordability ratio that is the highest of all settlements in Wiltshire. Low levels of housing affordability may also be experienced in other rural parts of the HMA, but the town of Swindon is comparatively affordable. Marlborough also faces air quality and environmental issues as a consequence of traffic.

Strategic issues for the HMA at this stage are:

- How much of the additional housing needs of the HMA could and should be planned for within and/or at the urban area of Swindon? How can this be balanced against the objectives of respecting the environmental quality of the area for existing communities and maintaining a diversity of uses needed to support a thriving economy? Is infrastructure a constraints to such growth?

- How can we deliver high quality employment land in the right locations to support existing businesses and take advantage of inward investment opportunities in the Functional Economic Market Area?
- What is the role of the market towns and other rural settlements within the Housing Market Area?