

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Title: | West Wiltshire Core Strategy - Issues and Options Paper |
| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr Phillips – Deputy Leader - Planning |
| Reporting Officer: | Mark Russell, Planning Policy & Conservation Services Manager |
| Key Decision: | No |

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to approve a Core Strategy Issues and Options paper for public consultation.

Due to the size of the document, this has been circulated to Members of the Cabinet and copies have been placed in the Members Room.

Background

The Council is currently preparing the West Wiltshire Core Strategy. This is a key document in the new Local Development Framework and will set out the spatial vision and objectives for West Wiltshire. It will contain: a spatial strategy; core policies covering key areas (e.g. housing, employment, town centre) and a monitoring and implementation framework. The document will set out the key environmental protection policies which operate within the area and will explain how development, proposed within the Regional Spatial Strategy, will be broadly distributed through West Wiltshire. The Core Strategy is the main planning tool by which the spatial objectives of community strategies and plans can be delivered.

Officers have been preparing a series of technical reports to provide the evidence base for the Core Strategy. The following reports have been prepared or are in preparation:

Landscape Character Assessment; (prepared)
Strategic Housing Market Assessment; (in preparation)
Housing Land Availability Assessment; (in preparation)
Housing Needs Survey; (prepared)
Employment Land Audit; (prepared)
Retail Needs Study; (prepared)
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; (in preparation)
Gypsy and Travellers Needs Assessment; (prepared)
Sustainability Appraisal. (Scoping Report prepared)

A Core Strategy Policy Project Group (PPG) was set up in August 2006 to assist the Portfolio Holder in developing the Core Strategy.

In April 2007 the Council published 5 Issues papers for the 5 community areas and consulted widely on the spatial planning issues affecting West Wiltshire. A People's Voice

questionnaire was also developed. A series of one 2 one meetings were held with key stakeholders in West Wiltshire and an LSP conference started to develop spatial visions for the 5 towns. Landowners and developers were invited to put forward potential sites for future development.

Key issues

A detailed summary of the results of this initial Issues stage of consultation is available to view in the Members' room. A brief summary of the results is set out in appendix 1. The results of consultation have, and will continue to, feed into the Core Strategy as it develops.

Officers have prepared an Issues and Options paper for further informal public consultation and the PPG considered sections of it at meetings on 13 and 19 November 2007.

The paper sets out the following:

A draft spatial vision for West Wiltshire and spatial objectives;

Options for a spatial strategy for the area which identify those settlements where growth should occur in the future and those which should only provide for local needs;

Issues and options for future housing, community facilities, employment, town centre, environment and transport policies;

Broad spatial options if future growth at the 5 West Wiltshire towns is required, based upon sites put forward by landowners and developers.

The full draft Issues and Options paper has been circulated separately. A summary of the 3 options for the future spatial strategy are set out in appendix 2.

Effect on strategies and codes

The Core Strategy, when adopted, will form part of the development plan for West Wiltshire. It will therefore replace many of the planning policies currently contained within the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2016 and the West Wiltshire District Plan 1st Alteration.

The involvement of the community area partnerships and the West Wiltshire Economic Partnership in the PPG and in consultation has helped to ensure that community and business views are taken into account in the development of the Core Strategy. The involvement of the LSP in the process has helped to ensure that the Core Strategy will have regard to, and help to implement, the West Wiltshire Community Strategy.

Risk management implications

At the current time, all Districts are preparing their own core strategies. Officers are investigating the implications of One Council for Wiltshire on these current work programmes. There are risks associated with LGR in terms of potential delay and loss of capacity to carry out the current work programmes but also opportunities in terms of combining core strategies or at least more closely aligning and co-ordinating them and their future preparation. This is likely to be a role for the Implementation Executive identified in the Order when it is published in December 2007.

Finance and performance implications

The development of the evidence base for the Core Strategy has been achieved mainly through Planning Delivery Grant. The preparation of the Issues and Options paper has been achieved through the current revenue budget. The development of the Core Strategy is subject to key performance milestones set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

Legal and human rights implications

There are no direct legal or human rights implications.

The next steps

The Issues and Options paper will be published as soon as possible for informal public consultation to February 2008. A series of seminars and workshops will also need to be set up to explore the options. Stakeholders and the community will be asked for their views on the options put forward for consideration at this stage and whether there are other potential options for the Council to consider. Recommended consultation arrangements are set out in appendix 3.

