

EXTRACTS FROM BAKER ASSOCIATES REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2008

3 The importance of spatial planning

3.1 Spatial planning is an integral part of a local authority's 'place-shaping role'. It is central to creating a vision for the future of places and translating that vision into priorities, programmes, policies and land allocations for its realisation. Spatial planning brings together community derived objectives within an overall framework of national and regional policies and strategies to deliver sustainable development.

3.2 PPS12: Creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning (Communities & Local Government, June 2008) effectively summarises the role of Spatial Planning and its Local Government context:

"The planning system has been substantially reformed to embed community responsive policy-making at its heart and to make contributing towards the achievement of *sustainable development* a statutory objective. The new *spatial planning* system exists to deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes, and requires planners to collaborate actively with the wide range of stakeholders and agencies that help to shape local areas and deliver local services.

The new planning system therefore both offers, and requires, the development of a stronger leadership role for local authorities and elected members, built on collaboration through LSPs and accountable delivery through LAAs. The government intends that spatial planning objectives for local areas, as set out in the LDF, should be aligned not only with national and regional plans, but also with the shared priorities set out in Sustainable Community Strategies where these are consistent with national and regional policy". (Paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6)

3.3 The creation of a Unitary Wiltshire Council offers a very great opportunity to embed this new way of thinking about planning into the way in which the Council delivers its services. It requires the new Council to understand:

- the positive and proactive role of spatial planning to deliver community aspirations;
- the key role of spatial planning to deliver the Council's political priorities in the areas of promoting economic progress, delivering affordable housing, improving opportunities for recreation, delivering sustainable transport solutions, promoting effective environmental plans and strategies and assisting structural changes in health provision;
- the need to structure services to facilitate closer integration of plan making, Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements.

Corporate support and service integration

8.1 Section 3 highlighted the importance of spatial planning to Wiltshire Council as a key delivery mechanism for achieving the Council's political priorities, corporate strategies and the spatial outcomes from the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

- 8.2 The final report of the CLG Spatial Planning in Practice Project, which looked at progress towards the implementation of the new LDF system, identified the following key ingredients required to deliver a successful LDF:
- Obtain corporate recognition of the role of the LDF as a key delivery mechanism for the SCS, other local strategies and the corporate plan;
 - Invest in creating partnerships and in explaining what the LDF can do for other service providers.
- 8.3 These are important messages for the new Council where there is an opportunity to embed the new culture change regarding the role of spatial planning into the vision and structure of the new authority.
- 8.4 Obtaining corporate support means ensuring that the delivery of the LDF is identified as an early corporate priority and that it is supported through a commitment to adequately resourcing its delivery.
- 8.5 Implicit in the above statement, however, is that delivery of the LDF does not simply mean supporting an LDF team of spatial planners, but ensuring that Wiltshire Council is organised to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery, recognising the importance of the role of staff within other service areas in the development of the LDF and, equally, the importance of the LDF team in helping to deliver the priorities of other services.