

Our Place in the Future

***Another opportunity for you to have
a say on the planning policies that
will shape the district for the next 20
years***

Foreword by Councillor Paul Clegg, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Salisbury District Council

The pace of change can be daunting and we must plan carefully for the challenges that we face now and in the future.

In summer 2007 and spring 2008 we asked for your views on options that would help us to develop a new set of planning policies for the district. We were delighted with the level of interest. Some 6000 people responded to the first round of consultation and around 8000 comments were received on the second.

These are serious issues and we need to agree a strategy that will ensure that south Wiltshire continues to be a thriving and vibrant place where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life and good health in a safe, clean neighbourhood. This must be a place where people can appreciate a superb environment that makes the most of the natural landscape and historic buildings and complements them with exciting new buildings. It must have a thriving economy and hold a strong place within the wider region. We must act now if we are to meet our existing and future challenges especially climate change and affordable housing.

I am pleased that the issue of the strategic growth of our area over the next 20 years has produced such robust and healthy debate.

Your comments have helped us to understand your priorities, aspirations, hopes and fears and to develop our thinking accordingly. However, the process very clearly revealed tensions and concerns, particularly around the level of growth we can accommodate, while ensuring that characteristics of the district that we all hold so dear are not compromised.

Our officers have listened carefully to what you said and have produced a new magazine style document to reflect your concerns. This strategy has been endorsed for consultation by the council's cabinet. We now want to hear your views on the revised approach, before Cabinet debate the issues in detail.

This is a genuine opportunity to have your say, and the issues have yet to be debated by the council's Cabinet. We want to hear your views on our revised approach before we decide the way forward.

From April 2009 planning policies will be the responsibility of the new unitary Wiltshire Council. We have been working closely with our colleagues in the other Wiltshire councils and have agreed that the policies we adopt will form part of a countywide Core Strategy to be produced in due course. Agreeing robust policies now will stand us in good stead for the future.

One of the things you told us was that the original consultation document was too long and technical. For this new stage of consultation we have tried to summarise the issues in a more accessible format, highlighting many of the key issues in a straightforward way. I hope that you find this approach helpful.

By listening very carefully to our communities we will be in a strong position to take the tough decisions necessary to ensure that south Wiltshire has a very bright future.

Councillor Paul Clegg
Salisbury District Council Portfolio Holder, Planning
August 2008

The purpose of this document and how to use it.

What exactly is this document?

This magazine represents a third phase of consultation relating to the preparation of the Core Strategy and is part of the process of producing a new set of planning policies for south Wiltshire.

What is a 'Core Strategy'?

The Core Strategy document will contain planning policies to guide the development of south Wiltshire over the next 20 years. It will provide the guidelines to co-ordinate new development, ensuring that it meets our local needs and allows communities to realise their aspirations. It will safeguard the quality of the environment and promote the principles of sustainable development, allowing us to live within our means and reduce the environmental impacts of our actions. It will take into account the views of all sections of the community and stakeholders, and be consistent with national and regional guidance.

Haven't you already asked us about this?

Yes, we have. During the preparation of the Core Strategy, there are several stages of consultation. The first round of consultation on the Core Strategy took place last summer and was called “**Our Place in the Future**”. The responses to this first round of consultation were then used to inform the preparation of a second version of the Core Strategy called the “**Preferred Options**”, also referred to as the “**Black Book**”. This was consulted on for 8 weeks between February and April.

Following that consultation, it was resolved by the District Council that further discussion and consultation should take place on the Core Strategy – this is what this magazine is all about. This third round of consultation has been called “**Our Place in the Future**” again because we understand from feedback that this was preferred.

Why producing this plan now is important

A number of people have understandably questioned why Salisbury is working on this plan when it will be replaced by the Unitary Council in April 2009. The reasons are clear:

- We have pressing needs now, especially for affordable housing and new jobs. We must act now.
- We have a legal responsibility to produce this plan and so will the new authority. We are working with the agreement and in partnership with Wiltshire. They realise that if we do not act now they will inherit a position of even more acute needs next year.
- If we do not find sites for new housing then private developers will do it for us leading to the potential for uncontrolled development. You have told us this is definitely what you do not want. There would be less control over the ability to deliver affordable housing due to there being no policy in place.
- The LDF is the way of delivering some of the objectives of the Community Strategy. By not progressing it, we are failing to properly act on the voice of our communities.
- The delivery of projects such as the Salisbury Vision would be stifled which could undermine Salisbury's role as a retail centre.

