

Questions from Les Durrant, Chair of Swindon Development Delivery Panel

To Councillor Toby Sturgis – Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property

Question

Swindon Development Delivery Panel (SDDP) has expressed its concern that SBC Economic Strategy has a timeline to 2026, Wiltshire and Swindon's Local Plan programmes have timescales to 2036 whilst organisations such as Highways England, who are responsible of the planning and delivery of key infrastructure, have Investment Strategies to 2050.

Bearing in mind the urgent need for infrastructure to support the development needed to maintain prosperity associated with growth of Swindon, the SDDP would like to see a long term strategic vision to 2050 and alignment of economic and spatial planning timescales to this date. This has already been called for by Swindon Chamber of Commerce (SCC) in their representations to the draft Economic Strategy. What are Cabinets views on the appropriateness of this, bearing in mind the amount of employment and housing development that would need to be accommodated in the period to 2050 and the position of the administrative boundary between the two authorities?

Answer

The plan horizon for the Wiltshire Local Plan Review is 2036. This reflects government policy within the National Planning Policy Framework for Local Plans to relate to an appropriate timescale, "preferably a 15-year time horizon". Predicting local household formation and population growth over a much longer timescale of more than 30 years would not be realistic. However, it is an important part of strategic planning to ensure that decisions are not made through any Local Plan that would compromise the ability to plan for the development needs of the County beyond that timescale.

At this stage, as it is unclear what future growth needs may be beyond 2036, our current focus must be to ensure that we have a clear strategy in place for the period to 2036. In doing this, we are committed to joint working with Swindon Borough Council through the preparation of the Joint Spatial Framework, which will inform the review of both authorities' respective plans.

We recognise that longer term strategic planning and investment in infrastructure is important to ensure that we have sufficient headroom in capacity and are forward thinking enough to be able to respond to future development needs of the County in a timely way.