

APPENDIX 6

Swindon Housing Market Area – Assessment Summary

Cabinet Version, April 2019

Introduction

- 1.1 As a starting point, the distribution of housing and employment in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) has been rolled forward. Rolling forward the current strategy, each part of the Housing Market Area (HMA) would accommodate the equivalent share of housing and employment needs as the current WCS. This is used as a basis to help see where there may be better distributions of growth for the period 2016 to 2036.
- 1.2 Swindon Borough Council has indicated its scale housing need can be met within the authority area. There will be no unmet needs to be accommodated in any adjoining authority areas.
- 1.3 Different distributions of growth are considered solely for settlements within the Wiltshire part of the Swindon HMA. The whole HMA is shown below:

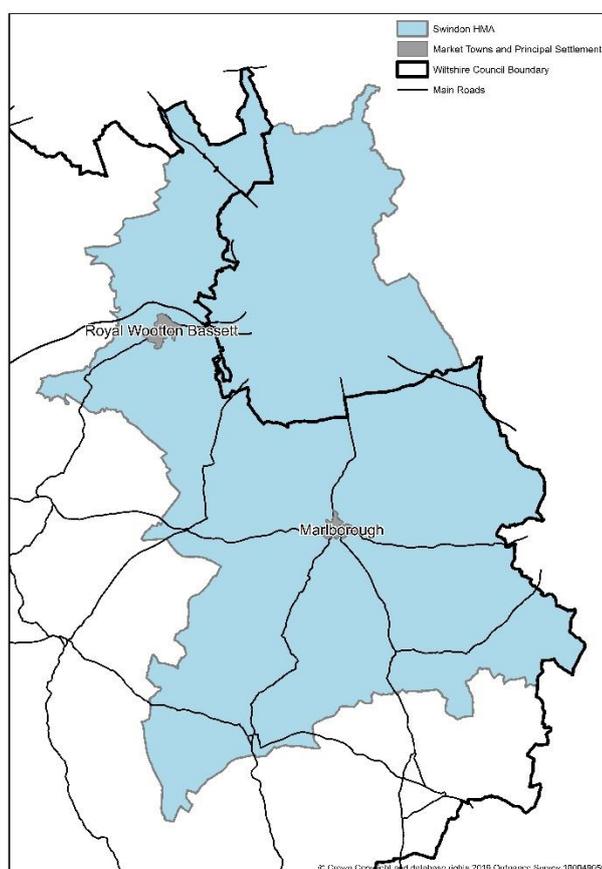


Figure 1: Swindon Housing Market Area (HMA)

- 1.4 This paper summarises assessments that have been carried out to help identify where an alternative distribution of growth to that currently included in the Wiltshire Core Strategy should be considered. Assessments, however, are not straightforward. Results may indicate a higher level of growth is justified at a settlement because of its economic prospects but may also indicate a lower rate of growth at the same settlement because of the risk of harmful environment impacts. The summary pulls together the results for each settlement to show where it is appropriate to test higher or lower rates of growth than rolling forward the current strategy.

- 1.5 Initial findings were discussed at workshops held with local members, town and parish councils and representatives of neighbourhood plan groups. Matters raised in these discussions have helped to inform alternative development strategies.
- 1.6 A set of alternative development strategies have been developed that highlight different choices about the distribution of future growth. It includes taking forward the current strategy. They will now be tested against each other in more detail and will help to decide a preferred way forward for the local plan review.

Rolling Forward the Current Strategy

- 2.1 The assessments test rolling forward the pattern of development of the current strategy aligned to the Housing Market Areas (HMA) proposed in the Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017. Using this new evidence of forecast needs for more homes¹ and fresh land for employment², each settlement within the HMA has the same share of growth as the current strategy. Rolling forward the current strategy produces the following requirements for the period 2016-2036 (Table 1).
- 2.2 Evidence suggests a decrease in the need for new homes in the Swindon HMA. There would be around a 16% decrease compared to rates of housing development proposed in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 2.3 At face value, much of the need for new homes has been built or will be met by the current supply of identified land. This however may not be appropriate. The location of sites for housing may need to better match the distribution of need. Sites in the current land supply may have become unsuitable.

Principal Settlement/Market Town	Wiltshire Core Strategy 2006-2026		Rolling Forward for 2016 – 2036	
	Housing Dwellings	Employment Hectares	Housing Dwellings	Employment Hectares
Marlborough	680	3	570	4.3
Royal Wootton Bassett	1070	3.7	900	5.3
West of Swindon	900	0	755	0
Rest of HMA	1225	1	1030	1.4
Total	3875	7.7	3255	11

Table 1 Housing and Employment Requirements - Rolling forward the current strategy for 2016 - 2036

¹ Swindon and Wiltshire Strategic Market Assessment, ORS, (2017)

² Functional Economic Market Assessment, HJA (2017) and Wiltshire Employment Land Review, HJA (2018)

Assessment Method

3.1 The assessments look at potential impacts upon each place and how development trends compare to those anticipated by the new evidence. Impacts involve looking at what additional land requirements there would be for growth over and above what can already be accounted for with planning consent or plan allocations. The results of public consultation also help to highlight where alternatives may need to be considered because this has raised new issues and opportunities. As mentioned above, the result of each assessment method might indicate a higher or lower rate of growth in the future for a particular settlement. The assessment takes into consideration economic, social and environmental factors as well as delivery and infrastructure constraints.