What is the “evidence base”?

Throughout this magazine, we refer to our “evidence” and our “evidence base”. To identify the challenges we face we have taken a really detailed look at the facts and figures available to us, gathered information from a wide variety of sources and carried out our own surveys. Collectively, this information is referred to as the “evidence” or “evidence base”. This evidence, along with your consultation responses, helps us to prepare the Core Strategy.

Appropriate Assessment / Habitats Regulations

This consultation period also allows you to comment on an Appropriate Assessment that we have published under the Habitats Regulations and we would welcome your comments on this too. The Appropriate Assessment is an example of a study that forms part of our evidence base as referred to above.

The Habitats Regulations require an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken in respect of any plan or project that either alone, or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. A European Site is any classified Special Protection Area and any Special Area of Conservation.

An Appropriate Assessment helps us in the wider decision making process required by the Habitats Regulations. The Appropriate Assessment is available to view at www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions.

How can I make my views known?

In order to be helpful and get to the heart of matters, this magazine focuses on the most contentious issues that were raised during previous rounds of consultation. For example, there was clearly some concern around the number and location of houses being proposed. However, the majority of the issues raised in the in previous stages (including the Black Book) have been strongly supported and we do not wish to over-complicate matters by repeating them again in this document.

Let us know your thoughts by using the form at the back of this magazine and sending it to us at the following address:

By post	Forward Planning and Conservation Salisbury District Council Planning Office 61 Wyndham Road Salisbury Wiltshire SP1 3AH
email:	ldf@salisbury.gov.uk
tel:	01722 434362
website:	www.salisbury.gov.uk

It is important to point out that as part of this round of consultation you are more than welcome to comment on any of the issues that are set out in the Preferred options, even if they are not referred to in this magazine. Comments on any aspect of this magazine or the Preferred options will all be taken into account. The Preferred options can be viewed along with all the evidence base at www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

Wherever you see the following symbol, it is a specific area where we would like your comments. *{Text box subject to redesign}*

The form at the end of this magazine is for you to complete and return to us. If you have any additional comments about any other issue raised in the Preferred options, but not specifically referred to in this magazine, or on the Appropriate Assessment then please write them on a separate piece of paper.

Why not come and find out more?

The consultation begins on 1 September and runs for eight weeks until 24 October, during which time we are asking your views on all these matters. Over the next eight weeks, a series of exhibitions will take place across the district for you to find out more. Why not drop in for a cup of tea and a chat with our planning officers? We are also encouraging parish and town councils to hold their own events and would recommend that you keep an eye on parish notice boards.

Community Area	Venue	Date	Time
Salisbury City	Guildhall, Salisbury	1 September	12 noon to 7pm
Mere and District	Grove Buildings, Mere	2 September	12 noon to 7pm
Nadder Valley	Victoria House, Tisbury	3 September	12 noon to 7pm
Stonehenge	Antrobus House, Amesbury	4 September	12 noon to 7pm
Southern	St Laurence's Church Hall, Downton	5 September	12 noon to 7pm
Four Rivers	Michael Herbert Hall, Wilton	8 September	12 noon to 7pm
Salisbury City	TBC	w/b 6 October? TBC	TBC

What happens next?

We encourage everyone to make their views known at this stage. However, there will also be a future consultation opportunity.

Once we have gathered opinions during this round of consultation and amended the Core Strategy further, there will be a final opportunity to comment prior to its submission to the Secretary of State early in 2009. All comments at that stage will be considered by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Sites needed for new homes and jobs in the longer term, including in the rural areas, will be the subject of consultation on another subsequent set of planning documents, which will be the responsibility of the new Wiltshire Council. Consultation on this subsequent set of planning documents will give you the opportunity to discuss important issues of how growth may be sensitively accommodated in your area.

Introduction

Key changes to the draft Core Strategy

Many of the proposals in the original draft core strategy were strongly supported. Broadly, there was general agreement about the need to create more jobs and affordable homes to rent and buy, whilst protecting the natural and built environment. However, there was much greater concern about the possible location of new homes, jobs and the delivery of the infrastructure to support them.

