

WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON STRUCTURE PLAN 2016

A Joint Structure Plan Alteration covering the
Administrative Areas of
Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire County Council

ADOPTED
Explanatory Memorandum
&
Written Statement

April 2006



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FOREWORD

The Structure Plan provides a strategic policy framework for land use planning, development and transport across the administrative areas of Wiltshire (incorporating Wiltshire County and Swindon Borough) up to 2016. This framework is used to inform the more detailed Local Development Frameworks produced by the Borough and District Councils against which decisions on development are made.

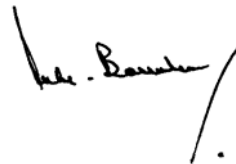
The Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 is an Alteration to the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011. This means that the majority of policies have remained the same, with alterations to other policies to ensure the Plan is consistent with national and regional planning guidance to guide development across Wiltshire up to 2016.

The Structure Plan 2016 has passed through a number of formal, public stages on its way to adoption by the two Strategic Planning Authorities. A Deposit Draft Alteration was placed on deposit for public consultation in October 2003. This was followed by an Examination in Public (EIP) in June and July 2004. The EIP Panel's recommendations were published in October 2004 and, following consideration of these, the Strategic Planning Authorities published Proposed Modifications for public consultation in August 2005. The Structure Plan was agreed for adoption by Swindon Borough Council on 26 January 2006 and Wiltshire County Council on 7 February 2006. The Structure Plan was formally Adopted on 1 April 2006.

The Plan forms part of the development plan for Wiltshire for a period of three years or until it is replaced by the new Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Structure Plan sets out strategic planning policies for the area of Wiltshire County and Swindon Borough for the period up to 2016, in support of a strategy for their future development and the conservation of their heritage.
- 1.2 This Structure Plan has been prepared jointly by Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991). This requires a single Structure Plan to be prepared for the whole of the former County area of Wiltshire. **Figure 1.1** shows the Plan Area and its constituent local authorities, plus community areas used for service planning purposes.
- 1.3 The previous Structure Plan (Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011) has been altered and rolled forward to cover the period to 2016. This means that the majority of policies in the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 remain the same and have been carried forward into this Plan but that a small number of policies have been altered. Only limited alterations to the previous Plan were considered necessary instead of a major review because the Plan was regarded as broadly compatible with national and regional planning guidance.
- 1.4 The policies are set out in bold **CAPITAL** type. The accompanying text explains, qualifies and interprets the policies. Together, these form the Explanatory Memorandum. The policies are also set out separately at the end of the document, together with the Key Diagram, to form the Written Statement. The Key Diagram acts as a geographical index to the policies.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- 1.5 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 strengthens the role of regional planning by replacing Regional Planning Guidance with statutory Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and making RSS, which also replaces the Structure Plan, part of the development plan. The Act also replaces Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks (LDF). An LDF contains Local Development Documents (LDDs) including Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that together with RSS will form the Development Plan.
- 1.6 Under the transitional arrangements of the Act, this Plan is “saved” for a period of 3 years from the date of adoption or until RSS revisions are published by the Secretary of State that replaces its policies in whole or in part. The South West Regional Assembly (SWRA) as Regional Planning Body is responsible for preparation of RSS for the South West. The timetable for preparation of RSS indicates that an examination in public of the draft RSS will take place during spring 2007 and the Secretary of State will issue the new RSS early 2008. The adoption of this Plan will ensure that a strategic policy framework is in place for this interim period providing a context for Local Transport Plans and new Local Development Documents, as well as any Local Plans

being completed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. All Local Plans will be assessed for conformity against this Structure Plan. Although the Plan in places refers to Local Development Documents, in appropriate circumstances, this should be interpreted as Local Plans where they have not been superseded by Local Development Documents.

The Role of the Structure Plan

- 1.7 The Structure Plan has three main functions:
 - i) To provide a framework of strategic policies for local planning and development control decisions;
 - ii) To ensure that provision for development is realistic and consistent with national and regional policy; and
 - iii) To secure consistency between development plans at the local level for neighbouring areas.

- 1.8 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires all relevant planning decisions to be "plan led", that is in accordance with Development Plans, unless material considerations indicate otherwise: thus the need for up-to-date and relevant Structure Plans is of paramount importance.

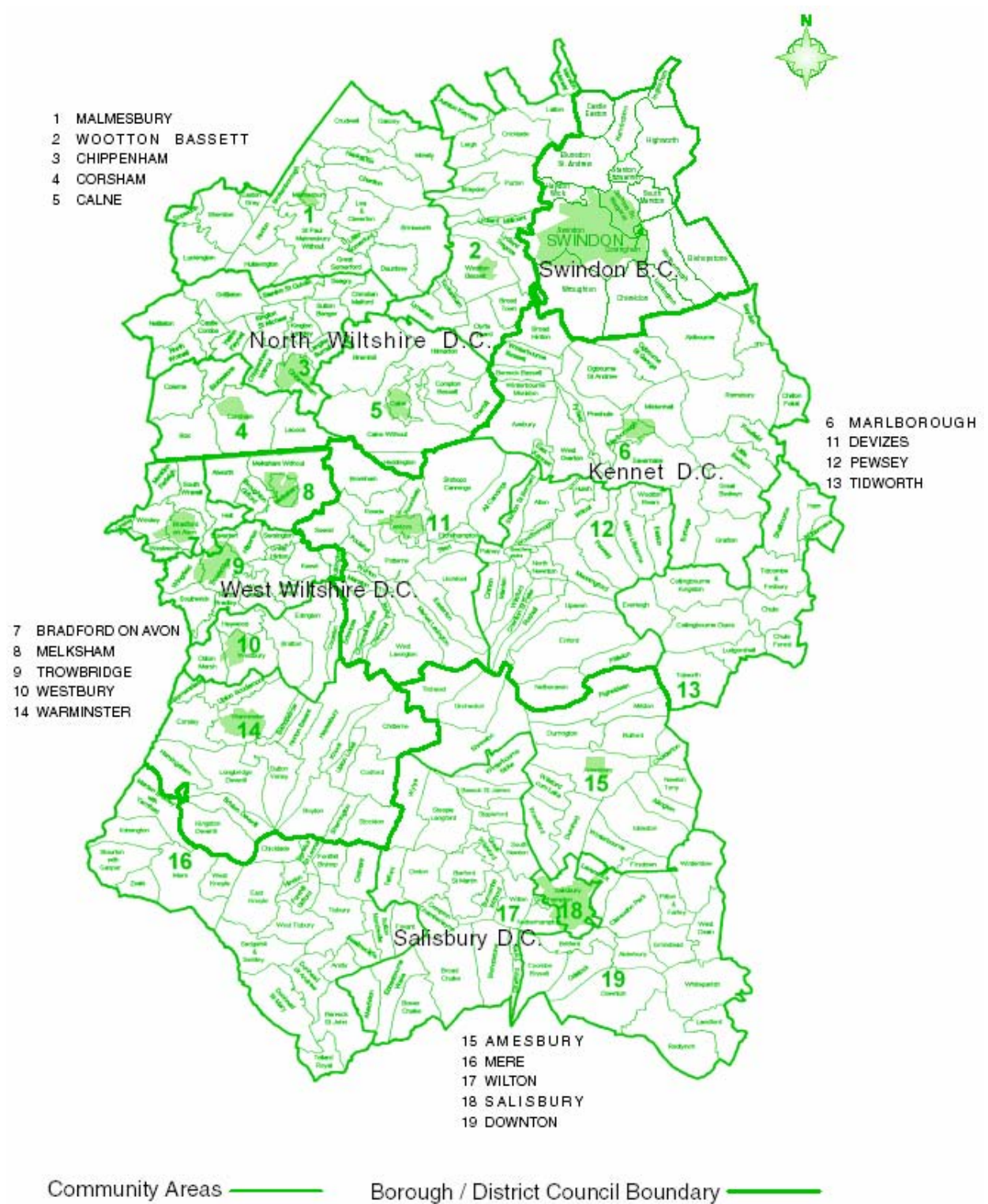
- 1.9 Together with Local Plans or the new Local Development Documents (where these supersede policies in Local Plans), the Structure Plan will form the Development Plan for Wiltshire and Swindon in the period until it is superseded by a new Regional Spatial Strategy.

- 1.10 The role of the Structure Plan within the planning process will therefore be to provide an up-to-date statement of strategic planning policy. Local Plans or the new Local Development Documents will act as the detailed basis for day-to-day development control decisions.

- 1.11 The Structure Plan is a broad land use and transport strategy which establishes the main principles and priorities for the future development of the area. It provides a measure of certainty about the medium-term to long-term time scale within which the new Local Development Documents should be prepared and decisions on planning applications taken, and hence sets a framework for co-ordinating action.

- 1.12 For the County and Borough Councils, the Structure Plan establishes a common basis, in terms of the overall scale and distribution of development and land uses, for a range of plans and programmes for the services they provide. These include Local Transport Plans (LTPs), Economic Development Strategies and investment programmes for education and social services. The Structure Plan also complements many of the County and Borough Councils' other strategies and initiatives, together with those of other agencies such as the Environment Agency and Countryside Agency. The Plan will help guide and influence the work of public and private bodies in the Plan Area.

Figure 1.1 Wiltshire Structure Plan Area and Local Authority and Community Areas



The European, National and Regional Planning Context

- 1.13 It is important to recognise that national and regional planning must also be seen in the wider European perspective. Increasingly the policies of the European Union are having an influence on strategic planning policies and funding programmes.
- 1.14 The Government issues Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS) on a range of land use planning topics. There are also a number of circulars, other Government policies and statements such as the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. These have been taken into account in preparing the Structure Plan. Of particular relevance is the requirement to contribute to sustainable development, which is a key feature in PPGs and more recently in PPSs produced by the Government. Preparation of this Plan has followed the guidance in the Planning Policy Guidance Note - Development Plans (PPG12).
- 1.15 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) was issued in September 2001 by the then Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions following the submission of advice from the South West Regional Planning Conference in July 1999. The Vision of RPG10, "Developing the Region, in a sustainable way, as a national and European region of quality and diversity, where the quality of life for residents, the business community and visitors will be maintained and enhanced", highlights the need for development plans to secure a sustainable level of growth and distribution of development. Thus, while seeking to safeguard and enhance the distinctiveness and diversity of the South West's environment, plans should encourage and maintain a healthy economy.
- 1.16 RPG10 provides an overall growth context for this Plan, setting out a figure of 3,000 additional new dwellings per annum for Wiltshire and Swindon for the period 1996 to 2016. Distributing the housing provision and taking forward the regional development strategy appropriate to the Wiltshire context have been key issues during preparation of this Plan, particularly in the context of securing sustainable development.
- 1.17 Having regard to the Plan Area's geographical position, it is also essential to take account of the important relationships with other counties in the South West and adjoining counties of the South East, both individually and in the context of Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9).

The Structure Plan Process

- 1.18 The process of preparing the Structure Plan is set out in **Figure 1.2**. The entire process is the responsibility of the Strategic Planning Authorities, including adoption of the Plan. However, the Secretary of State retains powers to intervene in the process, in order to ensure that national and regional policies are upheld.
- 1.19 A pre-deposit consultation document 'Shaping the Future Development of Wiltshire and Swindon' was published for public comment in April 2003 and a formal Deposit Draft Alteration in October 2003. An Examination in Public took place in June and July 2004 and the EIP Panel report published in October of that year. The County and

Borough Councils then published Proposed Modifications in August 2005 to take account of recommendations made in the Panel report and other objections made at the formal Deposit stage. Following consideration of responses to the Proposed Modifications minor changes were made to the Plan and the Alteration to the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 was agreed for adoption by Swindon Borough Council on 26th January 2006 and Wiltshire County Council on 7th February 2006. The Structure Plan was formally adopted on 1st April 2006. The previous approved Structure Plan has been repealed with effect from the date that this plan became operative following Adoption on 1st April 2006.

Figure 1.2

The Structure Plan Process

Preparation of Draft Plan for Publication



CONSULTATION – DRAFT PLAN



Re-assessment and Revision



DRAFT PLAN ON PUBLIC DEPOSIT



Selection of Matters/Issues for E.I.P



EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC



Reconsideration in the light of E.I.P
Panel's Recommendations



PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS



ADOPTION

Figure 2.1 Regional Context



CHAPTER TWO

ISSUES, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 In preparing the Structure Plan, the County and Borough Councils have taken into account the changing national and regional context and the role that Wiltshire and Swindon plays. The Plan Area is diverse. It exhibits a number of problems and opportunities, which need to be addressed in developing a strategy for the longer term.

Issues

- 2.2 Although Wiltshire and Swindon are part of the South West Region, they adjoin the South East Region and the counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Hampshire. Parts of the South East Region, including the M4 corridor, have been subjected to major development pressures in recent years. Increasingly during the 1970s and 1980s these pressures have expanded into adjoining areas. Consequently Wiltshire plus Swindon is one of the ten fastest growing counties in the country, for both population and employment. The areas of fastest growth are located predominantly on the fringes of the South East Region. Over the period 1978 to 2003, some 83,642 new homes have been built in Wiltshire and Swindon, at an average rate of some 3,345 per annum. Details are shown in **Table 2.1**, which gives totals for the periods before and since 1996 and the balance of development between urban and rural areas.
- 2.3 Much of this house building has been on new, or "greenfield" sites. Monitoring carried out by the Wiltshire and Swindon local authorities shows that, between 1991 and 2003, about 42% of new dwellings have been provided on previously developed land. The relatively high use of new sites results from the location of rapid housing development in an area where most settlements are market towns or smaller and where much of the urban fabric has been built in the last fifty years. There are limited opportunities for urban redevelopment.
- 2.4 Outside Swindon, the Plan Area is generally rural in character. Much of the Plan Area has an outstanding landscape (see Key Diagram). About 70 per cent is designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Special Landscape Area (SLA) or Green Belt. The West Wiltshire Green Belt which surrounds historic Bradford on Avon is part of the much wider Bristol/Bath Green Belt. A small part of the New Forest National Park extends into Salisbury District. In addition, large parts of the Plan Area are recognised for their nature conservation value at international and national levels. There are also many areas of archaeological interest, including the World Heritage Site of Stonehenge and Avebury. Wiltshire and Swindon contribute significantly to the distinctiveness, quality and diversity of the South West's environment.
- 2.5 Swindon, with an urban population of about 158,000 out of a Plan Area total of about 627,500 (2004) is the largest urban area and has experienced rapid growth for several decades. In the south of Wiltshire lies the historic cathedral city of Salisbury, with an urban population of about 44,500 (2004). The city serves a large surrounding rural area. To the west of the County, there are a number of market and industrial towns, the largest of which are Trowbridge (population about 35,500 in 2004) and

Chippenham (population about 33,500 in 2004). Smaller towns are dispersed across the rest of the Plan Area, providing important service functions for their surrounding areas. Like Swindon, most of the towns in the Plan Area have grown rapidly in recent years.

