



CORE STRATEGY

Preferred options

*Embracing and managing
change for the
benefit of all*

A Plan For Salisbury
and South Wiltshire

2006 - 2026

Consultation Methodology & output report

July 2008

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

	Page No.
1. Purpose of this document	2
2. Background and context	2
3. Objectives and benefits	3
4. Consultation methodology	4
5. Quality Control of Consultation Process	9
6. Results	9
7. Use of Data and Next Steps	10
8. Conclusions	12

1. Purpose of this document

- 1.1.** The purpose of this document is to set out the information we received during the Preferred Options consultation, which was conducted over a period of 8 weeks from 28th February 2008 to 25th April 2008 in accordance with the Councils Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). It represents a simple write up of the process and includes a table showing the responses to the preferred options from stakeholders.
- 1.2.** The consultation was designed to gain responses on a number of preferred options, which emerged from the 'Our Place in the Future' consultation and the subsequent Topic Paper Addendums. It represents a qualitative resource that forms part of a shared evidence base for the district and can be used to inform a series of plans and strategies. Its key function will be to identify the level of support or objection for each preferred option and from this undertake an additional stage of consultation, as resolved by the Full Council meeting on 23rd April 2008. This additional stage of consultation will set out the Councils revised Preferred Options, which will take account of the responses received during the Preferred Options consultation period as well as emerging Government Guidance and the Councils own evidence base.
- 1.3.** Section 2.0 of this document sets out the background to the Local Development Framework while section 3.0 sets out the objectives and benefits of the Core Strategy. Section 4.0 and 5.0 of the document covers the consultation methodology and quality assurance protocols which have been employed during this stage of the LDF. Section 6 gives a brief description of the results of the consultation. While section 7.0 indicates the next steps in the process and section 8.0 draws some conclusions from this stage of the consultation.

2. Background and context

- 2.1.** The new planning system of 'Local Development Frameworks' that is replacing the old system of local plans is divided into a series of documents. One of the key documents is the Core Strategy, which sets out the overarching principles that development in the district will need to conform to. It will also establish the number of houses and the amount of employment land that the District will need to provide and will reinforce the principle of "sustainable communities" and identify broadly where development will be directed.
- 2.2.** As part of this new process, in the first stage, the Council gathered evidence to see what the key issues facing the district were and from this put forward a range of options to tackle them. These 'issues and options' were contained within a document called 'Our Place in the Future' and consultation on this document took place in the summer of 2007. From the consultation responses received along with government guidance at the National, Regional and Local Level and the councils own evidence base, a series of Addendum Topic Papers focusing on specific issues identified within the district were produced. From this a number of Preferred Options on how the district could develop over the next 20 years were produced. These are contained within the Core Strategy Preferred Options document.

3. Objectives and benefits

3.1. The Preferred Options document sets out a spatial planning framework for the long term development of South Wiltshire, ensuring that investment decisions are not made in isolation, but are properly coordinated, with a focus on promoting the principles of sustainable development. It was prepared taking into account the views of all sections of the community and stakeholders, as well as maintaining consistency with national and regional guidance. It also provides a spatial expression of the Community Strategy, as well as the districts other key strategies.

3.2. The Preferred Options document was published in response to the results received from the 'Our Place in the Future' consultation carried out during the summer of 2007. All responses were analysed and a report was published which is available at www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferred-options.htm.

3.3. The Core Strategy is fundamental to the future of our communities and consultation has provided a number of benefits:

- It accords with best practice and Government guidance – *Planning Together Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Spatial Planning: a practical guide*.
- It ensures the essential tests of soundness were passed as set out in National Planning Guidance.
- It complies with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and all other adopted procedures, including the Wiltshire Compact.
- It allows public opinion to be better understood and will ensure that the final document reflects the views, needs and aspirations of the public.
- It raising awareness of the issues affecting the future of the district and how these can best be planned for.
- It allows individual expertise to be gained from the local community, which are essential to creating environments that meet the needs of the users.
- Providing people with a greater understanding of planning issues can increase the efficiency of the planning process.