This document does not attempt to revisit everything in the original consultation, but focuses on those areas where there was less agreement.

However, your comments are welcome on any issues mentioned in this document or raised during the previous stage.

Key changes in the draft strategy now proposed include:

- The strategy will focus on the delivery of new homes and jobs for the first five years of the 20 year plan. This will amount to around 3,500 new homes in and around Salisbury and Amesbury.

- Proposals for the location of land for homes and employment beyond this period (another 8,900 houses will be required over the life of the plan) will be subject to further detailed consultation. This will be the responsibility of the new Wiltshire Council and will form part of the county-wide Local Development Framework.
- Suggestions for the new settlement around the Pheasant Hotel on the A30 at Winterslow and an urban extension to Firsdown have been removed. There are no plans for a new settlement anywhere in the district.
- Possible development in the remaining villages across the district, including Alderbury and Laverstock, will be modest in size and in keeping with the character of those areas. This possible development will be the subject of further consultation by the new Wiltshire council when they produce the subsequent detailed policy documents.
- The '40ft rule', limiting the height of developments in order to preserve the historic roofscape of Salisbury and treasured views of the Cathedral, will remain in place.

Explaining growth - taking positive action to meet local needs.

It is very important that we explain clearly our approach to delivering new houses and jobs. This is the issue that, unsurprisingly, caused the greatest interest and controversy during previous rounds of consultation, especially the number and potential location of new houses.

The number of new dwellings that need to be built in this area has proven a very controversial issue. It is apparent that many of you feel that the number proposed over the next 20 years is simply too high. The fear is that the character of our existing towns and villages will be lost through over-development. . The number of new houses proposed within south Wiltshire is not arbitrary but comes from the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which is a higher level strategy that we must take into account. This number of houses has been based on household projections and economic forecasts. Of course no-one can predict with certainty what will happen in the future, but the number of houses proposed within south Wiltshire has been based on robust evidence.

However, it is important to point out that the Council has its own robust evidence base which also confirms that there is an acute need for these new houses, especially affordable homes. For example, the Council regularly carries out a local housing needs and market survey, which indicates where areas of need may be. In particular, our evidence highlights the following areas of need that should be addressed:

(a) The need to address the acute shortfall in affordable homes.

Affordable housing can be defined as:

"housing (including low cost market and subsidised houses (irrespective of their tenure/ownership/financial arrangements) which is available in perpetuity to those households who are financially unable to compete in the local market (for rent or for sale) to secure a suitable home"

Examples of affordable housing would be providing housing for local people to rent, or where they can purchase a share of the property, thereby providing them with a home at less than market value.

The evidence indicates that, by 2009, 669 households per year will need affordable housing. The 12,400 homes that will be delivered over the next 20 years averages at 620 homes per year, which falls short of providing just the affordable housing need. The housing waiting list continues to grow, standing at 2894 at the start of May 2008. Despite the downturn in the housing market, the average house price in south Wiltshire is £247,819. 92% of those seeking to enter the housing market cannot meet this price. This highlights acute need we should seek to address.

The need to provide more affordable housing was supported by the majority of respondents to our earlier consultation. However, a significant minority argued strongly that the suggested housing numbers were not required. Our evidence clearly shows that there is acute need for those who are the least well off. We cannot and should not ignore this.

(b) The need to use the market to provide more affordable homes

The main way to meet the majority of our need is by requiring house builders to provide a proportion of affordable homes in their developments. We are recommending a minimum of 40% of affordable homes in all new schemes of five or more homes. This was a move strongly supported at previous consultation stages.

This means that we have to encourage the market to help us make real progress in meeting the acute affordable housing need. This is another clear reason why there is a need to accept and plan for new housing growth in south Wiltshire.

(c) The need to plan for the population living longer and together in smaller numbers

You asked us to ensure that the elderly have the choice of specially designed homes to allow them to live with dignity within their own communities. The number of people aged 65 and over will increase by just under 10,000 in south Wiltshire by 2026. In addition more 1 and 2 person households will form during the same period, meaning that more homes will be needed relative to the size of the population. This creates a need for additional homes for which we must plan.

(d) The need created by a growing population.

By 2026, the population of the district will have grown by about 14,000. This presents a clear need for new housing to be built to meet demand.

(e) The need to retain an adequate workforce to secure our long-term economic prosperity.