Potential impacts <i>Place based assessment</i>	Development trends <i>Assessment of different scales of growth</i>
<p>Biodiversity: what is the risk of harming local biodiversity</p> <p>(Source: advice from specialists based on published information)</p>	<p>Trends: How does forecast housing need compare with what has actually happened?</p> <p>(Source: implied future rates of development compared to actual past rates)</p>
<p>Landscape: what are the risks of harm to the character and attractiveness of the local landscape</p> <p>(Source: advice from specialists based on published information)</p>	<p>Land availability: Is there land to continue the current strategy?</p> <p>(Source: future scale of housing and employment need compared to the amount already committed)</p>
<p>Heritage: what is the risk of harming heritage assets?</p> <p>(Source: advice from specialists based on published information)</p>	<p>Economy: housing and employment</p> <p>Do economic forecasts predict a need for more employment land or new homes than the current strategy?</p> <p>(Source: rolling forward the current distribution of development compared to forecast pattern of job growth)</p>
<p>Flooding: what is the likelihood of unacceptable risks of flooding</p> <p>(Source: advice from specialists based on published information)</p>	<p>Social: population and affordable housing</p> <p>Are homes provided where people live and where there are the most needs for affordable homes?</p> <p>(Source: rolling forward the current strategy compared to the distribution of the population and registered needs for affordable homes)</p>
<p>Infrastructure: can the current strategy be supported by secondary school capacity and the local transport network?</p> <p>(Source: advice from specialists based on published information. An estimate of the number of years until secondary capacity is reached.)</p>	

Consultation responses: what are the new issues and opportunities?

(Source: summary reports of public consultation)

Table 2 Assessments

Results

4.1 The results collated in relation to the 'place based assessment' and 'potential scales of growth' are summarised in the table so an informed judgement can be made about what alternatives to test - RAG rating is used to indicate potential for growth. For example, a settlement might accommodate less growth because of the high risk of unacceptable impacts on a nationally protected habitat. The assessment may show little evidence to change the current strategy, but in some cases the results could also pull in opposing directions. There may be forecasts to support increased growth, but environmental or infrastructure constraints also suggest less.

	Place based assessment							Assessment of Potential scales of growth					
	Environmental aspects				Infrastructure			Deliverability		Economic aspects		Social aspects	
	Biodiversity	Landscape	Heritage	Flooding	Education	Transport	Consultation	Trends	Land availability	Housing	Employment	Population	Affordability
Marlborough	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red
Rest of HMA (WC)						Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
Royal Wootton Bassett	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green
West of Swindon					Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red		Red	

Key:

Indicators for growth	
Higher	Green
Neither higher or lower	Yellow
Lower	Red
No information	

Table 3 Summary of results

4.2 The following table provides in summary, the conclusion of the assessment process. It suggests alternatives that should include the following:

Locations	Summary conclusion	Higher or Lower than rolling forward the current strategy
Marlborough	Public consultation showed concern at the prospects of further growth in so doing reflecting on several concerns, such as air quality, traffic and the adequacy of local infrastructure. The ELR and consultation responses support some additional employment at the town but this would be	Lower