3.4. It must be understood that the writing of planning policies is not done in isolation. National and Regional planning policies set out a framework which all local planning authorities must adhere to. In certain areas there may be flexibility, which will allow for local circumstances to be reflected and the council will pursue these where they exist. However, more often than not these policies can appear rigid and unresponsive to particular circumstances. By promoting greater dialogue in the policy-making process it is hoped that all stakeholders gain a better understanding of the difficult issues to be faced and can then understand why certain options have to be considered, and ultimately why decisions are made as they are.

3.5. The title given to the consultation initiative was 'Core Strategy Preferred Options: A plan for Salisbury and South Wiltshire 2006 – 2026'. It ran for a period of 8 weeks from 28th February 2008 to 25th April 2008.

4. Consultation methodology

Who was consulted?

4.1. The consultation aimed to involve the very broadest range of stakeholders and included all of the following:

- A letter sent to all households in the district informing them of the consultation and how they could get involved
- 'Hard to reach' groups in liaison with our community partners
- Youth via direct notification to all Primary and Secondary schools in the district and a tailor made summary sheet
- Statutory and non-statutory consultees
- Government departments and agencies
- Regional agencies
- All elected representatives (MP, County, District and Parish Councillors)
- Strategic partners such as the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance
- Community groups and residents associations
- Developers and agents
- Business sector such as the Chambers of Trade and Commerce
- All parties on the LDF database
- Voluntary groups
- Pressure groups (such as CPRE)
- Adjoining districts and parishes
- Availability of consultation document at libraries and the Council Offices

Design of document

4.2. The Preferred Options document was designed in a light, magazine style format in an attempt to make a very complex process, easy to understand and as accessible as possible.

4.3. The document was designed to be as jargon free as possible with the design, layout and language aimed at the 'layperson' rather than those with a more detailed knowledge of the planning process, in order to try and engage with a far wider range of people rather than just with those who usually get involved in such a process.



- 4.4. In accordance with government guidance all documents were framed in a manner that identifies the key issues affecting the district and presented a number of preferred options for tackling them.
- 4.5. Copies of the consultation document can be found on the Councils website at: <http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning/forward-planning/local-development-framework/preferred-options.htm>

The consultation techniques

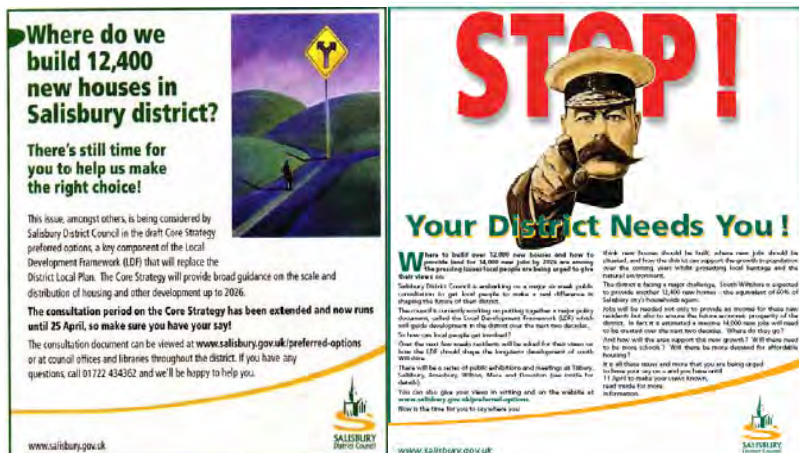
4.6. The consultation was designed to be very comprehensive and is fully compliant with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Indeed, as with the last stage of consultation, a conscious decision was taken to far exceed its requirements in order to try and maximise engagement in this process. It encompassed a wide range of techniques involving a media strategy, publicity, direct notification, posters, summary sheets for young people and public meetings, as set out below.