We have to plan for a robust economic future and not just leave it to chance. Economic growth needs housing to support it.

The acute shortage of affordable homes highlights a real problem for employers in south Wiltshire. We do not have the affordable homes to attract and retain an adequate workforce. This, coupled with an ageing population and increasing out-migration (caused by the lack of affordable homes) and out-commuting, will cause the problem to worsen.

If south Wiltshire is to have the prosperous future that respondents to our consultation want, then we have to build the new houses to allow workers of all types, ages and skills to be able to make a home in the area.

(f) Meeting regeneration needs

Parts of south Wiltshire are under threat of decline if we do not take positive steps to plan for their future.

One example is the MOD's intention to vacate the UK Land Forces HQ in Wilton, removing 1,200 jobs with a potentially serious detrimental impact on local businesses. Therefore some of the demand for housing need is based on issues such as planning for mixed use developments, to help secure a prosperous future. The proposed relocation and regeneration of the Churchfields industrial estate in Salisbury is another good example of where a need for new housing is created when seeking to secure the long-term prosperity of a settlement.

(g) Retaining viable local services and creating sustainable communities

There is significant pressure on many services in our rural settlements, with village shops and pubs finding it increasingly difficult to survive. Local communities have told us that they want the council to take action to try and retain them where possible. One of the ways we can help is to allow modest growth in settlements that currently provide a range of services. Such growth introduces new customers for businesses and helps them to remain viable. However, this does create a need for new housing.

(h) Using new development to solve local problems.

We can work with housebuilders to use the development process to solve long-standing local problems, such as road junctions that need improving, rebuilding a village hall or upgrading flood defences, where new development would add to the burden on such facilities. Developers can either implement the improvements themselves or make a financial contribution to the appropriate agency. This is a key benefit of allowing new development.

(l) Ensuring there is enough housing available to meet identified needs

The volatility of the housing market make it even more imperative that we plan as far as we can to ensure the steady supply of homes to meet the needs we have identified. We can do this by working with potential developers, landowners and other agencies to deliver appropriate sites.

(i) The need to provide for gypsies and travellers

National guidance requires us to provide accommodation for gypsies and travellers.

(j) The need to provide homes for 'key workers'

Key workers are those employed delivering an essential public service in a sector where there are serious recruitment and retention problems, e.g. nurses and teachers. Over 16% of all our households are home to key workers, many of whom cannot afford open market housing. The fact that these key workers cannot afford open market housing is likely to impact on the quality of public services we can expect in south Wiltshire. This is another reason why more housing is required in the area.

The Challenges we all face

We have taken account of the evidence and listened carefully to a wide range of views and have identified a number of key issues, problems and challenges that the policies in the Core Strategy should set out to address.

- How do we ensure a sustainable future for south Wiltshire?
- How can we meet the challenge of climate change?
- Can we agree the role our settlements should take?
- How do we ensure a decent, affordable home for all?
- How do we ensure a prosperous economy, providing jobs, vibrant town centres and a thriving countryside?
- What can we do to support safe and healthy communities that provide opportunities for all?
- How can we make the most of our beautiful natural environment while protecting its value?
- How do we make the most of our historic environments and look after them for future generations?
- How do we ensure that growth does not undermine the very thing that makes our area so attractive to begin with?
- What steps should we take to welcome visitors and promote leisure and shopping opportunities?
- Can we deliver the "Community Chest" idea for raising money to invest in areas of need?
- What measures are needed to ensure the quality of new buildings is sympathetic to their setting, makes a positive contribution to the character of the area and does not erode the very qualities that are so unique to south Wiltshire?
- How do we face challenges such as flood risk, waste, reducing pollution and providing transport choices?

Agreeing actions to address these challenges

Previous areas of agreement

Many of the options we put forward to address the challenges before us met with very strong public support. Issues such as protecting the natural and built environment, ensuring that everyone has access to essential services, protecting village shops and pubs and open spaces, met with widespread agreement. Because of this, we do not intend to repeat them all again here. However you can still comment further if you wish by going to the Preferred options document at www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

Areas for further consideration.

We want this document to focus on the areas where it is clear more debate would be helpful in allowing the Council to understand fully the views of the community when making its decision on the final content of the Core Strategy. These issues are especially based around:

- The strategy for growth, including the role and function of our settlements
- The location and volume of growth
- The 40 ft rule in Salisbury
- The future delivery and location of jobs
- How we can ensure that the new growth is matched by improved transport and other infrastructure requirements.