The current timetable envisages the development of Preferred Options by this Council for consultation in April 2008. However, this timetable is under review as the One Council for Wiltshire transition team considers how the Districts' core strategies could be co-ordinated in the future.

Recommendation

Cabinet are asked to consider the report and to:

- Note the development of the evidence base and the results of initial Issues consultation;
- Approve the Issues and Options paper for public consultation;
- Approve the proposed consultation arrangements.

Background Papers

File Ref: Core Strategy, Planning Policy and Conservation Services (F26)

Appendix 1: Summary of responses to Issues stage consultation

Your home and your children's home:

There was quite a distinct split in the responses to the question on housing density. Those responding from Trowbridge, Warminster community areas and the People's Voice survey thought medium densities of 50-70 dwellings per hectare (dph) were most appropriate for their towns. Bradford on Avon and Westbury respondents however felt lower densities i.e. the minimum national densities of 30-50 dph were more suitable for their towns.

The majority of respondents from Melksham community area felt that none of the options given were appropriate and gave options of their own for us to consider including:

- Density that is appropriate to individual sites
- Widen the acceptable range of housing density to 30-70 dph

In response to the questions on affordable housing the majority of community areas were in agreement that we should continue with the existing policies for both towns and villages.

Other issues raised by a substantial number of respondents included:

- Need for quality design
- Sustainable construction
- More provision of live/work units

Your work:

Bradford on Avon and Melksham community areas felt that it is necessary to protect key employment sites within the towns and larger villages from redevelopment. The remaining community areas thought that it was more appropriate to redevelop the older, redundant employment sites within the towns and larger villages for a mix of employment alongside other uses such as housing.

The provision of sites for small businesses and start up entrepreneurs and the need to encourage rural enterprise and employment were stated as being of high importance across all community areas.

Your environment:

Protection & enhancement of the landscape was listed as one of the top 3 most important environmental issues by all 5 community areas.

There was a very positive response towards renewable energy with all community areas in favour of supporting the regional target of 10% reduction in CO² emissions using on site renewable energy from larger developments. However, a significant number of respondents felt that we should be aiming at a higher percentage from all development and this was also the most popular option in the People's Voice survey with 53%.

Other issues that were put forward as being significant:

- Noise pollution
- Air pollution
- Flooding

Your community facilities:

There was consensus amongst all the community areas that the facilities most needed or in need of improvement were:

- Schools
- GP's and healthcare
- Sports and leisure

A very large proportion of respondents also highlighted the need for facilities for the youth especially 13-18 yr olds in both the towns and villages.

All the community areas were in favour of development in rural areas if it brings or maintains rural services.

Your town centre and shops:

The 3 most popular ways to achieve vibrant town centres were:

- More shops and facilities
- Protection of existing shopping and facilities
- Traffic management measures

Other ideas put forward included:

- A market day once a week
- Need for street art
- Limited free parking in the towns to encourage shoppers

Your travel:

The majority of respondents felt that the best way to reduce the amount of travel by car was to locate new housing next to jobs and services so that only essential car journeys are made.

Most popular other travel issues raised:

- Park & Ride schemes
- More parking
- Improvement in public transport services

Appendix 2: Spatial strategy options

"A" Strategically significant town. The primary focus for development.

"B" Market towns suitable for locally significant growth.

"C" Small towns and villages for smaller scale development to meet local needs.

Option 1: "A" Trowbridge

"B" Bradford on Avon, Melksham, Warminster, Westbury

"C" Atworth, Bratton, Broughton Gifford, Bulkington, Codford, Corsley, Dilton Marsh, Heytesbury, Hilperton, Holt, Horningsham, Keevil, Limpley Stoke, Longbridge Deverill, Monkton Farleigh, North Bradley, Semington, Southwick, Staverton, Steeple Ashton, Sutton Veny, Westwood, Wingfield, Winsley