Direct consultation

- A consultation pack including a covering letter, the Preferred Options document and response forms – This was sent to all consultees on the database: a total of over 850 individuals, business, interested groups, councillors, parish councils and statutory consultees.
- A household letter – All 48,000 households in the district were sent a letter informing them of the Preferred Options consultation and inviting them to have their say and request full copies of the consultation document and a response form.

Indirect notification

4.7. In order to ensure we reached a maximum number of households, adverts informing the public of the consultation were placed in the Salisbury Journal, Blackmore Vale and Avon Advertiser (3 times each during the consultation) and a ‘wrap’, designed to raise awareness about the consultation, was distributed with the Avon Advertiser.



4.8. Throughout the consultation period the Journal ran several press articles about the Preferred Options and radio adverts were broadcast throughout the consultation on Spire FM (5 per day for two weeks). Posters were also put up in Wilton, Downton, Mere, Amesbury, Salisbury and Tisbury to inform the public of the consultation, exhibitions and public meetings.

4.9. BBC Wiltshire broadcast an Interview with Councillor Paul Sample, which discussed the consultation, and Vision News carried out several interviews, which can be viewed online. Consultation documents were available to view in libraries across the district as well as at the Councils offices.

Consultative Technical Group

4.10. During the Issues and Options consultation stage, the Forward Planning Team set up the Consultative Technical Group. The group includes representatives of the from specialist bodies such as the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, utility companies etc. This group is designed to compliment the statutory consultation process with the added benefit of discussing topics raised during the creation of the LDF in an open forum with a multitude of other agencies. The group will continue to meet during key stages during the production of the LDF.

4.11. The consultative technical group met on the 3rd April 2008 during the most recent consultation period. A number of the agencies invited were unable to attend (Such Wessex Water, Environment Agency, English Heritage and County Highways) but each organisation was sent a copy of the Core Strategy Preferred Options directly. The discussion main focus of was on the Highway, nature and archaeological implications of the preferred options.

Public Exhibitions

4.12. A number of public exhibitions followed by public meetings were held across the district to engage members of the public within all of our communities. A list of the exhibitions and public meetings is detailed below:

Settlement	Location	Date	Exhibition	Public Meeting
Amesbury	Antrobus House	6 th March	1pm – 6pm	7pm – 8.30pm
Downton	Memorial Hall	13 th March	1pm – 6pm	7pm – 8.30pm
Salisbury city centre	Guildhall Square	18 th March	1pm – 6pm	7pm – 8.30pm (in the Banquet Hall of the Guildhall)
Tisbury	Victoria Hall	25 th March	1pm – 6pm	7pm – 8.30pm
Mere	Grove Buildings	31 st March	1pm – 6pm	7pm – 8.30pm
Wilton	Michael Herbert Hall	4 th April	1pm – 6pm	7pm – 8.30pm
Amesbury	Antrobus House	8 th April	1pm – 6pm	7pm – 8.30pm

4.13. Pre-publicity was carried out to try and make members of the public aware of these exhibitions. This included displaying posters and releasing press adverts that clearly set out where the exhibitions would be and when. At the exhibitions, display boards summarising the issues that we had identified and planning

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officers attended to answer questions raised. The public meetings consisted of a presentation on the Preferred Options, how people could respond and what the next steps were. Copies of the consultation document and response forms were available to take away at the exhibitions.

Drop in sessions

4.14. In addition to the exhibitions, two drop in sessions were held for Development Control Officers of the Council and then other professionals from other Council departments. These were held on 5th March 2008 and attended by Forward Planning Officers who explained the consultation and answered questions and took notes.