The Big Issue - Where do we build the new houses required to meet our local needs?

If we are to meet our need, both now and in the future, we cannot avoid the need to build new houses. We know that this has raised many concerns and we hope you find our response positive and responsible.

(a) The preferred strategy - sharing the growth

New houses will be dispersed throughout existing settlements, with numbers based on their services, job opportunities and character.

(b) Meeting immediate housing and employment needs, while giving towns and villages more time to discuss these sensitive issues

We need to ensure that we can deliver enough housing and jobs to meet our immediate needs for the first five years of the new plan. However, it is also clear that identifying the amount and location of new housing sites within our villages is a sensitive issue that needs more detailed consideration and, importantly, more dialogue with the communities themselves. To strike a balance, we propose to identify the large strategic housing and employment sites that can meet our immediate needs in years 1 to 5 of the Core Strategy. However, the location of longer term sites across the district, including within our villages, which will be deliverable in years 6 to 20 of the plan, will be the subject of much more dialogue with communities. These longer term sites will be identified in new policy documents that will need to be produced in the future by the new Wiltshire Council.

(c) Meeting our immediate needs with sites to deliver housing in the next five years

We have pressing needs for new homes and we cannot afford to wait. We are proposing to allocate four major housing sites in the Core Strategy that can be developed without the need for any further policy documents. These sites have been identified after a thorough analysis of the area and careful consideration of previous consultation responses. The sites are:

- Land to the northwest of Salisbury, known as Fugglestone Red Phase 2
- Land to south of Amesbury, adjacent to the Archer's Gate development
- Land to the north of Salisbury around Old Sarum

- Land to the east of Salisbury, to the north of Bishopdown Farm (often called Hampton Park).

All of these sites would be the subject to master planning and a planning application process, which would be the subjects of further consultation

(d) How these sites were chosen.

We have carried out a thorough appraisal of our district to ensure we have identified where land may be available for development in a manner that minimises impacts on local character and distinctiveness.

Through carrying out a rigorous and systematic site selection process and, importantly, listening to the views of the community, we have identified the four strategic housing sites to meet our immediate needs.

Identifying these sites has been a complex process and has entailed a lot of technical work. It would be inappropriate to include it here, but we have produced a background document entitled "Identification of Strategic Growth Areas", which is available on our website or on request, which includes how we have reached our conclusions (see www.salisbury.gov.uk).

(e) How we intend to meet the longer term housing needs of south Wiltshire

We also need to take a longer view and plan for growth for the next 20 years. We need to ensure that carefully planned growth will bring real benefits, such as affordable housing, new community facilities and economically viable shops and services. We need to ensure that any growth sits comfortably in existing settlements, is sensitively designed and located, and has the essential infrastructure (roads and drains etc) to support it. Importantly we also need to spend more time discussing the best location that each community feels comfortable with.

(f) A commitment to further consultation

To tackle the longer term needs of the district, the new Wiltshire Council will need to produce policy documents as part of the Local Development Framework. The preparation of these policy documents will entail much more detailed discussions about specific sites and offer more time to discuss how best to accommodate growth.

(g) An indication of the likely longer term growth required to meet our future needs

Many people would like us to be more explicit over how much new development is proposed for their area. However, as we are committed to further discussion with communities on long-term growth, it is difficult to be precise in advance of those discussions and the production of the subsequent policy documents. However, if we accept the strategy of dispersal around the district, then the community areas will need to accommodate the following growth levels over the 20 years lifespan of this Core Strategy:

- **Salisbury and Wilton Area:** about 8700 new homes (about 435 per year) over the next 20 years, to meet local needs and secure the long term prosperity of the city. This would include 2550 new homes shared between Fugglestone Red, Old Sarum and Hampton Park to meet immediate needs in years 1 to 5 as described above. The delivery of these sites will be subject to detailed master planning and discussions with key agencies. Additional sites will include a residential mixed-use scheme on the Churchfields industrial estate. The detailed selection of longer-term sites will be the subject of further dialogue with the community and the production of subsequent policy documents.
- **Amesbury Community Plan Area:** about 2240 new homes (about 112 per year) over the next 20 years. The strategic site at Archer's Gate could deliver about 825 of these new homes, within the first 5 years of the Plan. The delivery of this site will be subject to detailed master planning and discussions with key agencies. The detailed selection of longer-term sites will be the subject of further dialogue with the community and the production of subsequent policy documents.