TABLE 2.1 Housing Growth¹ in the Plan Area's Districts & Towns 1978-2003

District / Borough	New Housing Completions 1978 to 1996			New Housing Completions 1996 to 2003		
	Total Built	Share of Plan Area Total	Share of Total in Towns and Other Main Settlements	Total Built	Share of Plan Area Total	Share of Total in Towns and Other Main Settlements
Kennet	6835	10.9%	55%	2401	11.6%	70%
North Wiltshire	12972	20.6%	77%	3898	18.8%	75%
Salisbury	9236	14.7%	67%	3259	15.7%	79%
West Wiltshire	12365	19.7%	82%	5251	25.4%	88%
Swindon ²	21521	34.1%	96%	5904	28.5%	96%
Plan Area ²	62929	100%	81%	20713	100%	84%

Note: ¹ Completions are gross.

² Land areas:- Swindon Borough = 23,099 ha (7%),
Plan Area = 348,557 ha.

- 2.6 Swindon, which has a strategic location on the M4 and the Inter-City rail corridor between London and Bristol, has been well placed to accommodate much of the pressure for development. Development has secured a wider and sounder base for the town's economy and its position as a regional centre has been confirmed, with the number working in the Borough increasing from around 96,000 in 1991 to around 108,000 in 2001 (an increase of 13%). The buoyancy of the local economy has resulted in substantial net in-commuting flows, which increased from around 10,000 in 1991, to around 14,000 in 2001. The Northern Development Area, the last of the major areas identified for growth during formal town expansion, will accommodate some 9,000 to 10,000 houses and is likely to be completed before 2014.
- 2.7 Economic growth pressures have not been so significant further west along the M4 corridor. Indeed, there has been concern about the economic fortunes of parts of the western area, particularly with structural changes in the economies of the main towns.
- 2.8 North Wiltshire District, and particularly the Chippenham area, has also benefited from an M4 Corridor location, with employment in the District increasing from around

47,000 in 1991, to around 58,000 in 2001. This increase of 22% is well above both the national rate of increase over this period (10%) and the rate of increase in the Plan area as a whole (14%).

- 2.9 In contrast, in West Wiltshire District, where the traditional manufacturing base remains important, the local economy is less buoyant. The population of the District is concentrated in the closely-spaced market towns of Trowbridge, Melksham, Westbury, Warminster and Bradford-on-Avon, which together had a population of around 95,000 in 2004. However, although the workforce of the District – at around 60,000 – is similar to that of North Wiltshire, the rate of employment increase has been much lower, with the number of workers in the District increasing from around 48,000 in 1991, to around 51,000 in 2001, an increase of 7%. Furthermore, there are particular concerns about the viability and vitality of several town centres, and it is considered that the economies of all the towns remain vulnerable to structural change. In consequence, the improvement of the A350 route through the area, and through to the M4 has been, and remains, a priority.
- 2.10 In spite of the contrasts in their economic fortunes, both North and West Wiltshire Districts experienced significant increases in net out-commuting between 1991 and 2001. In the case of North Wiltshire, however, the District's location, in addition to benefiting economic growth, also provides ready access to employment opportunities in Bath and Swindon, in addition to Bristol, where the number of jobs in the "North Fringe" increased greatly in the 1990s. It is against this background of an increase in jobs within the "commuting hinterland" of the District, together with the high rate of housing completions, particularly at Chippenham, that net out-commuting from the District increased from around 6,800 in 1991, to around 9,200 in 2001.
- 2.11 In the case of West Wiltshire, the District's residents have long looked to the centres within the former County of Avon, and particularly to Bath, for employment. Nevertheless, in 1991, at around 1,600, the scale of net outflow was far less than that from North Wiltshire. However, by 2001, this had increased greatly – to 7,000. The explanation for this is in part to be sought in the escalating price of housing in Bath, and the increasing differential in prices between Bath and West Wiltshire. Nonetheless, it is likely that this increase in net out-commuting is in part a consequence of the relatively modest rate of employment increase in the District.
- 2.12 Elsewhere in the County, Kennet and Salisbury Districts have experienced rates of employment increase a little above those of the Plan area as a whole. Both Districts are essentially rural in character, and a large part of each is within the Salisbury Plain MOD Training area, the use of which is set to intensify.
- 2.13 Kennet District has the smallest population base of any of the Wiltshire Districts but the dearth of employment opportunities in the District gave rise to a net outflow of workers of around 5,000 in 1991, although this remained little changed in 2001.
- 2.14 In addition to its rural hinterland, Salisbury District includes the cathedral city of Salisbury, which is an important retail and employment centre, and the Plan Area's second largest urban area. The District's employment base is almost twice as large

as that of Kennet, and similar in size to that of North Wiltshire; while, exceptionally for the Wiltshire Districts, in both 1991 and 2001 there was minimal out-commuting from the District as a whole. Salisbury looks to the south, beyond the New Forest to Southampton and Bournemouth. The city has an attractive landscape setting, made up of the river valleys and chalk downlands. Here there is a need to balance the opportunities created by pressures for development with the long-standing policy emphasis on environmental protection.

- 2.15 The extensive rural parts of the Plan Area have undergone significant changes in balancing the competing demands of conservation and development. The agricultural industry has changed and diversified. There have been increasing demands on the countryside for general recreational enjoyment and leisure. The role of many small towns and villages has changed, particularly with increased use of the private car to travel to larger centres for employment and other purposes. Despite considerable rural house building many villages have also, therefore, seen significant decline in local shops and other services. County Council surveys of villages have identified a loss of more than one half of the general food shops and one third of post offices since the mid 1970s. There has also been growing concern about the availability of affordable housing for local people.
- 2.16 There are other demands on the countryside, including mineral extraction and waste disposal. These can conflict with protection and enhancement of the countryside and its environmental and historic assets. Many of these are of national importance and are also a basis for the Plan Area's developing tourist industry.
- 2.17 The White Paper "Rural England" set the scene for a wide debate on the future of the country's rural areas. This was followed by a Good Practice Guide on Rural Diversification and a revision of PPG7 on the Countryside and the Rural Economy, published in 1997. This has since been replaced with Planning Policy Statement 7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas". This Structure Plan has an important role in enabling development to take place in ways that ensure the economic vitality of the countryside, whilst preserving the quality of its environment.

Accommodating development in a sustainable way

- 2.18 Development Plans have always had a role in protecting the environment. To a great extent, this has reflected concerns with protecting amenity and attractive landscape or townscape, and areas of special nature conservation and archaeological importance. Policies promoting public transport and renewable energy have reflected the growing awareness of more global environmental concerns, in particular global warming and air pollution. In recent years, the increasing importance of these has been demonstrated by many conferences and publications. During the 1980s, the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission) worked on the concept of "sustainable development". The Commission's Report, "Our Common Future" (1987) proved highly influential. The most commonly quoted definition of sustainable development emanates from this Report - "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". It led to the U.N.

Conference on Environment and Development (the "Earth Summit") at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the publication of advice on how "sustainable development" can be pursued at all levels.

- 2.19 The Earth Summit's action programme, "Agenda 21", the European Union's 5th Environmental Action Programme "Towards Sustainability" and the U.K. Government's White Paper "This Common Inheritance" (1990) all focused attention upon the role of local authorities in working towards a healthier, more "sustainable" approach to accommodating development in the environment. This is now reflected in updated Planning Policy Guidance and Statements, and in initiatives such as Best Value programme for local authorities.
- 2.20 The term "sustainable development" has been taken up because it reflects the desire to continue economic growth, whilst reducing its impact on the environment. This is seen as a unifying issue by many nations. Indeed, an economy with good long term prospects and an environment which is healthy are increasingly seen as interdependent. In the United Kingdom, the White Paper "This Common Inheritance" recognised the role of the planning system in pursuing "sustainable development". It also stressed that this role is not limited to preventing development from taking place. "New buildings and other changes in land use are essential to help the economy grow and to provide people with jobs and homes. But, without some control, the myriad of proposed new developments would produce haphazard results which could damage the environment. In Britain, the framework for land use is largely provided by the long established town and country planning system."
- 2.21 PPG12 "Development Plans" (2000) requires that all development plan policies should reflect environmental considerations and embraces sustainable development principles. At the core of this is the relationship between land-use and transport, because the latter is the fastest growing form of fossil energy use and pollution. This concern is reflected in such revised guidance as PPG3 "Housing" (2000), PPG13 "Transport" (2001) and PPS6 "Planning for Town Centres" (2005). The ability of Development Plans to play a key role in the pursuit of "sustainable development" is strengthened by Central Government's requirement that these policy documents should be given prime consideration in decisions on development proposals.
- 2.22 The issue of sustainable development is therefore central to the Structure Plan. It needs to be addressed in a number of inter-related ways, in particular through the pattern of development and land uses, the transport system connecting these, and environmental protection. These matters are increasingly the subject of further Government research and advice, as illustrated by Planning Policy Guidance Notes and other Government Statements. The emphasis is placed on reducing the amount of travel, and dependence on the private car. This necessitates a greater provision of opportunities for employment and services locally, thereby minimising the need to travel.

Aim of the Structure Plan

2.23 The Aim of the Structure Plan is : -

To support a sustainable pattern of development in Wiltshire, meeting the needs of the County's current and future population for:-

- (a) a prosperous and robust economy**
- (b) an attractive and suitably protected environment**
- (c) good housing and community facilities**

through the strategic planning of land-use and transport.

2.24 This recognises that development must continue to provide for the needs of the population. A "sustainable pattern of development" does not therefore mean "no development". But it does mean that very careful consideration should be given to the broad environmental consequences of the scale of development proposed for Wiltshire and Swindon, and to the strategy for accommodating it. Full account must be taken of existing development in securing an overall pattern, resolving existing problems and realising new opportunities as appropriate. Development will be needed to provide jobs, homes, shops, services, recreation and leisure opportunities and an adequate infrastructure, including transport for the County's population and visitors.

2.25 Wiltshire and Swindon will be expected to play their part in achieving a healthy national and regional economy. In many parts of the Plan Area, away from Swindon, there is a need to give much greater emphasis to job creation. This will avoid the need for residents to travel long distances to work, help sustain the regeneration of the Plan Area's other towns, and improve the economy.

2.26 The integration of land use and transport is central to this approach by achieving a pattern of development which significantly reduces the need to travel, particularly by private car. In the main towns this should also enable a greater emphasis on public transport, whilst in rural areas there is a need to maintain and improve local facilities, including employment opportunities, to reduce the need to travel.

2.27 In providing for all these forms of development, the Aim of the Structure Plan is to support options which offer most safeguards to the environment, from the local to the global scale. But it is recognised that the wording of the Aim and indeed the term "sustainable development" do not by themselves resolve the conflict between development and environment that must arise in some cases. Not enough is known about the environmental impact of development to be sure in every case whether an important threshold is being crossed or not. However, it is clear that a "precautionary" approach should be supported in instances where a national or regional priority is at stake. Development proposals which threaten these priorities will therefore be resisted. Conversely, however, the need to accommodate development in sustainable locations is unlikely to always be accepted by those living nearby.