Council Committees

4.15. As well as consulting all members individually with the consultation pack, the following Committees of the Council were consulted:

Northern Area Committee	13 th April 2008
Planning and Economic Development Scrutiny	19 th March 2008
City Area Planning Committee	20 th March 2008
Northern Area Committee	27 th March 2008
Southern Area Committee	27 th March 2008
Western Area Committee	3 rd April 2008

Parish Councils

4.16. Along with the planned public meetings throughout the district, all Parish Councils were sent the consultation pack and several of these Parish Councils requested that a Forward Planning Officer attend a Parish Council Meeting or specially organised Public meeting to explain the Preferred Options to the public and answer any questions. We attended the following meetings:

Date	Parish Meeting
7 th March	Laverstock Parish Council
26 th March	Firsdown Paris Council
3 rd April 2008	Winterslow Parish Council
14 th April	Downton Parish Council
16 th April	Durrington Parish Council
21 st April 2008	Orcheston Parish Council
22 nd April	Redlynch Parish Council
22 nd April 2008	Harnham Parish Council
29 th April 2008	Porton and Idmiston Parish Council

Publicity measures: Local Press

4.17. Adverts were placed in the Salisbury Journal, the Blackmore Vale Magazine and the Avon Advertiser, to inform people of the consultation on three separate occasions throughout the consultation period. Dates and publications included:

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Newspaper	Date of advert
Avon Advertiser	27 th February 2008
Salisbury Journal	28 th February 2008
Blackmore Vale	29 th February 2008
Avon Advertiser	5 th March 2008
Avon Advertiser	19 th March 2008
Salisbury Journal	20 th March 2008
Blackmore Vale	21 st March 2008
Salisbury Journal	27 th March 2008
Avon Advertiser	9 th April 2008
Salisbury Journal	10 th April 2008
Blackmore Vale	11 th April 2008

Publicity measures: Press releases

4.18. A press release was released by the Council and emailed to local parish magazines on 22nd February 2008.

Publicity measures: Local TV Interviews with Planning Officers

4.19. Interviews were carried out with planning officers regarding the Preferred Options and the consultation. These are available to view online from the Vision News website.

- SDC holds an open debate on the Local Development Framework (23.03.08) An interview with David Milton, Forward Planning and Conservation Team Leader
- A public announcement by Salisbury District Council on the future of Salisbury District (12.03.08). An interview with Judith Cameron, Forward Planning Officer.

Publicity measures: Local radio advertising campaign

4.20. Radio adverts were recorded to inform people of the consultation period and how to have a say. Adverts were broadcast on Spire FM over a two week period 5 times per day commencing 28th February 2008.

Publicity measures: Posters

4.21. Posters were placed on parish notice boards, as well as in strategic locations around the district including in Salisbury, Wilton, Amesbury, Downton, Mere and Tisbury.

Publicity measures: Web pages

4.22. A dedicated set of web pages for the preferred options was created (<http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning/forward-planning/local-development-framework/preferred-options.htm>) which included downloadable copies of all documents including the Preferred Options, Sustainability Appraisal, Soundness testing, topic papers and addendum topic papers and the background documents/evidence base used to inform the emerging Core Strategy. Information on how to get involved, the representation form and what happens next was included on the web pages.

Publicity measures: Hard to reach groups

4.23. A list of organisations were contacted in consultation with Community Initiatives. The list of organisations is stored confidentially by Community Initiatives as many do not wish to be widely publicised. However these included representatives of ethnic minority and disability groups.

Publicity measures: Schools / young people

4.24. To make sure we also engaged the younger generation we tailored a summary leaflet and wrote letters to all Primary and Secondary Schools in the district informing them of the consultation and how they could get involved.

5. QUALITY CONTROL OF CONSULTATION PROCESS

5.1. When planning and implementing the consultation process it was essential that due process was followed. We put in place measures to manage this risk and to ensure that all Regulatory requirements are satisfied as we move through the LDF process, rather than wait until the end. Measures we have implemented include:

Counsel's Input

5.2. We have taken steps to seek specialist legal advice throughout the three year delivery period of the LDS. We have appointed Counsel from the leading environmental/legal practice, Landmark Chambers, to perform this advisory and quality control function. The rationale is that it is better to revise processes as they go along rather than to wait until adoption stage and find that problems have become embedded within the process. Counsel gave advice on the Preferred Options and put forward recommendations, which were taken account of before the consultation period commenced.