- **Southern Area:** about 590 new homes (about 29 per year) over the next 20 years. Alderbury is constrained by the roads and will only be able to accommodate around 50 new homes. The landscape and environmental constraints at Laverstock would limit growth to a similarly low number. An urban extension at Firsdown and a new settlement at Winterslow will no longer be pursued due to environmental concerns raised by consultees, the views of the government office and public opinion. It is envisaged that the main service centre of Downton will take about 200 new homes (10 per year) over the 20 years of the plan, to be discussed further with the community as subsequent policy documents are produced by Wiltshire Council.
- **Western Area:** about 510 new homes (about 26 per year) over the next 20 years. We would envisage less than 300 new homes (15 per year) in Mere over the next 20 years, with the location to be discussed further with the community as subsequent policy documents are produced by Wiltshire Council.
- **Nadder Area:** about 360 new homes (about 18 per year) over the next 20 years. We would envisage less than 250 homes (about 12 per year) in Tisbury over the next 20 years, with locations to be discussed further with the community as subsequent policy documents are produced by Wiltshire Council.

Placing greater emphasis on delivering the jobs to secure a successful economic future

It is clear from consultation responses that some people thought that the importance of the local economy in securing a vibrant future was a little lost, as the previous debate focussed largely on housing issues. It was also suggested that it did not have a high enough profile within the previous consultation document. We agree!

The vision for the economy that we set out in the last document, gathered very strong support:

In 20 years south, Wiltshire will be a place where the economy is thriving, providing a range of job opportunities to match a growing population and where traditionally strong sectors, such as scientific research and development, continue to be world leaders.

As with housing, we need to ensure that we have enough opportunities to meet our immediate needs within the first five years of the plan, and then decide how to provide for our longer term needs.

(a) Meeting our immediate economic needs

We must act now to meet our short-term needs, so that businesses have opportunities to flourish, we can attract new jobs and remain competitive with our neighbours. We must also address specific local priorities. These include the MOD pulling out of Wilton and delivering the elements of the Salisbury Vision e.g. redevelopment of Churchfields industrial estate. We therefore propose to allocate the following employment sites in the Core Strategy that can be developed straight away without the need for any further policy documents. These sites have been identified only after a thorough analysis of the area and careful consideration of previous consultation responses.

- A major new business park on land between the Harnham Business Park and the Livestock Market, to the south of Netherhampton Road;
- A phased redevelopment of the Churchfields industrial estate as a residential led mixed-use development with office, leisure and hospitality jobs;
- Redevelopment of the UKLF HQ in Wilton as a major new business park;
- Development of the next phase of Solstice Park, Amesbury;

- Significant employment land allocated in most of the strategic housing sites mentioned above;
- Revisiting the master plan at Porton Down Science Park to assess whether it is still fit for purpose and working with major employers at the MOD, Boscombe Down and the Salisbury District Hospital to help them meet their future aspirations.

All of these sites would be covered by planning briefs or master plans and a planning application process which would be the subject of further consultation. The proposed relocation of the uses from Churchfields will be in a phased manner over time and may be dispersed to a variety of locations as appropriate to the individual businesses.

A Major New Business Park for Harnham

Due to tightly constrained land surrounding Salisbury, as identified in the site selection process mentioned earlier (see www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions for further details), the most appropriate area to accommodate strategic employment growth is on land south of Netherhampton Road between Harnham and the Livestock Market.

While this site can make a very significant contribution to Salisbury's economic future growth, we will need to ensure that the necessary and essential infrastructure improvements are delivered to support it. An obvious example could be investment in local roads.

The mixed-use redevelopment of Churchfields, a key Brownfield site close to the railway station and the city centre, is a Salisbury Vision project that received strong support during consultation. A strategic allocation in Harnham could enable some of the businesses currently on Churchfields industrial estate to relocate.

Securing our long term economic prosperity

The principle of improving job prospects and providing a strong and prosperous economy throughout South Wiltshire was clearly supported during previous rounds of consultation on the Core Strategy.