Objectives of the Structure Plan

- 2.28 Objectives have been developed from this Aim, in order to provide a more detailed basis for preparing the Plan Area Strategy and Policies, for criteria used in their appraisal and for monitoring their future effectiveness, in the light of the issues facing the Plan Area.

a) Community Development

To ensure that the needs of all groups in the community, including people with disabilities and others with special needs, are taken into account in planning new development and transport improvements, with particular reference to affordable and special-needs housing, employment, transport, access and mobility.

b) Integration of Land-Use and Transport

To reduce overall reliance upon private motorised transport, particularly on roads, by supporting:-

- a better balance between housing and employment in all the Plan Area's communities
- greater provision of public transport and rail freight services, and increased scope for walking
- the provision of cycleways in new and existing developments
- parking policies which reflect the need to reduce car use as well as the need for access to facilities and to maintain the vitality and viability of service centres.

c) Energy Efficient Land-Uses

To encourage land-use changes needed to reduce energy use, absorb carbon dioxide, provide renewable energy and increase recycling of resources, in both settlements and transport systems, provided that their impact on the environment and amenity of the Plan Area is minimised.

d) Rural Communities

To support the economic diversification, social life, facilities and regeneration of rural communities, to enable them to meet more of their needs locally.

e) **Industry and Employment**

To provide scope to existing employers and those moving into Wiltshire and Swindon to evolve and grow, to create sufficient jobs for the Plan Area's growing population.

f) **Quality of Employment**

To encourage choice and variety of high quality employment opportunities in towns throughout the Plan Area.

g) **Regeneration of Small Towns**

To encourage the regeneration of small towns through new investment and community improvements.

h) **Re-use of Developed Land and Buildings**

To secure the effective and appropriate re-use of developed land and buildings, including land which is derelict or has been previously contaminated, for economic and/or community purposes.

i) **Amenity of Settlements**

To protect and improve the amenity of settlements, including their built and natural environment.

j) **The Countryside**

To protect and maintain the quality of the Plan Area's rural environment and biodiversity and support management of the countryside, including by agriculture, forestry, new enterprises and the control of traffic, to achieve:-

- a strong and diverse rural economy
- environmental improvements, including more sustainable development and land use practices.
- protection and improvement of vegetation cover, wildlife species and their habitats, watercourses and the landscape
- protection of the best agricultural land and mineral resources, and
- acceptable forms of public access

k) **The Regional Balance of Development**

To support a scale of development for Wiltshire and Swindon, adjoining counties, the South West Region, the South East Region and the counties of the outer South

East (ROSE) which will allow each area to fulfil its role in meeting national needs, as defined in Regional Planning Guidance, and which will not increase pressures upon the Plan Area.

l) **Efficient and Safe Use of Roads**

To improve safety and control congestion on the Plan Area's roads.

m) **Infrastructure and Services**

To ensure the provision of adequate infrastructure and services, including health care and hospital services, to support development, protect the amenity of existing settlements and reflect agreed standards.

n) **Water**

To protect the Plan Area's water resources by encouraging and supporting measures by the water industry and regulatory bodies to:-

- improve the quality and quantity of the water supply and the quality of the water environment
- maintain acceptable river flows
- prevent increases in flood risk
- reduce mains leakage and wasteful use of water
- improve waste water treatment standards
- reduce pollution by water users and adjacent land uses

provided that any adverse impact on the environment and amenity of the Plan Area is minimised.

o) **Minerals**

To provide for the extraction of minerals according to national and regional strategies and assessments of need, where the use of secondary aggregates cannot meet assessed need, to achieve environmentally acceptable extraction and to encourage sensitive restoration and after-use of sites.

p) **Waste Management**

To encourage waste minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery to reduce reliance on landfill/land-raising and minimise the risks of pollution and other impacts on the natural and built environment.

q) **Recreation and Leisure**

To provide for the development of environmentally acceptable recreation and leisure activities, to meet the needs of the Plan Area's population and visitors and to help provide employment.

r) **Hazard Noise and Light Pollution**

To contribute to the minimisation of hazard, noise and light pollution by strategic decisions on the location of development and transport improvements.

- 2.29 The Structure Plan only provides a strategic framework, and it will be necessary for the Borough and District Councils in preparing their new Local Development Document policies and proposals to develop sustainable solutions at the local level. Much can be achieved at the local level to ensure an appropriate mix and integration of land-uses, of housing, education, health and sporting facilities, shops, as well as employment, in order to minimise travel needs. The form, layout and design of development can also play an important part in reducing energy use, for example by supporting district heating schemes, making use of sunlight to reduce heating needs and encouraging low energy transport. At the same time it will be important to protect open spaces / green areas within settlements by utilising "brownfield" sites where appropriate. Such measures will help to protect and enhance the amenity of settlements and their environments. Structure Plan policies for other forms of development, such as shopping, renewable energy, recreation and tourism and development in the countryside will also need to be taken up in the new Local Development Documents. Clearly it will be important for development to be well related to existing and proposed public transport networks to avoid dependence on the private car.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Aim and Objectives of the Structure Plan are set out in **Chapter 2**. They seek a sustainable pattern of land-use and transport, whilst meeting the needs of the Plan Area's current and future population by providing for a prosperous and robust economy, an attractive and suitably protected environment, and good housing and community facilities.
- 3.2 The Adopted Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 has been altered and rolled forward for an additional five years to cover the period to 2016. While the overall Plan Area Strategy of the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 is considered to be broadly compatible with more recent national and regional planning guidance, this has been updated to better reflect Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) that was published following the adoption of the Structure Plan to 2011 (**paragraph 3.4**). In particular, Policy SS2 of RPG10 that seeks to achieve more sustainable patterns of development.
- 3.3 The altered Development Strategy policy (**Policy DP3**) has been developed in accordance with RPG10 and places emphasis on focusing growth towards the Swindon Principal Urban Area (PUA) and three Strategic Service Centres of Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge. Outside these settlements, Local Development Documents are required to identify towns that function as local service centres to accommodate smaller scale development to meet local needs and make services available to the wider rural area, and small towns and villages to meet local needs only. This is discussed in more detail in **paragraphs 4.8 to 4.23**.

The Plan Area Strategy

- 3.4 The County and Borough Councils consider that the key elements of the Plan Area Strategy should be:-
- **concentration of development at the Swindon Principal Urban Area and Strategic Service Centres of Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge**
 - **reducing the need to travel, with an increased emphasis on public transport, cycling and walking**
 - **providing scope in towns and villages to facilitate local job creation and economic and social regeneration, and provide for local housing needs**
 - **in particular, to regenerate the economies of the towns in the western part of Wiltshire, and**
 - **in the open countryside, balancing economic diversification with the conservation of a wide range of environmental assets.**

- 3.5 This Plan Area Strategy fully reflects that of the Structure Plan to 2011 with the exception of the first bullet point that has been altered and previously read - “continued concentration of development in the main towns including Swindon”, and third bullet point that has also been altered to include reference to the need to “provide for local housing needs”.
- 3.6 Sustainable development is more likely to be secured by urban concentration than by dispersed development, with Swindon and the Strategic Service Centres playing a major role. Other towns will continue to play an important role as centres of employment and local services for the wider rural area and development will be necessary to ensure the vitality and viability of these centres is supported and enhanced. Some development in rural areas is inevitable and, indeed necessary to enable diversification of the rural economy, and to permit local needs housing. The Strategy needs to support and sustain rural communities, by affording scope for increased local employment opportunities and the development of low cost housing at settlements throughout the rural areas of the County.
- 3.7 The Structure Plan therefore seeks to secure a sustainable pattern of development by concentrating development at the main urban areas, but also provides some scope for limited development in smaller towns and villages. The specific distribution within each area will be a matter for the Borough and District Councils to determine in preparing their Local Development Documents. The scale and nature of development at each settlement should reflect a range of considerations, namely, its role and function, location within or adjoining areas of protected countryside, the scope for links to major employment centres by public transport, the availability of necessary infrastructure and the need to achieve balanced growth in population, job opportunities and access to services.

Other Main Elements of the Strategy

- 3.8 The distribution of the 60,000 net additional dwellings required by RPG10 to be provided in Wiltshire over the period 1996 to 2016 is shown in **Table 3.1**. For the Plan Area as a whole, the average building rate in the period from 1978 to 2003 was about 3,350 a year. About 20,700 dwellings were built between 1996 and 2003, although the net increase in the housing stock over this same period was only about 18,650 dwellings. However, losses over this period were exceptionally high (due to the demolition of married quarters in Bulford and Tidworth¹ and the Precast Reinforced Concrete replacement housing programme in West Wiltshire), and it is expected that they will now revert to their long-term level of around 100 dwellings a year. Consequently, a build rate of about 3,280 will be required over the remainder of the Plan period to reach the policy total of 60,000 net additional dwellings by 2016.
- 3.9 In Swindon, the Strategy proposes 26,000 dwellings (**Table 3.1**). The average building rate in the period from 1978 to 2003 was about 1,100 a year, a total which is strongly influenced by the high build-rates which prevailed through most of the 1980s. Since that time, however, build-rates have been affected, firstly by the

¹ Although MOD married quarters housing is monitored and counts towards the overall build rate for Wiltshire, it does not count towards meeting the Structure Plan quantum.

housing-market collapse of the late 1980s, and then by the recessionary conditions of the early 1990s. Although rates have since recovered, the number of dwellings completed in the Borough remains relatively modest, with about 5,900 dwellings having been built between 1996 and 2003, resulting in a net increase to the stock of about 5,800 dwellings. From 2003, a build rate of over 1,500 dwellings a year will need to be sustained to reach the policy total of 26,000 net additional dwellings by 2016.

- 3.10 In the towns of the western part of Wiltshire, the local authorities have pursued regeneration for some time. These towns have suffered major losses to their traditional employment base and much effort has been needed to encourage new employment. There remains a need for regeneration to address existing economic problems, and improvements to transport links, in particular the A350, are seen as vital to this process. The regeneration of this area remains an important part of the Structure Plan Strategy
- 3.11 After allowing for further windfall developments (potential for redevelopment of brownfield sites) and existing commitments, **Table 3.1** also provides an indicative assessment of the estimated capacity of new greenfield sites required to be allocated in Local Development Documents. This indicates that there is little or no potential to identify additional greenfield sites over and above those provided for in current and emerging Plans to 2011. The reasons for this are set out in more detail in **Paragraphs 4.30 to 4.34**. However, within the guidelines of the Structure Plan, and as part of the development plan process, it will be the responsibility of the Borough and District Councils to determine the location of development by means of urban capacity studies and the assessment of other potential for development. As part of the review of Local Plans (as Local Development Documents), the Councils should reappraise any outstanding allocations to determine whether they are needed within the period to 2016 and whether there are any alternative sites where development would be more sustainable.

TABLE 3.1 : Proposed Housing 1996-2016

District / Borough	Housing (no. of net additional dwellings)				Development rates per annum (rounded)	
	Total Proposed	Share of Plan Area Total	Est. scope of dwellings built, committed and further windfall development (2003) ¹	Estimated Capacity of New Greenfield Sites Required to be allocated in Development Plan Documents	1978 to 1996 (Gross rates achieved)	1996 to 2016 (Net to be provided)
Kennet	5,250	9%	5370	0	380	262.5
N.Wilts	9,000	15%	9,780	0	720	450
Salisbury	8,000	13%	7,650	350	510	400
W.Wilts	11,750	20%	12,470	-720	690	587.5
Swindon	26,000	43%	25,065	1,000	1,200	1300
TOTAL	60,000	100%	60,335		3,500	3,000

Notes : ¹ Kennet, Salisbury and West Wiltshire Districts include allocations in adopted Local Plans. North Wiltshire District and Swindon Borough take account of draft local plan allocations for the period to 2011.

3.12 The development of adequate employment opportunities is fundamental to this strategy. **Table 3.2** refers to the strategic provision which should be made available at the PUA, Strategic Service Centres and other settlements where there is the need to redress the imbalance of housing and employment locally to maximise self-containment. Such settlements are generally those settlements with populations in excess of 3,000. However, this excludes those settlements that have a substantially military population and small civilian population including Bulford, Durrington Larkhill and Lyneham. Other policies in the Structure Plan should facilitate appropriate additional developments at the remaining towns, and in villages and the rural areas.

TABLE 3.2: Proposed Employment Land 1996-2016

Area	Employment Land (ha)				Development rates per annum (ha)	
	Total Proposed	Share of Plan Area total	Estimated area of sites built and committed (2003)	Estimated scale of new strategic sites required	Recorded , 1978 to 1996	Possible , 1996 to 2016
Kennet District	55	8%	45	10	1.3	2.8
North Wiltshire District	160	22%	145	15	5.5	8.0
Chippenham	45	6%	48	-3		2.3
Remainder	115	16%	97	18		5.8
Salisbury District	80	11%	57	23	1.0	4.0
Salisbury	35	5%	14	21		1.8
Remainder	45	6%	43	2		2.3
West Wiltshire District	150	21%	149	1	3.4	7.5
Trowbridge	35	5%	31	4		1.8
Remainder	115	16%	118	-3		5.8
Swindon Borough	280	39%	232	48	17.2	14.0
Swindon	280	39%	227	53		14.0
Remainder	0	0%	4	-4		0.0
Total	725	100%	627	98	28.4	36.3

3.13 In most areas, compared to past rates of development, a liberal scale of employment land provision is proposed. This is considered necessary to provide a choice of sites, and to allow for possible variations in employment densities, or in the proportion of future employment growth located on employment land. It is recognised that the allocation of land in itself is seldom sufficient to actually achieve development.

Transport

3.14 The Strategy of concentrating development in the larger urban areas will facilitate the development of public transport systems. The Strategy also recognises that, in some areas, the emphasis needs to be on developing more local job opportunities, and retaining services and facilities, to avoid the need to travel long distances to major towns.

3.15 Greater emphasis is being placed on policies for the development of integrated transportation plans for urban areas, encouraging the use of more efficient and environmentally friendly forms of transport, and promoting the effective management of the existing highway network to meet local travel needs. The importance of maintaining and improving a strategic highway network for regional and national economic reasons is recognised. It is also necessary to support the economic promotion of the towns outside the Swindon area. In particular, the existing strategy to regenerate the economies of the towns in the western part of Wiltshire will be maintained to deal with continuing problems.

- 3.16 The main national primary routes serving this area are the A350 and the A36. Difficulties of access to the towns by these routes, in particular the A350, have contributed to slow economic development and the build up of employment problems. The County Council has completed the Chippenham Western Bypass and Semington-Melksham Diversion, and has proposals for a Westbury Bypass and improvements at Yarnbrook/West Ashton and Melksham, all on the A350. Other improvements to the A350 should be given a high priority as funds become available. There are known problems with the A36 that the County Council is seeking to resolve with the Highways Agency.

Environmental Protection

- 3.17 The Strategy recognises that large parts of the Plan Area are of considerable archaeological, ecological and landscape importance, and that such areas need to be protected and maintained as part of the package for sustainability. Apart from designated areas, there is the need to protect the countryside for its own sake, in accordance with PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas). Nevertheless, the County and Borough Councils recognise the importance of maintaining the vitality and viability of the countryside and therefore an appropriate balance needs to be struck between conservation and development. Thus the Strategy affords these major environmental assets continued protection whilst encouraging their selective use for tourism to diversify the rural economy and improve job prospects. At the same time, other activities, such as minerals extraction need to be carefully controlled.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

4.1 The Strategy described in **Chapter 3** establishes a broad framework for all the strategic planning policies. This Chapter sets out policies for:-

- sustainable development priorities
- infrastructure
- the scale of housing and employment development and its distribution to the Plan area's local authorities, towns and villages.