Option 2: "A" Trowbridge

"B" Melksham, Warminster, Westbury

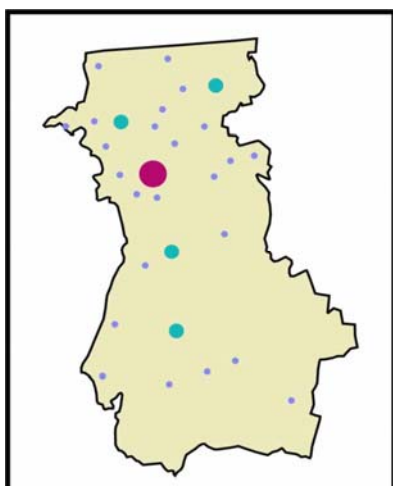
"C" Bradford on Avon, Atworth, Bratton, Broughton Gifford, Codford, Corsley, Dilton Marsh, Heytesbury, Hilperton, Holt, Horningsham, Monkton Farleigh, North Bradley, Southwick, Steeple Ashton, Westwood, Winsley

Option 3: "A" Trowbridge

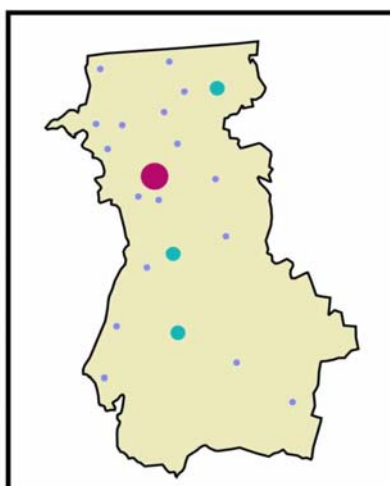
"B" Melksham, Warminster

"C" Bradford on Avon, Westbury, Bratton, Broughton Gifford, Codford, Dilton Marsh, Hilperton, Heytesbury, Holt, Southwick, Westwood, Winsley

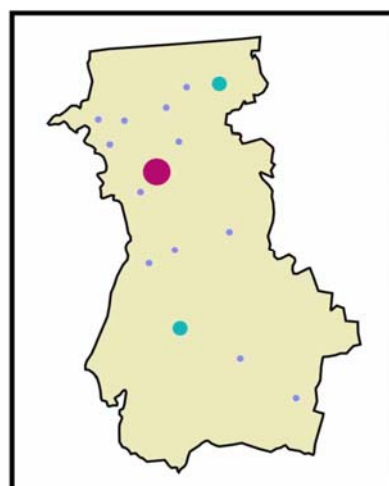
Option 1



Option 2



Option 3



Appendix 3: Draft consultation arrangements for Issues and Options stage

The proposed consultation will be in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and the Wiltshire COMPACT.

- **8 week period of consultation:** December 2007 to February 2008.
- **Publish Issues & Options paper:** Place paper and forms at the District Council offices, town council offices and the town libraries. Publish paper on our website, with information on how to respond. We will accept all responses submitted electronically, and will explore options for submitting on-line (webform) responses.
- **Inform stakeholders of publication:** To inform by post or by email, as appropriate. Key partners will be sent copies (either in paper or electronic format) of the paper. For example: councillors, statutory consultees, the LSP, community area partnerships and town and parish councils. Other stakeholders will be provided with details of how they may obtain or view copies.
- **Advertise the paper and consultation period:** Inform our communities via the local press and our website. Use other promotional opportunities (such as West Wilts Matters) as they arise.
- **Local Strategic Partnership:** Reconvene task & finish group and report to LSP Board meeting.
- **Members' seminar/ workshop:** An afternoon/ early evening seminar for Members to explore the issues and potential options.
- **Community area partnership workshop:** Workshop session (three hour/ half day) to obtain the views of the community area partnerships on the issues and options.
- **Rural/parish workshop(s):** Similar to the above but to discuss rural area issues. There are a number of options on how we manage this opportunity –either a single (large) meeting for all rural parish councils, or 5 community area based meetings.
- **Additional seminars/ workshops/ meetings – upon request:** Previously we have carried out additional seminars/ workshops for other organisations that have shown an interest in becoming involved. We have also attended other meetings – to appear as an item to explain the process and how the organisation can respond.
- **Public exhibitions:** These will serve as stand alone exhibitions but the display material could also be used to support the above workshops/ seminars. Libraries are the traditional locations for exhibitions but these are not always ideally placed to catch maximum footfall. Town centre shopping areas have the potential to catch significant public footfall. These should target weekends and would need to be manned full time.