	<p>lower compared to rolling forward the current strategy. Land supply and developer interest, though strong, is not so robust as clearly capable of much higher rates of growth. Assessment of social and economic aspects tended to suggest lower rather than higher rates of growth.</p>	
<p>Royal Wotton Bassett</p>	<p>Public consultation recognised the dormitory role of the town to Swindon but a theme saw that this relationship could be improved by investment in transport infrastructure. Secondary school capacity is also a possible constraint. There is also a significant supply of land and housing delivery exceeds indicative scales envisaged in the WCS One course to consider is for investment to be supported by higher growth. The ELR and consultation responses support some additional employment at the town but this would be lower compared to rolling forward the current strategy. Economic forecasts however indicate a smaller share of housing growth, but there was a marked need for affordable homes, although a strong recent track record of housing delivery does not so far appear to have been successful in reducing such a need. On balance, rolling forward the current strategy involves a lower assessment of overall need, it would also be appropriate to examine the opportunities for a higher rate of growth.</p> <p>There are heritage and landscape risks. It would instead be sensible to test a period of consolidation that plans for a lower rate of growth. Again, however, scope is limited by the scale of land already in the pipeline.</p> <p>The evidence points to testing a lower growth alternative. However in order to investigate the possibility to address infrastructure constraints a higher growth alternative should be tested also.</p>	<p>Higher</p>
<p>Rest of HMA</p>	<p>Public consultation pointed to Lyneham and Cricklade as having more strategic role than meeting local needs. Economic forecasts as well as population and housing needs assessments suggest a higher share of HMA growth including employment land provision. There is also a significant supply of land and housing delivery exceeds indicative scales envisaged in the WCS. It would be appropriate to test a higher rate of growth. although, as elsewhere, scope to do so may be restricted by the current level of housing commitments.</p>	<p>Higher</p>
<p>West of Swindon</p>	<p>Perhaps more than other locations, rates of further growth West of Swindon need to be considered in the context of the Borough's needs as a whole, and specifically whether all the Borough's needs can be met within its boundary. Public consultation suggests, amongst other things, that the area would need to fulfil a role by supplementing the range of site size to help improve housing delivery in the Borough. In isolation there do not appear to be justifications for higher rates of growth. Rolling forward the current strategy presumes there will be unmet needs from Swindon Borough rather than needs from within Wiltshire. This</p>	<p>Lower</p>

has not been established. At this stage there is a justification for lower rates of growth

Table 4 Summary conclusions

Summary of Town and Parish Workshops on Distribution of Growth

- 5.1 Informal consultation took place between October and November 2018 with local members, town and parish councils and representatives of neighbourhood plan groups. The initial results outlined in Table 4 were discussed. The outcome of the consultation is summarised below. These comments have influenced the development of alternative development strategies.

Settlement	Summary
Marlborough	The outcome of discussions regarding Marlborough identified a requirement for housing which met local need. In this instance, a need was identified for affordable and social housing, with a lack of need for retirement homes and large homes. It was also identified that by accommodating housing growth, new facilities should be delivered alongside the development.
Royal Wootton Bassett	A higher growth figure than that proposed was discussed with the assumption that it would help to ensure the delivery of improvements to road infrastructure, including a bypass, school and health facilities and improvements to bus services.
West of Swindon/Rural	A key area of discussion for rural parish representatives were concerns relating to traffic. Discussions on the location and amount of housing that could be accommodated in the area were mainly led by how to minimise traffic impacts and improve the use of public transport.

Alternative Development Strategies

- 6.1 Based on the results of these assessments and consultation with town and parish councils, the following alternatives have been developed. They are expressed as alternative distributions of housing and employment requirements for Principal Settlements, Market Towns and rest of the HMA. Development in the rest of the HMA would be focussed primarily toward designated Large Villages and Local Service Centres. Alongside requirements a residual figure shows the scale of development that would need to be accommodated over the period to 2036 once current commitments have been taken into account.

Alternative Development Strategy	Description
OPTION SW-A Roll forward the Wiltshire Core Strategy Distribution of homes and jobs	Housing and employment land requirements are distributed pro-rata rolling forward the current strategy. Housing requirements are increased pro-rata to match a higher assessment of housing needs.

		2016-2036		
		Housing		Employment
Settlement Area		Requirement	Residual	
		<i>Dwellings</i>		<i>Hectares</i>
Marlborough		570	135	4
Royal Wootton Bassett		900	670	2
West of Swindon		755	271	-
Rest of HMA		1030	358	-
Total		3255	1434	6
OPTION SW-B Focus on Royal Wotton Bassett	<p>Growth in the rural area is reduced in line with the overall reduction in need for the HMA. Development is further constrained at Marlborough to current commitments plus an approximate amount for windfall within the built up area. No further development beyond existing commitments west of Swindon. The balance is focussed on Royal Wootton Bassett at a rate higher than indicative levels set in the WCS.</p> <p>Royal Wootton Bassett becomes a focus for additional employment growth in reaction to consultation responses and its complementary role to Swindon.</p>			
		2016-2036		
		Housing		Employment
Settlement Area		Requirement	Residual	
		<i>Dwellings</i>		<i>Hectares</i>
Marlborough		485	50	-
Royal Wootton Bassett		1255	1026	6
West of Swindon		485	0	0
Rest of HMA		1030	358	-
Total		3255	1434	6
OPTION SW-C Focus on the Rest of the HMA	<p>Housing growth in the rest of the HMA and Marlborough is set to continue levels in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. No further development beyond existing commitments west of Swindon. Housing growth is decreased at Royal Wootton Bassett to support a period of consolidation</p> <p>Employment land requirements mirror the market-led ELR forecast</p>			
		2016-2036		
		Housing		Employment
Settlement Area		Requirement	Residual	
		<i>Dwellings</i>		<i>Hectares</i>
Marlborough		680	245	3
Royal Wootton Bassett		835	606	-
West of Swindon		485	0	-
Rest of HMA		1255	583	3
Total		3255	1434	6