Priorities for Sustainable Development

4.2 In planning the strategic development of land use and transport, the County and Borough Councils attach great importance to the concept of sustainable development, maintaining and enhancing the quality of life and the environment for existing and future generations. **Policy DP1** reflects guidance at the national and regional level about when Local Authorities should exercise the "precautionary principle", rejecting development which is clearly not sustainable and supporting new forms of development which will enable a more sustainable pattern of land-use, transport and use of resources.

DP1 IN PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULAR PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO:-

1. **MEETING LOCAL NEEDS FOR JOBS, SERVICES AND AFFORDABLE AND SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING IN ALL SETTLEMENTS**
2. **MEETING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**
3. **ACHIEVING A PATTERN OF LAND-USES AND ASSOCIATED TRANSPORT LINKS WHICH MINIMISE THE NEED TO TRAVEL AND SUPPORT THE INCREASED USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CYCLING AND WALKING**
4. **MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION AND ACCOMMODATING PROPOSALS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY**
5. **IMPROVING THE AMENITY OF SETTLEMENTS**
6. **MINIMISING THE LOSS OF COUNTRYSIDE AND PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE PLAN AREA'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS.**

4.3 Where necessary, the sustainable development priorities in **Policy DP1** are expanded upon in more specific policies in the remainder of the Plan. However these cannot anticipate all forms of strategic development proposal with which the Planning Authorities may be faced. **Policy DP1** provides a "baseline" against which proposals not anticipated in specific policies will be assessed. The priorities listed are a mixture of traditional planning themes and subjects that more recent work on sustainable

development has brought to the fore. The latter include access to jobs, housing and facilities by all sections of society and reduction of the demand for energy, by minimising the need to travel, by conservation measures and by the use of renewable sources.

Infrastructure

- 4.4 It is an Objective of the Structure Plan to ensure that adequate infrastructure and services should be provided in support of development. It is also an Objective that the amenity of settlements should be protected and improved.

DP2 DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT PROCEED UNLESS THE INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES AND AMENITIES MADE NECESSARY BY THE DEVELOPMENT CAN BE PROVIDED AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME.

- 4.5 The development of the strategy has taken into account the availability and likely provision of basic infrastructure, including water services and transport infrastructure. The acceptability of development proposals will depend upon the existing availability or new provision of a wide range of appropriate community services and facilities. In the past, significant delays have taken place in providing facilities for development areas in Wiltshire. It is apparent that areas of rapid growth have experienced particular difficulties. Severe restrictions on public expenditure are likely to continue, causing difficulties in funding highways, transport services, schools, recreation facilities and other community services needed to support new areas of housing development in particular. The Environment Agency has expressed concern about the environmental impact of increased demand for water from some rivers in the Plan Area, namely the Bristol Avon (Malmesbury area), the Kennet and the Wylde. Water supply from these areas is limited and may need to be augmented from other areas. Other services, such as community health centres are also likely to be affected. Developers and landowners will therefore need to provide the means to realise the infrastructure, services and amenities necessitated by their development in an environmentally sustainable way.
- 4.6 Local Development Document policies will provide the more detailed framework for establishing such requirements through their proposed allocations for development. They will also consider whether development on major sites will need to be phased, to match provision of infrastructure, services and amenities. Arrangements are likely to be finalised when planning permission is sought. In some cases, it may be appropriate to attach conditions to planning permissions to ensure that development does not take place before infrastructure, services and amenities are provided. In most cases, however, planning obligations are likely to be the principal mechanism. These will usually be drawn up under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991) while Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 and other powers may also be appropriate. Developers may assist this process by offering voluntary obligations to provide infrastructure, as described in Circular 05/2005.

- 4.7 Infrastructure, services and amenities will need to be provided in an environmentally sustainable manner, to comply with **Policy DP1**. This includes facilities that are accessible to all members of the community.

Development Strategy

- DP3 DEVELOPMENT SHOULD PRIMARILY BE FOCUSED AT THE SWINDON PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ITS ROLE AND FUNCTION AND THE REGENERATION OF THE CENTRAL AREA.**

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS SHOULD IDENTIFY SALISBURY, CHIPPENHAM AND TROWBRIDGE AS STRATEGIC SERVICE CENTRES FOR SMALLER SCALE GROWTH TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE RURAL AREA BEYOND THE HINTERLAND OF THE PRINCIPAL URBAN AREAS. PROVISION SHOULD ONLY BE MADE FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT SUSTAINS THEIR STRATEGIC SERVICE CENTRE ROLE AND IMPROVES THE BALANCE OF LAND USES WITHOUT ENCOURAGING CAR-BORNE COMMUTING TO THE PRINCIPAL URBAN AREAS. PARTICULAR EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND TO ATTRACT NEW ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND MEET THE NEEDS OF EXISTING EMPLOYERS, AND ALSO AT TROWBRIDGE, THE REGENERATION OF THE TOWN CENTRE.

ELSEWHERE, LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS SHOULD:

- 1. IDENTIFY TOWNS AS LOCAL SERVICE CENTRES TO ACCOMMODATE SMALLER SCALE DEVELOPMENT TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS AND TO MAKE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO THE WIDER RURAL AREAS; AND**
- 2. IDENTIFY SMALL TOWNS AND VILLAGES TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS ONLY.**

DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LIMITED IN SCALE AND WELL INTEGRATED WITH THE EXISTING FORM OF THE SETTLEMENT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LIMITED TO SETTLEMENTS THAT HAVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES SATISFYING LOCAL NEED, FACILITIES AND SERVICES, AND ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

IN LOCATING DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS STRATEGY PRIORITY WILL BE AFFORDED TO MAKING PROVISION ON PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH LAND IN SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS SHOULD NOT BE INHIBITED SOLELY ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE HOUSING LAND REQUIREMENT IS MET ON OTHER SITES. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS SHOULD SET OUT THE TESTS OF SUSTAINABILITY WHICH WILL BE APPLIED TO SUCH PROPOSALS INCLUDING THE NEED TO RETAIN AN APPROPRIATE BALANCE OF LAND USES AT SETTLEMENTS. DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OF A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN AND PROTECT OR ENHANCE LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY.

- 4.8 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) provides the overall framework for Wiltshire's development strategy. The regional development strategy states that:
- The Principal Urban Areas (PUAs) offer the best opportunity for accommodating the majority of development in the most sustainable way;
 - Other designated centres for growth can provide for sustainable and balanced growth to meet other identified sub-regional growth needs;
 - Elsewhere, towns should be designated to act as local service centres for the wider rural area;
 - Other small towns and villages in rural areas should provide for local needs; and
 - Substantial planned expansion of small dormitory towns within easy commuting distance of the PUAs should be resisted.
- 4.9 In taking forward the regional development strategy appropriate to the Wiltshire context, the strategy seeks to achieve a greater concentration of housing development than the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 while providing for housing to meet the needs of the rural areas. The strategy also aims to achieve a better balance of employment and housing, and provide for a range of facilities and services in all settlements to promote more sustainable communities and minimise the need to travel. The extent to which this can be achieved will depend on the role and function, and location of the settlement.
- 4.10 RPG10 identifies Swindon as the only PUA in Wiltshire. The development strategy seeks to accommodate a significant part of the growth that takes place in Wiltshire at Swindon. Development at Swindon will also need to reflect **Policies DP10A, DP10B, DP10C and DP10D**. The Swindon PUA is defined in **paragraph 4.80**. Outside the Swindon PUA, the development strategy focuses new development towards settlements that are able to function as Strategic Service Centres for the wider rural area beyond the hinterland of the nearest PUAs. Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge are Wiltshire's largest settlements in terms of population outside Swindon and have significant employment opportunities with potential for growth and a good range of facilities and services including public transport. They offer the greatest potential for self-contained growth outside the PUA and function as important centres serving the needs of their surrounding areas.
- 4.11 Salisbury is Wiltshire's largest settlement outside Swindon with a population of 44,450 (2004). It is relatively self contained and has a level of retail provision that is second only to Swindon. Salisbury is an historic town with an important landscape setting and its proximity to Stonehenge alongside Salisbury's own historic environment make it an attractive tourist destination. Despite Salisbury's relative self containment it will be particularly important to allow the town to become more self-contained through further economic growth to help minimise out-commuting to major towns on the south coast such as Bournemouth and Southampton. Salisbury's role as an important employment, retail and tourist centre should be enhanced.
- 4.12 Chippenham and Trowbridge have similar populations, of around 33,500 and 35,500 respectively (2004). Chippenham benefits from its location in the M4 corridor and on the Bristol to London main rail line. It is an important employment and service centre
-

with significant potential for economic development that should be realised. Continued economic growth will enable the town to become more self-contained and reduce the need to commute to the nearby PUAs of Swindon, Bath and Bristol.

- 4.13 Trowbridge is Wiltshire's County Town, an important administrative centre that does not enjoy the status it should. Significant potential exists for urban renewal within and around the town centre providing the opportunity to develop a strong and vibrant commercial centre for the town. Trowbridge is a significant employment centre that has a good level of self containment. The promotion of greater self containment through economic growth will enable the town to become more self-contained helping reduce the propensity to commute to the Bath and Bristol PUAs. The opportunities for urban renewal and town centre regeneration should play a key role in achieving the town's economic potential.
- 4.14 To improve the balance of land uses at Strategic Service Centres, an overall focus on employment provision will be of particular importance to ensure that housing does not take place without the local employment opportunities required by an increased workforce. Housing growth without employment provision could lead to increased car-borne commuting to the PUAs that have greater opportunities for employment. In order to sustain the Strategic Service Centre roles of Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge it will be important to maintain and enhance the level and quality of services and facilities commensurate with that required by the town's population and wider rural area to encourage leisure and shopping trips to be made locally.
- 4.15 **Policy DP3** proposes that most new development should take place in Swindon, Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge. However, appropriate opportunities are also needed for the growth of local employment and services in other towns and villages to help reduce the need to travel to more distant locations and further assist in diversifying the rural economy.
- 4.16 The Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 identified the Plan Area's main towns and settlements as:

Kennet District:

Devizes, Ludgershall, Marlborough, Pewsey and Tidworth

North Wiltshire District:

Chippenham, Calne, Corsham, Cricklade, Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett

Salisbury District:

Salisbury, Amesbury, Downton, Durrington, Mere, Tisbury and Wilton

West Wiltshire District:

Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon, Melksham, Warminster and Westbury.

Swindon Borough:

Swindon, Highworth and Wroughton.

While the roles of Swindon, Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge have been defined, it is recognised that some of the other settlements will continue to play an important role in meeting Wiltshire's needs and where appropriate these should be identified in accordance with **Policy DP3** in Local Development Documents.

- 4.17 Outside the PUA and Strategic Service Centres, Wiltshire's settlements have less potential to become self-contained because of their size, physical constraints and/or location in relation to larger settlements. Some of these nevertheless have a reasonable level of employment opportunities, services and facilities and are well located to play an important role as Local Service Centres in providing for the wider needs of the rural area alongside Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge. Other towns within Wiltshire should therefore be identified in Local Development Documents where these can provide for services and facilities of a more local nature than the Strategic Service Centres. These settlements should complement the Strategic Service Centres.
- 4.18 In identifying Local Service Centres to meet the needs of the wider rural area, consideration should be taken of their location relative to other settlements to ensure that another settlement does not have greater ability to meet the needs of the rural area. Local Service Centres should be well placed to provide a wide range of services for their surrounding communities and provide a focus for meeting the development needs of the areas in which they are located. Although development should be limited, the scale and type of development required to meet local needs will vary depending on the settlement's size; its particular role and function; availability of previously developed land; and need to accommodate employment, service and local housing development.
- 4.19 Access to jobs and services in most rural areas can be limited, and efforts are needed to provide for services and to accommodate employment uses that may wish to locate in these areas. Sites for small new employment areas or new community facilities may therefore also need to be allocated at villages and smaller towns where it is required to help support their communities and improve self-containment. The scale of development at these should be limited to meet local economic and social needs only.
- 4.20 In order to promote sustainable development outside the PUA and Strategic Service Centres and reduce the need to travel by car, housing should be restricted to towns and villages that have access to: employment opportunities; public transport; and services and facilities. Small towns and villages where limited additional housing development may be appropriate, as a minimum, should possess or have good access to a range of services and facilities, including most of the following:
- primary school, church, hall where community activities can take place,
 - food shop, post office, pub, and
 - recreation field.
- 4.21 Most of these facilities are provided by the private sector and all of them are subject to change. For this reason, the absence of some facilities should not be seen as a block to development in an otherwise well-provided village, particularly where the local community is running organisations which provide support for its members. Closely grouped villages that together have good access to facilities should also be considered

and be identified in Local Development Documents. An important aspect of accessibility is safety for pedestrians and the availability of footways.