Planning Advisory Service LDF soundness self assessment toolkit

5.3. Authorities can satisfy themselves throughout the process of DPD preparation that they are complying with the various requirements. The checks are geared to recognisable stages in DPD production. We have used this toolkit at all stages and have drawn on other advice from the Planning Advisory Service. A report into the soundness of the Preferred Options document has been produced and can be viewed on the website at: <http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/preferred-options-soundness-testing.pdf>

Benchmarking

5.4. We have carried out a detailed scan of the external environment, especially on learning lessons from those Core Strategies that have been through inquiry. We have taken on board the advice of the Inspectorate and ensured that national and regional planning guidance and other publications have been fully taken account of.

6. Results

6.1. The Preferred Options consultation received representations from 1556 individuals, groups, Councillors, Parish Councils and Statutory Consultees. Together these respondents made 7239 individual comments on the preferred options, maps and tables contained within the preferred options.

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- 6.2. To put this in context, Crawley Borough Council received 1312 comments from 232 individuals/ organisations while Tandridge District Council received 53 comments from individuals and organisations.
- 6.3. The previous round of consultation on the core strategy (Issues and Options) yielded 6131 responses from individuals groups, Councillors, Parish Councils and Statutory Consultees. This means that some 7681 people, in total, have responded to the core strategy during the first 2 stages of consultation.
- 6.4. The majority of responses were received on the specially designed response form, but many respondents also chose to respond via email, letter and petition. The comments received during both the Issues and Options and Preferred Options form an integral part of the evidence base for the production of the future planning policies in the district.
- 6.5. Appendix 1 of this report provides a summary of each of the preferred options that were included with the consultation document. Appendix 2 of this report shows the responses that were received during this round of consultation.
- 6.6. The responses contained within appendix 2 of this document are displayed within a table which has 9 columns under the following headings.

• Optnum	Option number
• mactable	Map or Table number
• paranum	Paragraph Number
• surname	Surname
• init	Initial
• corres	Unique correspondents ID
• Type	(1) Support (2) Oppose (3) Comment
• reasonstxt	Comments received
• Org	Organisation (if applicable)

7. Use of Data and Next Steps

- 7.1. This document represents a basic output report, which simply describes the methodology and prints the response received to each of the questions asked. It is not the objective to interpret or draw conclusions from the results at this stage. It is intended to perform the following function:
 - Provide a resource to be used in a range of plans and strategies
 - To form part of a clear audit trail, showing the steps we have taken throughout the LDF process
- 7.2. As with any raw data there needs to be some caution over its use. It is relatively easy to extract feedback in isolation and out of context to make a compelling argument for a particular course of action. This must be avoided and the data collected must be used in a considered and measured manner against the myriad of other issues that need to be considered.

Reviewing the LDF evidence base

7.3. The Preferred Options set out in the consultation document were the result of the extensive 'Our Place in the Future' consultation period which took place in the Summer of 2007, extensive analysis and interpretation of National and Regional Planning Guidance and other publications, the existing evidence base, topic papers and other local strategies. Using all of this evidence, a series of Addendums to the Topic Papers were produced which focussed on specific issues identified within the district, as shown below:

- Addendum to Topic Paper 1 - Climate Change
- Addendum to Topic Paper 2 – Housing
- Addendum to Topic Paper 3 - Settlement Strategy
- Addendum to Topic Paper 4 - Supporting communities
- Addendum to Topic Paper 5 - Natural environment / biodiversity
- Addendum to Topic Paper 6 – Flooding
- Addendum to Topic Paper 7 – Agriculture
- Addendum to Topic Paper 8 – Retail
- Addendum to Topic Paper 9 – Economy
- Addendum to Topic Paper 10 - Tourism and leisure
- Addendum to Topic Paper 11 - Planning obligations
- Addendum to Topic Paper 13 – Conservation
- Addendum to Topic Paper 14 - Design (incorporates addendum to Topic Paper 16 - Inclusive design)
- Addendum to Topic Paper 15 – Transport

7.4. The Preferred Options identified within these topic papers formed the basis for the Preferred Options consultation document. The next stage of the process is to review the evidence base in light of the consultation responses and use this to produce a refined consultation document, which will then be consulted on and used to inform the Submission Draft of the Core Strategy.