Therefore we will make sure that there are policies in the Core Strategy that will nurture and protect existing employment providers, and maintain and enhance the rural economy. We will seek to match jobs to homes and direct development towards larger settlements that are more sustainable and where growth will secure their economic and social viability.

Across the rest of south Wiltshire, we need to provide land for about 500 jobs over the next 20 years. We will continue to work towards providing a range of quality employment opportunities on the existing employment site at Solstice Park in Amesbury. The Core Strategy will also seek to strengthen and encourage biotechnology, environmental technology and advanced engineering sectors.

Given that the area is home to world class employers at Porton Down and Boscombe Down, and benefits from a large military presence, policies will also ensure that these organisations can meet their aspirations for expansion.

To improve the rural economy and ensure that the rest of the district remains economically vibrant, the Core Strategy will set out the principle of allocating land in Mere, Tisbury, and Downton to allow for managed growth to help secure the long term future of these villages as key local employment centres. However, the precise location and nature of these sites will be the subject of further in-depth consultation with communities that will then be reflected in subsequent planning documents to be produced by the new Wiltshire council.

Throughout the other villages in the district, the Core Strategy will include policies to provide opportunities for low-key, sympathetic employment development, offering local jobs that discourage commuting.

Policies will be framed so that new growth will not damage the special character of these villages. The actual locations and sizes of these sites for long term growth will be agreed

through future dialogue with local communities and in further documents produced by the new Wiltshire Council.

You want us to ensure that the infrastructure, especially the roads, is adequate to support the new growth necessary to meet our local needs

We can only make real progress over the next 20 years if we tackle those infrastructure issues that most of us take for granted, but are essential for our quality of life. These include decent roads, drainage and sewers, waste disposal and power when we turn on the lights.

The state of local roads was frequently raised, and was used by some as an argument against any new growth. However, we have acute and pressing needs, especially to provide housing for younger people and those who are worse off, as well as providing the economic growth essential to secure long term prosperity. The present condition of the roads is not a sustainable argument against necessary development. Indeed, when considering the adequacy or otherwise of infrastructure there are a number of important points to consider:

(a) We are working with partners

We already work with partners, such as the highways, education and water authorities, to identify what infrastructure improvements are needed to support the growth suggested in our Core Strategy. We must ensure that new development is adequately served. We are also exploring how new development can contribute to meeting some of our longer term requirements, where new development places an additional burden on infrastructure.

(b) New development can help deliver solutions.

Often a problem is understood and solutions agreed, but there is no money available to implement them. The Core Strategy recommends that contributions from developers should be used to tackle longer term infrastructure issues. An example would be requiring a new business park in Harnham to contribute to resolving local transport problems it might make worse, by working with the local highway authorities. Much of the cycle network throughout Salisbury is a direct result of this process, having been paid for by developers.

(c) We must focus on the achievable and keep a sense of perspective

Strong voices have called for a Salisbury bypass, Wylve Valley Relief Road, Harnham Link and much more. However, it is unlikely that there will be central government funding for these projects in the foreseeable future. Therefore we need to work within the framework we have.

Despite the perceived problems with Salisbury's roads, they certainly function better than in many big cities, such as Bristol or London. While we may not have sites served by perfect roads, we consider that we can locate new development in areas that, with developers' money, will allow the transport network to continue to function and actually provide the opportunity to make some longer term improvements.

Providing decent homes and jobs for the community should not be compromised by unrealistic expectations about the future availability of infrastructure. By working with investors and infrastructure providers we can meet pressing local needs and use growth positively to start to solve some of the infrastructure problems we face.

You have asked us to work hard to ensure that south Wiltshire is a place with a sustainable future, planning to address the causes of climate change.

Our previous rounds of consultation have brought near unanimity that this challenge is a priority, although it is only fair to acknowledge that there is a very small minority who disagree with the science of climate change.

A co-ordinated approach will be required, involving decisions on where we locate new development, how we provide meaningful choice in transport, the construction of environmentally friendly buildings, the use of renewable energy and doing what we can to minimise waste.

Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document (also known as the Preferred options) and you are welcome to make further comments should you wish. www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

A key priority is the maintenance of our natural environment and providing improved managed access for the benefit of all.