- 4.22 Many of the Plan Area's villages lie in undeveloped countryside. Much of this has special protection because of its landscape quality or importance for nature conservation or archaeology. Many villages are attractive in form and layout, with high quality buildings. These factors will also influence the scale and location of development. Development of villages in those areas protected by - the Western Wiltshire Green Belt (**Policy DP12**) and the Swindon Rural Buffer (**Policy DP13**) - will need to reflect the intentions of these policies. In many villages there would be advantages in encouraging the construction of smaller houses, affordable by a wider range of residents, on sites identified as suitable in Local Development Documents. Specific Proposals to provide affordable housing may be pursued separately under **Policy DP8**.
- 4.23 The strategy of regenerating the economies of the Western Wiltshire towns (Chippenham, Corsham, Melksham, Bradford-on-Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury and Warminster) still remains a central part of the Plan's strategy and includes the need to improve the A350 (**Policy T12**). The Strategy to meet local needs outside of the Principal Urban Areas and Strategic Service Centres will be particularly relevant for any of the Western Wiltshire towns identified in Local Development Documents. In these settlements, the overall emphasis should be on increasing opportunities for local employment and improving service provision to help improve the balance of housing and jobs locally, promote self-containment and minimise the need to travel. This should help redress existing imbalances.
- 4.24 In many of Wiltshire's settlements significant potential exists to redevelop brownfield sites and improve the quality of the urban environment through regeneration. Where such sites are available at settlements, highest priority should be given to locating the development needs of the settlement on suitable land and buildings. Specific policy on the re-use of land and buildings is set out in **Policy DP9**. At all settlements the redevelopment of previously developed land for housing should not take place at the expense of the supply or range and choice of employment sites locally, particularly where they are well integrated within the urban area. Local Development Documents should therefore ensure that important employment land is retained. This will be important to retain an overall balance of land uses and ensure that sufficient employment opportunities can be made available to meet the needs of the resident workforce and not encourage out-commuting.
- 4.25 The EIP Panel (2004) introduced flexibility into the Development Strategy to ensure that the development of well-located previously developed sites would not be inhibited by housing requirement figures set out in **Policy DP4**. This change was made to recognise the potential oversupply of housing that could arise in the Districts of North Wiltshire and Kennet, particularly in North Wiltshire due to higher levels of windfall developments coming forward than had originally been estimated. However, in making the recommendation, the Panel were clear that local planning authorities should be rigorous in their assessment of the sustainability of the location of any site that is considered under this policy. Local Developments Documents should set out policy tests that should be applied to proposals that would result in the District housing supply

being exceeded with particular reference to the need to retain important employment land to ensure that an overall balance of land uses is retained, as discussed in **paragraph 4.24**.

- 4.26 The need to secure high standards of design and protection or enhancement of the urban or rural landscape and biodiversity is an integral part of the Plan's Objectives to protect and improve the amenity of settlements. The maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity is also essential to achieving the overall aim of sustainable development.

Housing and Employment Proposals

DP4 IN THE PLAN AREA PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR 60,000 NET ADDITIONAL DWELLINGS AND 725 HECTARES OF ADDITIONAL STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT LAND BETWEEN 1996 AND 2016, DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS:

	DWELLINGS	EMPLOYMENT LAND (HA.)
KENNET DISTRICT	5,250	55
NORTH WILTSHIRE DISTRICT:		
• CHIPPENHAM	3,000	45
• REST OF DISTRICT	6,000	115
SALISBURY DISTRICT		
• SALISBURY	3,900	35
• REST OF DISTRICT	4,100	45
WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT		
• TROWBRIDGE	5,000	35
• REST OF DISTRICT	6,750	115
SWINDON BOROUGH		
• SWINDON PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA	24,000	280
• REST OF BOROUGH	1,000	0

PROVISION SHOULD ALSO BE MADE FOR 1,000 DWELLINGS AT THE PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA AT THE WESTERN SIDE OF SWINDON IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY DP10B.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS SHOULD PROVIDE MECHANISMS TO MANAGE AND REVIEW THE RELEASE OF SITES AND PHASING OF DEVELOPMENT OVER THE PLAN PERIOD.

- 4.27 Housing and employment proposals are made in the light of RPG10, and technical work on growth forecasts and constraints. The recommendations of the Panel who conducted the Examination in Public into the draft Structure Plan (2016) have also been taken into account.

- 4.28 The housing and employment distribution for the Borough and District Councils are explained in the Housing Background Paper (2003). Together with other development pattern and transportation policies, **Policy DP4** provides the appropriate level of guidance for the preparation of Local Development Documents by the Borough and District Councils.
- 4.29 Government Guidance is placing increasing emphasis on the monitoring and review of planned development provision, particularly housing, to ensure that development needs are being met in the most sustainable way. In particular, phasing and regular monitoring of housing on an annual basis should be used to ensure that priority is given to the development of previously developed sites, while ensuring that a continuous supply of housing is available. Account will need to be taken of the levels of windfall developments coming forward that are contributing to the housing requirement and any other changes in supply.

Housing

- 4.30 The house building proposal of 60,000 net additional dwellings between 1996 and 2016 conforms to Regional Planning Guidance. This figure excludes new houses provided by the Ministry of Defence for occupation solely by military personnel including married quarters accommodation. However, it includes existing dwellings transferred from dedicated military use to either the commercial or social housing sectors, as well as all new dwellings (including those arising through redevelopment and conversions) provided by the commercial or social housing sectors.
- 4.31 The scope for influencing the pattern of house building, even when looking more than ten years ahead, is limited by the need to allow for new windfall developments that come forward (development potential on previously developed land). Urban capacity studies produced by the Borough and District Councils have been used to estimate the level of additional housing likely to come forward on new windfall sites and it is estimated that around 8,250 dwellings could be provided from this source between 2003 and 2016. In total, taking into account all forms of housing supply (outstanding planning permissions including sites where there is a Council resolution to grant permission, local plan allocations and windfall sites) and provision that has already been made, it is anticipated that around 46% of the 60,000 net additional dwellings provided between 1996 and 2016 will be on previously developed land.
- 4.32 The overall aim of the Development Strategy (**Policy DP3**) is to achieve a greater concentration of development than the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 while providing for housing to meet the needs of the rural areas in the most sustainable way. In particular, this focuses housing towards Swindon and the three Strategic Service Centres of Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge. The Plan's housing distribution is constrained by the significant level of development that has taken place since 1996 and by existing commitments as well as future windfall development. These have been developed or committed in line with Local Plan strategies that have been prepared in accordance with earlier Structure Plans. The potential to ensure that development provision is consistent with any new development strategy is therefore limited. **Table 4.1** sets out the housing supply position at 1 April 2003.

TABLE 4.1: Housing Land Supply 1996-2016

District /Borough	Completions 1996-2003	Planning Permissions at 1 April 2003 ¹	Local Plan Allocations to 2011 ²	Windfall Allowance 2003-2016	Total Supply
	Net Additional Dwellings				
Kennet	1,545	1,560	1,130	1,135	5,370
N.Wilts	3,675	2,910	1,600	1,595	9,780
Salisbury	2,965	1,055	1,850	1,780	7,650
W.Wilts	4,690	2,670	3,725	1,385	12,470
Swindon	5,780	8,630	8,305	2,350	25,065
TOTAL	18,655	16,825	16,610	8,245	60,335

Notes:

¹ Includes sites with a Council resolution to grant planning permission² Outstanding allocations that have not been completed or have planning permission

4.33 In determining the distribution in the Plan Area, the Strategic Planning Authorities (SPAs) undertook an exercise to determine whether there was any potential to reassess existing commitments. The context for this exercise was to ensure that the housing distribution would achieve provision that is as far as possible consistent with the Development Strategy that has been prepared in line with RPG10. The SPAs concluded that the only real potential existed at West Wiltshire District where a number of Greenfield allocations in the West Wiltshire District Plan 1st Alteration were identified for development during the second phase of the Plan period (1 April 2006 to 31 March 2011). Potential therefore existed through plan, monitor and manage to reappraise the need for these sites against any new emerging Structure Plan provision. The EIP Panel supported the SPAs conclusions that provision at West Wiltshire District should be reduced to allow the reallocation of some housing towards Swindon.

4.34 The housing supply position and potential for redistribution has only been used by the SPAs to inform the distribution of housing provision. If any under provision arises as a result of non-implementation then this should be addressed through plan, monitor and manage by the relevant local planning authority and alternative provision made. Equally over provision could occur as a result of windfall coming forward at a higher level than anticipated. It will be a matter for the local authorities to address this through plan, monitor and manage. **Paragraph 4.25** clarifies that there is some flexibility in the housing provision to allow the development of previously developed land in sustainable locations if the housing provision has been met. Where opportunities arise to reappraise housing supply within a local authority area, alternative provision should be made in accordance with **Policy DP3**. In the case of West Wiltshire, in the interim period before the Local Plan is reviewed it will be a matter for West Wiltshire District Council to manage their provision against **Policy DP4** to ensure that provision is not exceeded.

- 4.35 The distribution for the Swindon Principal Urban Area is 25,000 dwellings (definition of the Swindon PUA is provided at **paragraph 4.80**). This comprises 24,000 dwellings to be found within Swindon and a further 1,000 dwellings that should be provided as an urban extension or extensions to Swindon on its western edge. The western edge of Swindon falls within the jurisdiction of both North Wiltshire District Council and Swindon Borough Council and until the outcome of the joint study required to be undertaken by **Policy DP10B** is known it will be unclear which local authority area provision should be made in. It is possible that the provision may be split between both areas rather than provision being made in just one.
- 4.36 It is important that housing developments provide a range of housing, including dwellings suitable for people with special needs. A broad mix of housing will help meet the needs of a range of groups in a community, and allow a community to evolve. The mix of housing should also include affordable housing, (defined in Circular 06/98: Planning and Affordable Housing, paragraph 4 as including both low cost market housing and subsidised housing). A policy for affordable housing has therefore been included in the Structure Plan (**Policy DP8**).

Employment

- 4.37 During most of the post-war period, the Plan Area has fared relatively well in economic terms with job-growth significantly above rates at the national level. Data compiled by Cambridge Econometrics (Cambridge Econometrics, Regional Economic Prospects, February 2005) suggest that, over the period 1981-2003, the Plan Area was in ninth place in terms of employment growth out of the 64 former British county areas. Projections prepared for the Structure Plan anticipated that, over the Plan period (1996-2016), employment within the Plan Area would increase by around 61,000, while the Area's workforce was forecast to increase by around 49,000. Between 2003 and 2016, it was anticipated that both employment and the workforce would grow by around 27,500.
- 4.38 Given the strengths of the local economy, and the locational and quality-of-life advantages that the Plan Area presents for inward investment, a high level of job growth seems likely to continue. However, it is not assured, and, as events continue to demonstrate, the continued presence of existing employers or jobs cannot be taken for granted. Continuing promotion and other measures will be necessary, particularly away from the M4 Corridor, to ensure that adequate job opportunities exist throughout the County. Improvements to the A350 in the west of the county will contribute towards this. However, it is important to ensure that an adequate supply of employment land will be available throughout the Plan period and across the Plan Area.
- 4.39 As a first step towards estimating employment land requirements, employment change and workforce-based projections were prepared for each of the Wiltshire Districts and Swindon Borough. The employment projections are based on Plan Area projections produced by Cambridge Econometrics, with the proportions of change attributed to each sub-area reflecting those of past employment growth. The workforce projections, were based on the projected scale of workforce increase associated with the proposed scale of housing increase within Swindon Borough and each of the Wiltshire Districts.

These initial figures were then refined to ensure that sufficient land is made available to allow unemployment to reduce to a nominal level of 1% by 2016, and to take account of likely trends in double jobbing. At Plan Area level, this exercise suggested that the number of jobs could increase by 66,000 over the Plan period (although, as stated, the projected increase in the number employed is put at 61,000, with the increase in the workforce itself put at 49,000). It was then necessary to translate these projections of employment and workforce-based growth into estimates of employment land requirements.

- 4.40 Both Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council have carried out research into patterns of job growth and employment densities. Within the County Council area, it was estimated that between 1991 and 2001 less than a fifth of the net increase in employment had taken place on employment land. In contrast, the Swindon study suggested that almost half of the employment within the Borough was located on employment land. With respect to employment densities, the overall picture was more uniform, although in both areas densities varied markedly between employment areas. The County Council study found that densities within areas counting towards the policy quanta averaged 55 workers per hectare; while the Swindon study found that densities averaged 56 workers per hectare.
- 4.41 Taking into account these studies, in converting the workforce-based and job-based projections (represented as persons) to an employment-land requirement (in terms of hectares), it has been assumed that employment densities would average 55 persons per hectare, in the case of the Wiltshire Districts, a significantly higher ratio than that which emerged from the studies cited above. It has also been assumed that every other new job would be located on employment land; while the highest estimate of employment land requirements has been selected, irrespective of whether this is derived from the job-based or workforce-based projections. This approach should provide a safeguard against employment-land densities being lower than has been the case historically, and allow more employment to be located on employment-land. It should also provide a buffer against more land going out of employment use than has been the case historically, and allow for the job change or workforce-based projections being exceeded. Additionally, it is also important to provide prospective occupiers with a choice of location, and to provide sufficient land to allow for decreased out-commuting from the Wiltshire Districts.
- 4.42 With the exception of Kennet District, the policy quanta contained in **Policy DP4**, have been derived directly from this process. In the case of Kennet District, however, the quantum has been raised to permit the development of the whole of the RDA site at Ludgershall, in recognition of the special needs of this area.
- 4.43 Provision made in **Policy DP4** should be realised in the form of strategic employment land, defined as employment provision located at the PUA, Strategic Service Centres and settlements where there is the need to address the imbalance of housing and employment locally to maximise self containment (see **paragraph 3.12**). Strategic employment land at these settlements should also be capable of being well served by public transport. There is no quantified requirement for the development of existing employment sites or smaller, non-strategic developments in other settlements, where a

criteria-based approach will apply (**Policies DP3, 9 and 15**). This will give flexibility to Local Development Documents to increase the range of local opportunities. However, in the exceptional event of development being permitted in these locations which does not meet the policy criteria, it would count against the provision made in **Policy DP4**.

4.44 Land provision in **Policy DP4** and proposals in other policies reflect the demand for a range of employment activities, namely:

- offices (other than those providing professional and other services to visiting members of the public)
- research and development
- industry
- storage and distribution warehouses (including wholesale cash and carry, but excluding retail warehouses selling directly to the public).

This classification of employment uses reflects the Use Classes B definitions in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and subsequent amendments.