Spatial interpretation of the information

7.5. It is recognised that South Wiltshire is a rich and varied part of the country and the issues, challenges and opportunities within it vary from place to place. The Preferred Options document reflected this premise through the production of both district wide preferred options and more spatially distinctive area vision preferred options for each community area. The district wide preferred options sets out those strategies and policies that it is considered are universally acceptable across South Wiltshire. The area vision preferred options aim to address the issues, challenges and opportunities which exist in each community area and to reflect the needs and aspirations of these areas and the level of growth required in order to preserve and enhance these places.

7.6. These district wide and area vision preferred options were identified through an analysis of the existing evidence base and through careful consideration of the responses received during the 'Our Place in the Future' consultation.

Full Council Meeting

7.7. The core strategy preferred options and the consultation itself came under intense scrutiny attracted varied criticism. As a result of this criticism, an extra ordinary full council meeting was held on the 23rd April. At this meeting, which was well attended by members of the public, Members resolved to delay the submission of the Core Strategy, and include a further round of consultation on

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the preferred options. Both the agenda and the minutes of this meeting are available on the on the Council's website or via he link below:

<http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/council/committees/full-council/meeting.htm?date=2008-04-23>

Next steps

7.8. It should be noted that since the full council resolution new regulations affecting the LDF system have come into force. Under the old regulations under consultation took place immediately after submission with representations at this stage being made to the Inspector. The new regulations now require further consultation on the submission draft by the Council **prior** to submission to the Secretary of State. This basically requires us to consult twice before submission, which in itself must be completed before the abolition of the Council in April 2008 and has a significant effect on the timetable for production of the submission draft.

7.9. Nevertheless the next round of consultation, as agreed at the full council meeting, will take place over an 8 week period starting 1st September 2008.

Weighting of consultation feedback

7.10. As with the last stage of consultation, this question has arisen frequently during the consultation process and is an issue that needs to be addressed. It was queried whether the views of specialist or elected groups such as Parish Councils would be given more weight as a consideration than an individual. We have considered this very carefully and have concluded that assessment must be based on the content and merit of each representation made and not via some arbitrary ranking of the source.

7.11. However, of course, particular attention will be paid to the views of specialists and community representatives. For example the Environment Agency has specialist knowledge of flooding and will therefore be accorded particular weight with regards to this issue. It must be highlighted that it is still equally important to pay close attention to the voice of communities via Parish Councils and partnerships such as the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance, when a particular policy, if pursued would have a particular significant impact on that community.

7.12. The consultation results, while a key consideration in agreeing future strategic direction of development, should not be the only consideration. Representations will need to be assessed in conjunction with other key factors, such as alignment with national and regional policy, tested against our adopted Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Framework, and deliverability criteria.

8. Conclusions

8.1. The responses received on the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation document shows that it has been successful in engaging a wide variety of individuals, organisations and Statutory Consultees and has resulted in a large number of detailed comments. It is fair to say that the consultation has been successful in engaging the public and raising awareness, as well as stimulating debate on the future of the district.

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- 8.2.** The responses to the Preferred Options consultation will be used to identify the level of support or objection for each preferred option and from this undertake an additional stage of consultation, as resolved by the Full Council meeting on 23rd April 2008. This additional stage of consultation will set out the Councils revised Preferred Options, which will take account of the responses received during the Preferred Options consultation period as well as emerging Government Guidance and the Councils own evidence base. From this the Core Strategy Submission Draft will be produced and submitted to the Secretary of State where it will be considered for adoption.