This issue has received strong support during past rounds of consultation. We have a real challenge in balancing the growth that we are seeking, while ensuring that we don't harm what respondents consider to be our greatest asset. One of the main ways of ensuring this objective is through the use of a process known as an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations. You are welcome to view and comment on this document using the link below. This assessment evaluates the potential impact of proposed growth on important nature designations and is used to inform our choices.

Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document (also known as the Preferred options) and you are welcome to make further comments should you wish. www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

You have agreed that tourism is a major sector of our economy, where we should work to deliver higher visitor numbers and longer stays in the area.

In previous rounds of consultation you supported the need to plan for greater numbers of tourists, to contribute to the economy of south Wiltshire. There is a need for accommodation of all kinds, together with improved quality of visitor attractions, especially at Stonehenge.

Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document (also known as the Preferred options) and you are welcome to make further comments should you wish. www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

You have asked us to enhance Salisbury's retail centre and to ensure that shops are protected across our towns and villages.

In previous rounds of consultation you recognised the need to deliver retail growth that will complement Salisbury's niche position as a centre that offers a range of specialist outlets and provides something different from the ordinary. There has been support for the redevelopment of the Maltings and central car park with a major retail-led mixed use scheme that delivers an enhanced retail offer.

The pace of growth in the local service centres of Wilton, Mere, Downton and Tisbury, has been steady and this has continued to support a range of shops and services. There is local concern that additional retail choice needs to be provided in Amesbury. Options proposed to address these issues met with a good level of support in previous rounds of consultation.

Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document (also known as the Preferred options) and you are welcome to make further comments should you wish. www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

You think that developers should pay a fair share towards meeting the extra demands their schemes will place on infrastructure and services.

New development will have some impact on local services and infrastructure. The feedback tells us that you would support an expansion of the range of benefits that can be sought from developers within the legal framework, and a greater say by the community of how the money should be spent.

Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document (also known as the Preferred options) and you are welcome to make further comments should you wish. www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

Protecting Salisbury's Character - retention of the 40 ft Rule.

We have looked closely at the longstanding policy that limits the height of new buildings within the Salisbury ring road in order to retain the city's varied roofscape and views of the Cathedral. We have asked you for your views on this and also commissioned a new study by consultants to review the effectiveness of the policy and to assess whether there are any other options.

We have concluded that the rule has been extremely effective, and has indeed helped retain the essential character of Salisbury. While there are other approaches possible, (such as zoning) this would be much less clear cut and could lead to difficulty in implementing the policy. Our studies, including a workshop of specialists, concluded that the effectiveness of the 40 ft rule was in its simplicity and that it should be retained.

Therefore we are proposing that the 40 ft rule is retained as it is.

Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document (also known as the Preferred options) and you are welcome to make further comments should you wish.
www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

You would like us to ensure that the design of new buildings is of a very high quality and is sympathetic to the character of the area.

In previous rounds of consultation we highlighted the importance of ensuring that new buildings, which are so important to delivering our new homes and jobs, need to be of a very high quality to ensure they complement and enhance our district, rather than spoil its character. You agreed.

Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document (also known as the Preferred options) and you are welcome to make further comments should you wish.
www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

You agree that we need to take action to show off our heritage assets to their full potential, so that we can proudly hand on our built heritage in a better state than when we inherited it.

South Wiltshire is rich in the diversity of buildings and other structures of historic and architectural interest which contribute to the visual quality of the built environment. Although we have many riches, there is clear evidence that we are not making the most of some of our assets. Stonehenge sits marooned between two busy roads and is served by a basic, functional visitor centre. Salisbury Market Place is marred by car parking and a shabby, incoherent treatment of the public domain. In short, while we have fantastic heritage assets, you told us we need to do more to show them off to their best effect.

Further details on this issue can be found in the Preferred Options document (also known as the Preferred options) and you are welcome to make further comments should you wish.
www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferredoptions

Don't Forget

We have tried to keep this magazine straightforward and to focus on the key issues that were clearly of most concern during previous consultation stages. However, don't forget that you are welcome to take a fresh look and to make comments on the Preferred options and on the Appropriate Assessment all of which is on our website at www.salisbury.gov.uk

Your comments on any of the proposals set out in this magazine are welcome. They will be taken into account when we produce the final edition of the Core Strategy.

Your comments should reach us no later than 24th October 2008

Let us know your thoughts by using the following form

RESPONSE FORM TO BE DESIGNED.