4.45 It is likely that there will continue to be demands to locate other activities within employment areas, for example shopping and retail warehouses, which fall outside the above "Use Classes Order" classifications, while some other uses may be best located on employment estates, due to their characteristics and traffic generated. An example is waste processing uses, such as recycling. It is an Objective of the Structure Plan that recycling, energy saving and power generating plant, which will contribute to a more sustainable pattern of energy use, should be encouraged. However, the land area taken by such uses will not be counted against provision in **Policy DP4**. Similarly, other developments which do not fall within the classification of employment uses identified above should not count towards provision.

Town Centres, District Centres and Employment Areas

4.46 The general pattern of new development in and on the edges of settlements needs to support the Objectives of the Structure Plan. The principles set out in **Policy DP5** reflect Objectives seeking reduced car use, balanced development of settlements, protection of amenity and protection of high quality environments. In developing the Objectives, analysis of emerging Central Government advice on sustainable development found that there was a strong emphasis on these matters. This has since been reinforced, in particular by "Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport" (2001).

DP5 THOSE EMPLOYMENT, SHOPPING, LEISURE AND OTHER SERVICE USES WHICH ATTRACT LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE SHOULD BE CONCENTRATED AT EXISTING TOWN CENTRES, CENTRES OF OTHER MAIN SETTLEMENTS AND DISTRICT CENTRES OR NEW CENTRES BUILT TO SERVE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, WHERE THERE IS MOST POTENTIAL FOR ACCESS BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CYCLING OR WALKING.

PROVISION SHOULD ALSO BE MADE FOR THOSE EMPLOYMENT USES WHICH ATTRACT SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENTS OF FREIGHT, IN LOCATIONS AWAY FROM CENTRAL AREAS WITH GOOD ACCESS TO THE RAIL AND ROAD NETWORKS AND ACCESSIBLE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CYCLING OR WALKING.

- 4.47 For the purpose of **Policy DP5**, the Plan Area's towns and other main settlements identified in **paragraph 4.16** apply. Nearly all have well developed centres, which act as foci for a variety of activities and access by all modes of transport. In Swindon, a network of District centres performs a similar function. These are listed in **paragraph 4.54**. The allocation in Local Development Documents of necessary additional sites for commercial development attracting large numbers of people should give first consideration to opportunities within existing centres, before considering adjoining sites. **Policy DP6** gives further strategic guidance on shopping development.
- 4.48 Several towns in the Plan Area have developed or allocated employment sites in peripheral locations. These have proved attractive to incoming firms. Government planning guidance now requires caution to be exercised about this form of development, with its emphasis on locations "well served by public transport or otherwise readily accessible to a significant local residential workforce" (PPG13: Transport). However, it does require that employment uses which attract "significant movements of freight (such as large scale warehousing/distribution depots and some forms of manufacturing) should be located away from congested central areas, but with direct access to the local, rather than the trunk network" and with good access to the rail network.
- 4.49 Some services, such as intensive sport and recreation, rely on the towns for most of their support, but may seek more rural locations, on the grounds that they could be reached by largely car-borne customers. Many journeys are made to use such services. Consequently, the County and Borough Councils are concerned that their dispersal would undermine the pursuit of a more sustainable pattern of development and transport. The policy therefore seeks general location of these developments in town centres, other main centres and district centres.
- 4.50 Whilst most of the Plan Area's towns have experienced significant growth, their centres have not necessarily prospered. There has been widespread concern about the impact of out-of-centre superstores and other forms of retailing. **Policies DP5** and **DP6** will give additional support to growth and development in centres. But there are other ways in which renewal and prosperity can be achieved. Much depends upon the energy and aspiration of the local community. The Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTi) is a community based regeneration programme for market towns and their

surrounding area. The initiative aims to support the development of vibrant, healthy and sustainable towns. The MCTi Initiative is being advanced in Wiltshire through the Wiltshire Market Towns Partnership. A number of towns have applied for MCTi status. In 2002 an Urban Regeneration Company was established for Swindon, the New Swindon Company, to regenerate the central area of the town. **Policy DP10D** sets out a specific policy to support the revitalisation of Swindon's central area.

Shopping

- 4.51 Significant growth in the Plan Area's population is forecast by 2016. Also some continued increase in personal spending seems likely. These factors will combine to produce a requirement for additional shopping provision in the Plan Area. The Strategy seeks to concentrate development at the larger towns, so these will also need to accommodate most new shopping floorspace. However, opportunities to enhance town centre shopping facilities will also occur in some smaller towns and main settlements. This will enable them to compete more effectively with other centres and other forms of retailing, because stronger centres will reduce the need for shoppers to travel elsewhere. Growth will also provide the opportunity to widen the range of shopping and to maintain an efficient and innovative retail sector. Retailing is an important source of jobs and economic enhancement. Leisure or tourism-related shopping will also help to provide a wider range of shopping and employment opportunities.
- 4.52 Village shopping has been reduced by strong economic forces favouring centralisation in the towns. Since 1976, a third of village food shops and post offices have been lost from the Plan area. Whilst many rural residents have the mobility to cope with this, others are dependent on local shops and services for a reasonable quality of life. **Policy DP6** therefore acknowledges the importance of village shopping and the need to consider its viability when planning new developments.
- 4.53 **Policy DP6** emphasises the future role of town and other shopping centres in meeting Government and Structure Plan objectives for efficient and innovative shopping, together with a more sustainable pattern of development and transport. It is impossible to predict how shopping trends might change in the period to 2016. But the fortunes of various centres will inevitably vary, due to such factors as population growth, competition or changing economic conditions. For these reasons, it is not desirable to promote the development of particular centres. Rather, **Policy DP6** provides a framework for considering new shopping proposals in the circumstances prevailing.

DP6 THE HIERARCHY OF SHOPPING CENTRES IN THE PLAN AREA COMPRISES:-

- 1. SUB REGIONAL CENTRES - SWINDON AND SALISBURY**
- 2. OTHER TOWN AND MAIN SETTLEMENT CENTRES**
- 3. DISTRICT CENTRES IN SWINDON**
- 4. OTHER LOCAL SHOPPING, INCLUDING NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES AND VILLAGE SHOPS.**

THE ROLE OF EACH CENTRE SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AND ENHANCED BY PROVISION FOR SHOPPING DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH THE ROLE OF EACH CENTRE AND WHICH WILL PROMOTE ITS VITALITY AND VIABILITY.

PROVISION FOR OUT OF CENTRE SHOPPING SHOULD BE MADE ONLY IF PROVISION IS NEEDED AND CANNOT BE MADE IN A CENTRE OR, FAILING THAT, ADJOINING A CENTRE, IF IT WOULD NOT AFFECT THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF NEARBY CENTRES (EITHER BY ITSELF OR WITH OTHER PROVISION) AND ACCESS IS READILY AVAILABLE OR CAN BE PROVIDED FOR MEANS OF TRANSPORT OTHER THAN THE PRIVATE CAR.

- 4.54 The policy aims to ensure that existing shopping facilities are maintained or enhanced. The shopping hierarchy ranges from the sub-regional centres of Swindon and Salisbury, through the major town centres of Chippenham and Trowbridge, to smaller centres such as Marlborough, Melksham and Mere and other local shopping, including neighbourhood centres and village shops. The full list of town and other main settlements covered by sub-clauses 1 and 2 of the policy is given in **paragraph 4.16**. Although Durrington and Downton do not have identifiable shopping centres, they may have the potential for centres to evolve later in the Plan period. In the Swindon urban area, the district centres currently considered to be of strategic significance are Old Town, West Swindon Centre, Gorse Hill, Cavendish Square and Orbital.
- 4.55 Previously much shopping development in the Plan Area has taken place outside town centres and other centres. However, for the past decade Central Government policy and Structure Plan objectives have placed emphasis on the need to enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres, now encompassed in Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6). **Policy DP6** emphasises the role of shopping centres and should provide confidence in their future, by resisting development which would threaten their future, or future enhancement. This should enable the steady attraction of new private and public investment. The County and Borough Councils will support the use of the sequential approach contained in PPS6 for the allocation of necessary additional sites for shopping in Local Development Documents.
- 4.56 However, it may not always be appropriate for development to take place in existing centres. There may be local needs in urban areas which cannot be met in established centres or, it may be difficult to fit needed shopping into small and historic centres. In the future, perhaps, a major increase in spending power might mean that not all requirements could be satisfactorily met in existing centres. Where development is needed and it cannot be accommodated on sites in or adjoining centres, the policy gives scope for sites outside centres to be used. PPS6 gives emphasis to the

assessment of quantifiable need but there may also be instances where qualitative need is of some relevance. However, in all cases it is essential that development would not adversely affect other existing shopping, or the implementation of beneficial shopping proposals. Sporadic comparison (i.e. non food) goods shopping development would increase the need to travel. Out-of-centre shopping should also be accessible by public transport, by bicycle or on foot, so that it can be used by all members of the community.

- 4.57 Enhancement of shopping centres requires more than the addition of retail floorspace. The quality of development is an important consideration, particularly in the many town and other main centres which have historic street patterns and high concentrations of historic buildings. Shopping centres will also continue to require good access by the private car, so that they can meet needs and compete effectively with more dispersed retailing. However, they can also be enhanced by improving accessibility and facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and those using public transport and by offering car-free areas. Management initiatives may need to be taken to enhance the environment and attractiveness of shopping centres, to underpin their key role in the revitalisation of urban areas.

Housing in Towns and Main Settlements

- 4.58 The desirability of achieving good links between housing, employment opportunities and other facilities has been reinforced by Central Government guidance seeking reduction in the need for residents to use cars. The general strategy of concentrating house building at settlements with a good range of services and facilities and employment is proposed in **Policy DP3**. The Strategy identifies the Swindon Principal Urban Area and Strategic Service Centres of Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge as the main foci for growth. Local Development Documents are also required to identify other settlements as Local Service Centres to provide for the needs of the wider rural area. At these settlements, where housing is required in accordance with **Policy DP3**, there is a need to provide land for housing in locations well served or capable of being served by public transport. Higher density housing and mixed-use schemes can provide further opportunities to reduce transport needs and, in the case of the former, more support for public transport. Also, locations close to other uses can provide more opportunities for short journeys on foot or by bicycle. The promotion of good links will also improve the amenity of housing areas, meeting another of the Structure Plan's Objectives.

DP7 NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AT TOWNS AND MAIN SETTLEMENTS SHOULD HAVE GOOD ACCESS TO NEARBY EMPLOYMENT AREAS, COMMUNITY FACILITIES, OTHER SERVICES AND OPEN SPACE, INCLUDING PROVISION FOR SAFE MOVEMENT BY CYCLING OR WALKING. THEY SHOULD ALSO HAVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS TO TOWN OR SUB CENTRES AND OTHER MAJOR EMPLOYMENT AREAS.

HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING AND MIXED-USE SCHEMES SHOULD BE PROVIDED, PARTICULARLY IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS CLOSE TO MAIN PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTES, TOWN AND OTHER CENTRES.

- 4.59 For the purposes of **Policy DP7**, “towns and main settlements” should generally be regarded as the Swindon Principal Urban Area, the Strategic Service Centres and Local Service Centres identified in Local Development Documents. The Structure Plan also proposes limited development of smaller towns and villages. Whilst the scale of development will be much smaller and the scale of integration sought by **Policy DP7** may not be feasible, accessibility to local facilities, services and public transport links to towns will still be desirable.
- 4.60 Some aspects of the policy will require careful consideration of the layout of housing developments, as well as their location. This may achieve better access to public transport and improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists. These and other considerations will be taken up during the preparation of Local Development Documents, which includes environmental appraisal and allocation of major sites. Planning briefs may also be useful in developing ideas about layout. An Environmental Assessment (EA) may be required at the planning application stage if the impact of development is considered likely to be significant.
- 4.61 Proposals for mobile homes or residential caravans should be subject to the same considerations as permanent housing. However, they may not be environmentally acceptable in residential areas. **Policy DP15** provides guidance for gypsy caravan sites.

Affordable Housing

- 4.62 Affordable housing is an important issue in Wiltshire. The scale of Local Housing Authority waiting lists and the findings of surveys commissioned by the Borough and District Councils, show that there is a strong need across the County in both towns and the rural area.
- 4.63 Central Government policy for affordable housing includes use of the planning system. "Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)3 : Housing" 2000, and Circular 06/98 "Planning and Affordable Housing" include three measures aimed at increasing supply :
- (1) the identification by the Local Planning Authority of targets for large sites, based on District-wide assessments of need for affordable housing. Circular 06/98 recommends that targets should normally be set for sites of more than 25 dwellings (or 1 hectare) but proposes the inclusion of smaller sites in settlements of 3,000 population or less or in areas with "exceptional local conditions".
 - (2) the granting of "exceptional" planning permissions on land outside villages, where the resulting housing would be affordable
 - (3) continued general development of low-cost market housing, as well as that subsidised by the above mechanisms.

Guidance also encourages Local Development Documents to increase the supply of suitable sites by supporting re-use of vacant property, sub-division of large houses, conversion of redundant buildings and re-use of land within settlements.

- 4.64 These measures are being used by the Borough and District Councils to encourage provision. However, schemes have met only a small proportion of needs so far. Their future yield may also be modest, due to limitations in the supply of sites, in the construction of low-cost market housing and in the public funding of Housing Associations, which have replaced Local Authorities as the main providers of affordable housing.
- 4.65 **Policy DP8** gives scope for development of these and other possible measures to increase the supply of affordable housing, which is essential in meeting the overall Aim and Objectives of the Plan for all communities.

DP8 PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON APPROPRIATE SITES AT TOWNS AND VILLAGES, TO MEET IDENTIFIED LOCAL NEEDS FOR LOW COST ACCOMMODATION FOR SUCCESSIVE OCCUPANTS.

- 4.66 The County and Borough Councils recognise that what constitutes affordable housing will vary with local market conditions and incomes. However, the constant need is for housing at costs significantly below those in the open market at the time that any proposal is considered. Also, in most cases, the incomes of those in need of affordable housing are likely to be sufficient only for renting. Some people who require affordable housing also have special housing needs, due to such factors as age and frailty or disability.
- 4.67 The Borough and District Councils will consider proposals for affordable housing in the light of policies in Local Development Documents, their policies as Local Housing Authorities and information on need. As strategic planning authorities, the County and Borough Councils will use **Policy DP8** to guide land disposal programmes, discussions with other landowners, responses to any proposed changes to Central Government policy and, in the case of the County Council, its responses to District Council consultations on planning applications. Current measures outlined in "Planning Policy Guidance (PPG3) : Housing" 2000 and Circular 06/98 are not expected to meet a large proportion of identified need for low cost housing. Other measures may be introduced.

Reuse of Land and Buildings

- 4.68 The re-use of previously developed land and buildings within settlements means some reduction in need for greenfield sites. One of the Objectives of the Plan, in moving towards sustainability, is to make use of such sites, i.e. to recycle urban land. Sites are often well linked to employment areas, shopping and recreation, reducing the need for residents to travel. Conversion of buildings can provide a greater variety of new dwellings and other premises. Finally, re-use of land and buildings can improve the amenity of settlements, by removing eyesores or restoring attractive buildings. Some buildings are only partly used; for example commercial premises with vacant upper

floors. Programmes such as "Living Over the Shop (LOTS)" have created flats in many town centres.

- 4.69 The reuse of redundant sites in the open countryside raises additional issues. The Plan Area has many large sites in active use in relatively remote locations, including numerous MOD establishments. All three of the Armed Services are well represented and their land ownership takes many forms, including the extensive training area on Salisbury Plain, airfields, housing, underground storage and administration blocks. Currently, the Armed Forces are undergoing many changes. Some are leading to greater use of sites, whilst others cause various establishments or bases to become surplus to requirements.
- 4.70 Some sites contain resources which may be put to new use, yielding general benefits. For example, sites in or adjoining towns may be redeveloped, reducing the need to release greenfield sites for new housing and jobs. The re-use of former military airfields for aviation may also reduce pressures on undeveloped land (**see Policy RLT7**). However, many establishments are in open countryside, at some distance from towns and other main centres, and some are in prominent locations in attractive landscape.

DP9 WITHIN OR ADJOINING SETTLEMENTS, SUITABLE PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND AND BUILDINGS SHOULD BE REUSED IN PREFERENCE TO THE USE OF UNDEVELOPED LAND.

IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE THE APPROPRIATE REUSE OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND AND BUILDINGS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.

- 4.71 A sequential approach to the release of sites for development should be adopted, to give greater priority to urban regeneration objectives and to secure the best prospects for development of previously developed land and buildings. Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing (2000) proposes that such an approach should be adopted for the identification of sites for housing. Local Development Documents will need to be based on "urban housing capacity studies" and will need to demonstrate that a sequence has been followed to identify sites, "starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas identified by the housing capacity study, then urban extensions, and finally new development around nodes in good public transport corridors."
- 4.72 The national target for the proportion of new housing to be provided on previously developed land and by conversion of existing buildings is 60 per cent by the year 2008 (PPG3: Housing 2000, paragraph 23). RPG10 includes a target of at least 50% of new housing to be provided on previously developed land. The Strategic Planning Authorities have not yet adopted a target for the Plan Area. However, they and the Wiltshire District Councils have been monitoring these forms of housing development. The latest of their annual monitoring reports, Housing Land Availability April 2005, shows that 46 per cent of housing development since 1996 has taken place on previously developed land or by conversion of existing buildings. In the light of this

information and policies in the Structure Plan, the Regional target of at least 50 per cent is considered to be a challenging level to aim for in the Plan Area.

- 4.73 Re-use of land and buildings within settlements needs to be subject to safeguards, in particular the need to protect the amenity of their surroundings. Proposals will need to be considered against **Policy DP1** and other policies in the Structure Plan, plus detailed policies in Local Development Documents. Re-use for housing can increase the number of residents and cars to levels which people perceive to be unacceptable. "Town cramming", leading to visual intrusion and over-use of streets and open spaces, needs to be avoided.
- 4.74 Within settlements, there is a particular need to encourage re-use of land and buildings and extensions to existing buildings to accommodate new forms of employment. This will help meet job needs and provide a wider choice of development options for local and incoming firms. Many existing employment sites are well integrated with public transport routes or accessible by walking or cycling. Their continued use may reduce the need for greenfield development. Development on these sites will therefore be likely to support the sustainability objectives of the Structure Plan, and help to maintain local job opportunities. In monitoring the take up of employment land, redevelopment of existing sites will not be counted against provision in **Policy DP4** unless significant development takes place on new land.
- 4.75 Appropriate use should be made of redundant MOD sites, which are in or adjoining urban areas and well related to the existing form of development.
- 4.76 Previously developed sites in the open countryside may have important infrastructure and special advantages which should be beneficially used rather than left to decay and become unsightly. Re-use may also reduce pressures elsewhere in the open countryside for development which necessitates a countryside location, or may take advantage of the existing specialised facilities, for example for aircraft (see also **Policy RLT7**). However, re-use should not accommodate activities at a scale or intensity which would cause an unacceptable environmental impact on the site or surrounding rural area. An employment use requiring a workforce significantly greater than could be provided in the vicinity of a site in the open countryside would be likely to encourage relatively long distance commuting by car. Similarly, whilst re-use of existing housing would make use of an existing asset, new housing development would only be acceptable as an appropriate addition to an adjoining settlement. On the other hand certain recreational facilities such as those covered by **Policies RLT2** (informal recreation), **RLT7** (airfields), **RLT8** (tourist attractions), and **RLT10** (holiday accommodation) may be more appropriate, again subject to their scale and intensity. Major recreation uses which would generate undesirable traffic flows to locations poorly served by public transport should not, however, be encouraged.
- 4.77 Proposals for redundant sites in the open countryside should seek to make as much use of existing assets as possible and should not involve extensive new construction on open land. Many sites are prominent in areas of protected landscape and are important for their archaeology, history and natural environment. However, there may be an opportunity to use limited redevelopment as a catalyst to enable the re-use of

major existing assets, or to make existing buildings less visually intrusive. Buildings which are already beyond re-use or whose appearance is not in keeping with the landscape should be removed. The Strategic Planning Authorities will encourage the preparation of feasibility studies and overall management schemes, working jointly with the owners, such as the MOD, and the District Councils. These should ensure that an appropriate range of alternative uses, or package of uses, has been fully examined and that due regard has been paid to the site's importance in landscape, archaeological, historical, architectural and nature conservation (biodiversity) terms.

- 4.78 **Policy C13** gives additional guidance on derelict or spoiled land in the open countryside. Some previously developed land is contaminated and the Environment Agency will advise on necessary actions to ensure safe disposal of contaminating material.

Development of the Swindon Principal Urban Area

DP10A WITHIN THE SWINDON PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA, NEW HOUSING WILL BE PROVIDED BETWEEN APRIL 2003 AND APRIL 2016 AT :

	NO. OF DWELLINGS (NET)
A) THE NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AREA	5,260
B) THE SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT AREA	4,100
C) CENTRAL AREA	3,000
D) REMAINDER OF URBAN AREA	4,400

- 4.79 **Policy DP4** proposes that 25,000 dwellings should be built at the Swindon Principal Urban Area between 1996 and 2016. By April 2003, some 5400 of these had been built, leaving about 19,600 dwellings to be constructed over the rest of the plan period. In addition to the provision set out in **Policy DP10A**, **Policy DP10B** provides for 1000 dwellings on the western side of the Principal Urban Area and **Policy DP10C** makes provision for up to 1800 dwellings in conjunction with a university campus at Commonhead. It is proposed that the remaining dwellings should be provided for within the urban area and at two urban extensions; the Northern Development Area, where building is already well advanced, and at the Southern Development Area, where construction is expected to start in 2006.
- 4.80 Policy SS5 of RPG10 states that Structure Plans should define the general geographic extent of the PUA. The Swindon Principal Urban Area comprises the existing built up area of Swindon together with the committed strategic urban extensions of the Northern Development Area and the Southern Development Area. The built up area and the two strategic urban extensions are indicated on the Swindon Inset Key Diagram. It would be inappropriate for the Structure Plan, at the strategic planning level, to precisely define the PUA boundary as this will be a matter for Local Development Documents. However, development that directly adjoins the PUA, particularly that proposed by **Policies DP10B** and **DP10C**, is regarded as development at the PUA and once it has received planning permission or has been defined in an adopted Local Development Document should form part of the PUA.

- 4.81 In accordance with **Policy DP3**, the priority for future housing in Swindon is for the use of previously developed land within the urban area. Most of these sites have already been identified in the draft Swindon Local Plan 2011. For the period between 2011 and 2016 additional potential sites have been identified in the Swindon Urban Capacity Study. The average annual rate proposed, 570 per year, is higher than the average completion rate of 270 per year from 1991 to 2003, but is considered to be achievable in the light of recent rates of completion and the continuing supply of such sites. Recycled land accounts for 38% of the overall supply between 2003 and 2016, compared with 35% of dwelling completions since 1991. Many of the identified sites are within the central area, and will contribute to the regeneration being driven by the New Swindon Company.
- 4.82 The Northern Development Area (NDA) of Swindon has capacity for about 9,100 dwellings. The area was the subject of a major planning inquiry during the late 1980s, which led to the decision in 1989 to grant consent, subject to the signing of legal agreements. Outline permission was granted in 1991 and the allocated area is subject to a comprehensive Master Plan and Local Plan policies, in which land is allocated for housing, employment, retail, community, open space and transport development. Construction of the NDA commenced in 1994 and by April 2003 almost 3,900 dwellings had been completed, of which 3,495 dwellings were built between 1996 and 2003.
- 4.83 The Southern Development Area (SDA) of Swindon has capacity for about 4,500 dwellings. Potential therefore exists beyond this Plan period to provide an additional 400 dwellings on this site. This area was identified as a strategic greenfield development area at Swindon in the previous Structure Plan as a result of the Swindon Development Appraisal Study (1999). The identification of this area as the most sustainable location to meet the Borough's outstanding development requirements to 2011 was endorsed in the Panel Report of the second Examination in Public (March 2000). Outline planning permission for the SDA was granted in May 2005 and construction is expected to start in 2006.
- 4.84 It is anticipated that the NDA should be substantially completed by 2011. However, as construction at the SDA is not now expected to commence until 2006 its completion, originally considered to be within the Structure Plan period to 2011, will now run to beyond 2016. This has meant that, in addition to the proposed provision at Commonhead (**Policy DP10C**), the development proposed by **Policy DP10B** now needs to be brought forward to meet the short-term shortfall in provision.

DP10BAT THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA PROVISION WILL BE MADE FOR 1,000 DWELLINGS TO BE IDENTIFIED IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS FOLLOWING A JOINT STUDY BY THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES. POLICIES IN THESE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS WILL ENSURE:

- A) THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS FROM THE FIRST PHASE OF ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT;**
- B) THE PROTECTION OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS; AND**
- C) PROTECTION OF THE STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE.**

4.85 After taking into account the sources of housing land supply identified in **Policies DP10A** and **DP10C**, there is a shortfall of about 1,000 dwellings. The EIP Panel considered that locating this at a new strategic urban extension as the first phase of a long term development would be premature prior to the identification of the scale and direction of long term growth through the review of RPG10 in a Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026. The Panel recommended that provision should be made on land on the western side of the Principal Urban Area to meet the shortfall of growth. The Panel have clarified that the western side of Swindon relates to land within Areas G and H as defined by the Swindon Principal Urban Area Study (September 2003). The area has good potential for road connections to Swindon and the potential to provide for growth without having a major impact on landscape or biodiversity.

4.86 The land to the west of Swindon is well related to the built up area in terms of existing road links, and it will be important to utilise these at an early stage of the development by providing good public transport links, particularly to the town centre. This will maximise the potential of the area for sustainable transport. It will also be important to protect known nature conservation interests in the area and to have regard to the principles set out in **Policy DP13** (The Swindon Rural Buffer) in assessing urban extension sites at Swindon.

4.87 Whilst it is possible that the required level of development could be accommodated on one urban extension it may be preferable, in sustainability terms, to locate it on more than one site. A study is needed to identify the most sustainable location(s), which should be adjacent to Swindon forming an urban extension or extensions. As much of the land on the western side of the Swindon PUA is within North Wiltshire District, it will be necessary for a joint study to be carried out by the local planning authorities. This will determine where development could be located without adversely compromising interests of acknowledged importance, including protecting the separate identities of the settlements to the west of Swindon. The results of the urban extension study should be identified in the authorities' Local Development Documents or in a joint Local Development Document.

University Campus and Mixed Use Development

DP10CAT THE SWINDON PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AT COMMONHEAD, WEST OF THE A419, WILL BE SUPPORTED COMMENSURATE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY, AND SHOULD PROVIDE FOR:

- A) A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES OF APPROXIMATELY 60 HA.; AND**
- B) HOSPITAL EXPANSION COMMENSURATE WITH GROWTH IN ITS CATCHMENT AREA UP TO 2016 AND BEYOND; AND**
- C) A STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATION OF ABOUT 23 HA. WITH LINKAGES TO THE UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT; AND**
- D) DWELLINGS UP TO A MAXIMUM OF 1,800, COMMENSURATE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY.**

THESE PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DEFINED IN DETAIL WITHIN A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT AND ENSURE:

- A) THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND ITS BIODIVERSITY AND INCLUDE AN APPROPRIATE BUFFER ZONE TO THE COATE SSSI;**
- B) THE PROVISION OF A DETAILED STRATEGIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY TO INFORM THE MASTER PLANNING OF THE SITE;**
- C) THAT NO DIRECT ACCESS FROM THE SITE ONTO THE A419 SHOULD BE PROVIDED, AND AN ALTERNATIVE LINK IDENTIFIED;**
- D) THAT PROVISION IS MADE FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS; AND**
- E) THAT PROVISION IS MADE FOR STRATEGIC LANDSCAPING THAT RECOGNISES THAT THE SITE IS VISIBLE FROM THE AONB TO THE SOUTH AND EAST.**

4.88 Wiltshire and Swindon presently have few higher education opportunities at degree level and above. Universities are not only seats of academic research but also contribute to the local economy through partnerships with local businesses and from the multiplier effect of spending by staff and students. Presently Wiltshire and Swindon have a net loss of people in their late teens and early twenties to other parts of the country. The presence of a university in the area would help redress the balance.

4.89 The prestige, academic opportunities, positive image and improvement in labour skill levels associated with the development of a university will have major benefits to the local economy akin to a major strategic employment site. It is anticipated that an establishment capable of admitting undergraduates from all over the country would

have an intake of up to 10,000 full time and part time students. Not only will a university presence in the area encourage an increase in higher education participation among the local population, it will provide support to the growing knowledge-based economy, contribute to the local economy through increased spending by students and staff, support the Borough's urban regeneration programme, and increase social and recreational facilities available to the local community. The university will therefore bring benefits to the economic and regeneration aims of the Structure Plan, which will be beneficial to Swindon and Wiltshire as a whole.

- 4.90 The University of Bath has defined a campus style university as their preferred business model, with an overall site requirement of about 60 hectares. Whilst Government guidance would favour a location in the central area of Swindon, there are insufficient sites available that could accommodate the type and scale of development required. Problems of land assembly and the logistics of operating a university on several sites rules out the possibility of locating the development on fragmented sites in the central area or elsewhere within the urban area. However, it would be beneficial to the regeneration of the central area to have an element of the university in the town centre, and Local Development Documents should promote the benefits of a university presence in the central area.
- 4.91 The results of the Swindon Principal Urban Area Study indicated that the area to the southeast of the Swindon built-up area, west of the A419 at Commonhead, is the most sustainable location for development. The site has intrinsic advantages including good public transport links to the central area and performed best in the overall sustainability assessment. It also provides an opportunity for the university to form links with the Great Western Hospital, for instance in the field of research and development. Development of the site will need to provide a high level of sustainable transport alternatives, particularly good transport links to the central area to facilitate access and support its regeneration.
- 4.92 As an identified sustainable location, the Commonhead area is also appropriate for a range of other uses providing the opportunity for linkages to the university. It can contribute to housing land supply by providing for up to 1,800 dwellings, which is considered to be the maximum in terms of environmental capacity. If further work on environmental capacity indicates that fewer dwellings should be accommodated, the balance will need to be provided for elsewhere within the urban area or through further provision at urban extensions. Employment provision on this site will count towards the overall employment land quantum, and should take advantage of the proximity of the university by forming functional as well as physical linkages with the university, for example related to creative industries, biotechnology and environmental technologies. The uses included within the development should not be detrimental to the regeneration efforts within the central area and should therefore accord with **Policy DP10D** and should be set out in the master plan for the development. Land should also be reserved to allow for the expected long term expansion of the Great Western Hospital, to meet the needs of the growing population within its catchment area, and particularly resulting from the future long term development of Swindon.

- 4.93 The area to the west of the proposed development is environmentally sensitive, particularly around the Coate Water Country Park that includes an area designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The nature conservation concerns of the area will need to be protected by means of sympathetic design and appropriate mitigation to ensure development does not adversely affect the integrity of the site. Although Coate Water is a SSSI, government guidance does not preclude development adjacent to these sites if there are no detrimental impacts on them. Therefore, a buffer zone adjoining Coate Water Country Park of a sufficient size to protect the integrity of the site and maintain the setting will be required. In addition there will be a need for the provision of strategic landscaping to take account of the views from and to the AONB, particularly at Liddington Hill. A stone circle and other known archaeological features, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, are included within the development area, and measures for their protection will need to be in place prior to the start of development. The Local Development Document and the Master Plan to be produced in association with a future planning application will need to satisfactorily meet these environmental concerns. It will also need to identify appropriate road links to the site that ensures that there is no direct access to the A419, which is intended for long-distance rather than local traffic.
- 4.94 Development at Commonhead will also need to address water supply and sewerage issues. Modelling will be required to fully understand the effects that the development will have on water resources and supply. This may require the Wanborough Sewage Treatment Works to be expanded and some reinforcement of the sewerage network to be completed.
- 4.95 The Commonhead proposal is a comprehensive mixed-use development with strong linkages between the different elements to promote sustainable development. The employment uses should take advantage of the proximity to the university, and the housing will give the opportunity for staff to live in proximity to the university thereby reducing the need for car-based commuting. The opportunities for functional linkages between the university and the Great Western Hospital should be maximised. All of the uses should be included in a Local Development Document or a comprehensive Master Plan approved by the local planning authority.

Swindon Central Area

DP10DSWINDON CENTRAL AREA WILL BE THE PRIME LOCATION FOR OFFICE DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS NOT ANCILLARY TO OTHER COMMERCIAL USES, AND WILL BE THE PREFERRED LOCATION FOR MAJOR SHOPPING AND OTHER COMMERCIAL USES, HEALTH, EDUCATION, LEISURE, RECREATION, ENTERTAINMENT, CULTURAL AND PUBLIC SERVICES AND ANY OTHER HIGH TRIP-GENERATING USES.

PROPOSALS FOR NON-ANCILLARY OFFICE DEVELOPMENT AND MAJOR SERVICE SECTOR USES WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED AT OTHER PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA LOCATIONS IF IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT;

**A) THEY CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATED IN SWINDON CENTRAL AREA; AND
B) THEY WILL NOT HARM FUTURE INVESTMENT IN SWINDON CENTRAL AREA.**

- 4.96 The regeneration of the central area is a key part of the strategy for Swindon. There is a range of uses that give the town centre its vitality by attracting people to work, shop and live there. In addition, a central location with a diverse mix of uses maximises the ability for people to use sustainable transport modes due to the centrally located bus and railway stations. It will also reduce the number of journeys made, and increase the viability of bus routes, which are focused on the central area. The central area's unique role as a location for higher order retail and leisure uses therefore needs to be protected.
- 4.97 The regeneration of the central area up to 2016 is being promoted by an urban regeneration company, The New Swindon Company (TNSC). In 2005, TNSC published a Regeneration Framework setting out its proposals for the central area. Swindon Borough Council is working closely with TNSC to ensure that the principles of the Regeneration Framework are incorporated at an early stage into an Area Action Plan (AAP). This will give statutory backing to the regeneration strategy for the central area, and development proposals of the types referred to in **Policy DP10D** will need to meet the requirements of the AAP. Until that time it will be necessary for proposals to meet a sequential test to demonstrate that the development cannot be accommodated in the central area and will not prevent appropriate future development there.
- 4.98 The New Swindon Company proposes to promote an additional 90,000 square metres of new office floorspace in the central area. This should all be 'pure' offices, which are those not ancillary to other commercial uses, and which only the central area is able to concentrate together. The dispersal of these types of offices in low density developments can lead to the unnecessary development of greenfield sites. It uses land that could be better put to other employment uses and lead to unsustainable travel patterns. In accordance with national planning guidance, therefore, a sequential approach to proposals for 'pure' office and other higher order uses should be adopted, with a preference for the central area unless the scale of development proposed cannot satisfactorily be accommodated in the centre. Even in

that event proposals would only be acceptable if it is demonstrated that there is no adverse impact on future investment in the central area. The views of the New Swindon Company will be sought on proposals for these uses at the PUA, both within and outside Swindon central area, to ensure that future significant developments in the town do not conflict with the regeneration strategy.

The Role of New Settlements

- 4.99 Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing (2000) identifies the circumstances in which provision should be made for a new settlement. In effect, new settlements are seen as appropriate only in special circumstances, where a combination of a shortfall in urban capacity to accommodate proposed housing combines with opportunity in the form of a large previously developed site with good public transport connections (PPG3: Housing (2000) paragraphs 72 to 75). Two broad types of new settlement can be identified. Firstly, New villages typically of at least 750 dwellings have been regarded as the minimum viable settlement, largely because they should be able to support a primary school. In view of their limited range of facilities they can only be regarded as satellite developments. Secondly, Strategic new settlements of at least 3,000 dwellings should be large enough to support a mix of uses, in particular a secondary school. This scale of development is so named because it would have a widespread impact on the settlement pattern and traffic flows. However, to provide the opportunity for residents to pursue more sustainable lifestyles by minimising the need for car travel, a significantly larger minimum settlement size of about 10,000 dwellings has been suggested.
- 4.100 The appraisals of development options for the Plan Area as a whole and for Swindon, undertaken for the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011, concluded that the pattern of development to 2011 should be predominantly urban and that scope existed at Swindon and other towns to accommodate the necessary housing. This view was supported by the two Panels who conducted the Examinations in Public into the Structure Plan in 1997 and 1999. The high level of growth already planned for through the Structure Plan 2011, urban capacity potential and potential for urban extensions at the Swindon Principal Urban Area meant that there was no need to consider a new settlement to accommodate growth for the period to 2016. Furthermore, in economic terms the Strategic Planning Authorities were anxious to secure and maintain the economic base of the existing towns in the A350 corridor, which could be diluted by the creation of a major focus of development.

DP11 THERE WILL BE NO PROVISION FOR A NEW SETTLEMENT TO MEET THE ADDITIONAL DWELLINGS AND EMPLOYMENT LAND REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY DP4.

- 4.101 The distinction between strategic new settlements and new villages was used in the County Council's appraisal of alternative strategies for accommodating new development in the 2011 Plan. The appraisal showed clearly that the option of a strategic new settlement in the Western M4 Corridor would be a less sustainable distribution of development than continued urban growth.

The Western Wiltshire Green Belt

4.102 An area of Green Belt in western Wiltshire was approved in 1966, forming part of the Green Belt around Bristol and Bath. Its purpose is to check the expansion of towns in the area, principally Bristol and Bath, and to safeguard surrounding countryside. The Green Belt lies partly in North Wiltshire District and partly in West Wiltshire District.

DP12 A WESTERN WILTSHIRE GREEN BELT WILL BE MAINTAINED AS PART OF THE BRISTOL AND BATH GREEN BELT, TO MAINTAIN THE OPEN CHARACTER OF LAND BETWEEN BATH, TROWBRIDGE AND CORSHAM AND TO PROTECT THE SETTING AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OF BRADFORD-ON-AVON.

4.103 The precise boundaries of the Green Belt are defined in the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2001 (to be superseded shortly by a new Local Plan for the period to 2011) and the adopted West Wiltshire District Plan 1st Alteration (2004). These Plans also contain policies for the control of development in the Green Belt. Development in the open countryside should only be allowed in the exceptional circumstances specified in "PPG2: Green Belts" and the appropriate scale of development in settlements should be determined in Local Plans.

4.104 The Green Belt's particular objectives are : -

- to maintain the open character of undeveloped land adjacent to Bath, Trowbridge and Bradford on Avon
- to prevent the coalescence of Bradford on Avon with Trowbridge or the villages to the east of Bath
- to limit the spread of development along the A4 between Batheaston and Corsham
- to protect the setting and historic character of Bradford on Avon.

The Swindon Rural Buffer

4.105 The concept of the Swindon Rural Buffer was first included in the North East Structure Plan at its First Alteration in 1990. Its original extent and role was reviewed as part of the Swindon Development Appraisal Study, required after the first Examination in Public, of the Structure Plan Review to 2011. The Panel Report of the second Examination in Public (1999) concluded that its purpose was to protect the separate identity of Swindon's towns and villages and to prevent their coalescence with Swindon.

4.106 The protection of the countryside and landscape for its own sake is covered by other policies in this plan, in particular **Policy DP14**.

DP13 RURAL BUFFERS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED TO PROTECT THE SEPARATE IDENTITIES OF THE FOLLOWING TOWNS AND VILLAGES AND PREVENT THEIR COALESCENCE WITH SWINDON:

**BROAD BLUNSDON
CHISELDON
CRICKLADE
HIGHWORTH
LIDDINGTON
LYDIARD MILLICENT**

**PURTON
SOUTH MARSTON
STANTON FITZWARREN
WANBOROUGH
WOOTTON BASSETT
WROUGHTON**

4.107 The 1999 Panel Report also concluded that the list of identified towns and villages should be extended to include those settlements to the east of Swindon that are equally at risk from coalescence. The actual extent of the Rural Buffer appropriate to each settlement will need to be defined and detailed during the review of the North Wiltshire District and Swindon Local Plans to 2011, and in subsequent Local Development Documents. These plans will need to define an area for each settlement that is essential to maintaining its physical separate identity and distinctive character. The extent of the area will be limited to only identifying land that would be essential to protect the named settlements from the continued growth of Swindon.

4.108 The extent of a settlement's buffer will need to allow for the completion of the Northern Development Area, the Southern Development Area, University development at Commonhead and urban extension(s) proposed on the western side of Swindon as required in **Policies DP10A, DP10B and DP10C**. Where settlements are in close proximity it may be appropriate to identify a combined buffer.

4.109 Local Plans and subsequently Local Development Documents will define in policy, for the purposes of Development Control, those uses that may be appropriate within a settlement's rural buffer.

Housing, Employment and Related Development in the Open Countryside

4.110 Strategic policies for towns and villages are based on the principle that development should take place in settlements, rather than the open countryside. This remains fundamental to Central Government planning policy. However, there are certain forms of development that need to take place, to allow the countryside and the rural economy to evolve. The Structure Plan sets out the overall policy within which they should be considered.

DP14 DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE SHOULD BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED. ISOLATED NEW HOUSES SHOULD REQUIRE SPECIAL JUSTIFICATION.

PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OR CONVERSION OF SUITABLE EXISTING BUILDINGS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON ACCOMMODATING NEW USES WHICH DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PROVIDE JOBS.

