
Issues Report

Wilton Neighbourhood Plan

January 2020



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1 Purpose

The Issues Report is an important step in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Wilton, as it brings together the results of the community engagement undertaken in late 2019 and sets out the wider planning policy context for the Neighbourhood Plan, in relation to the issues raised by residents. This is to provide a clear understanding of the “rules”, the higher-level policy, within which Neighbourhood Planning operates, and will help to guide the production of various options (in the next phase of the work) for addressing the community’s issues.

The key higher-level planning documents which are drawn on are the National Planning Policy Framework (Revised in 2019), and the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 2015). A new emerging Local Plan for Wiltshire is currently being prepared, and it is anticipated this will be adopted during the summer of 2021. Until this point, the existing Core Strategy is the Authority-level document which guides development in Wiltshire.

A total of 517 people responded to the survey, making over 2000 long answer comments in response to the questions, as well as providing their views on the importance of improving various aspects of Wilton’s physical environment in the years to come. This is a rich set of qualitative and quantitative data which provides a sound basis for understanding the issues that will be important to residents in developing the Neighbourhood Plan. For more detailed analysis of the community engagement data, see the Community Engagement Results Report, which breaks down the responses, interrogates the data and provides the verbatim answers individuals gave as an Appendix.

2 Services and Facilities

2.1 Key Services and Facilities Issues

Improvements to drainage, flood prevention and sewerage infrastructure were felt to be important by many of those who answered the community engagement survey, as were leisure and health facilities. Shopping and schools also rated highly for residents as aspects of Wilton life to improve in years to come. The full data relating to Services and Facilities, gathered in the community engagement, is in the Community Engagement Survey Results Report, January 2020.

2.2 Policies and Plans which relate to Services and Facilities in Wilton

2.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (updated February 2019)

Chapter 8 of the NPPF provides policy on promoting healthy communities and proposes that provision is made for the social, cultural, and recreational facilities needed by the community, and that planning has a key role to play in building strong and resilient communities. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF states that,

“To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”*

Paragraphs 155-165 of the National Planning Policy Framework provide substantial guidance on planning to avoid flood risk, guiding development towards areas where the chance of flooding is lowest. The link below provides access to the NPPF in full, for reference;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

2.2.2 Wiltshire Core Strategy

The Core Strategy recognises the importance of services and facilities within Wilton in helping to promote a degree of self-containment and reduce the need to travel. Core Policy 33: Spatial

Strategy for the Wilton Community Area describes the function of the town and the wider area in the settlement hierarchy and designates Wilton as a “Local Service Centre”, serving the rural hinterland and villages. The function of Local Service Centres is described in Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy, where the four tiers of settlements are set out, these being:

- Principal Settlements
- Market Towns
- Local Service Centres
- Large and Small Villages.

Core Policy 67: Flood Risk sets out the local authority’s position on reducing the risk of flooding and the part that planning plays in ensuring that locations most vulnerable to flooding are protected from development.

Given that substantial parts of Wilton are vulnerable to river flooding, according to the Government’s flood risk mapping, this issue must be considered in developing policy, especially for growth. The link below provides more information on the specific flood risk locations in the town;

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map>

3 Development and Housing

3.1 Key Development and Housing Issues

In relation to development and housing, Wilton residents expressed the view that energy efficiency, affordable accommodation and development reflecting the design and layout of the town were important to them. Homes for people with disabilities and capacity for young people to be able to live locally were also significant to many. The need for community infrastructure, services and facilities to accompany growth was also raised.

For detailed information on the findings of the community survey, please refer to the Community Engagement Survey Results Report, January 2020.

3.2 Plans and policies which relate to the issue of development and housing

3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

Much of the NPPF is concerned with the amount, location, volume, density and design of new housing, encouraging increased provision of housing to match demand. Development is guided towards sustainable locations where people's other needs, for example work, shopping, medical facilities, schools and community activities can be met, with the aim of reducing the need to travel and supporting self-containment of settlements. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out expectations for the provision of affordable housing, particularly within larger developments, and encourages the involvement of Neighbourhood Planning in housing allocation;

“Neighbourhood planning groups should also consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites (of a size consistent with paragraph 68a) suitable for housing in their area.”
(National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 69).

3.2.2 Wiltshire Core Strategy

As noted above, the Wiltshire Core Strategy designates Wilton a Local Service Centre; Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy states that;

“Local Service Centres are defined as smaller towns and larger villages which serve a surrounding rural hinterland and possess a level of facilities and services that, together with improved local employment, provide the best opportunities outside the Market Towns for greater self-containment. Local Service Centres will provide for modest levels of development in order to safeguard their role and to deliver affordable housing.”

The Core Strategy allocates, in Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy, 3 hectares of employment land and 450 dwellings at the UK Land Forces HQ, which is now completed or under construction. It therefore appears that the 255 homes required for Wilton Community Area (see Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy) between 2006 and 2026 have been delivered, leaving no outstanding requirement. This situation could alter as the new Wiltshire Local Plan emerges, perhaps requiring additional development in Wilton. The Neighbourhood Plan can propose a greater quantity of development than that required by the Core Strategy or Local Plan, but not less. So, if there are identified housing

or other development needs, it is practical to look at options for addressing these via the site allocations process in the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2.3 Housing Needs Survey

There does not appear to have been a Housing Needs Survey completed by Wiltshire Council relating to Wilton, and it is likely that this would be a useful resource for Neighbourhood Planning going forwards. The Housing Needs Survey will help to identify those requiring housing within the town and make recommendations for the type of accommodation needed, and it is suggested that this be requested from Wiltshire Council.

3.2.4 Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)

The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) provides information on a range of potential housing sites and sites for other uses which gives an indication of how development requirements could potentially be met. The most recent SHELAA was conducted by Wiltshire Council in July 2017 reveals a large number of locations promoted for development. The Wilton Community Area Appendix of the SHELAA is available via the link below (not included in full given the size of the document):

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/shelaa-2017-appendix-5.20-wilton.pdf>

4 Town Centre and Employment

4.1 Key Town Centre and Employment Issues

Residents of Wilton told us in the community survey that improvements to town centre accessibility, better use of brownfield land for business and a wide range of town centre uses were important to them. People would like to shop locally for the goods they need and would like to see a pleasant and easy to manage shopping environment with good parking and easy mobility for all.

4.2 Plans and policies which relate to the town centre and employment

4.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF Chapter 6 sets out how planning policy can help to secure a strong and prosperous economy, both in urban and rural areas. Paragraph 81 states that,

“Planning policies should:

- a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*
- b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;*
- c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and*
- d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances”*

The NPPF also notes the importance of providing opportunities for existing businesses to grow and thrive as well as making provision for new businesses wishing to start up or move to the area. The re-use of previously developed land is also highlighted as an issue here, in relation to more rural business in particular.

4.2.2 Wiltshire Core Strategy

As noted above, the Core Strategy (Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy) allocates 3 hectares of employment land at the UKLF site, which it is understood is under construction.

The first strategic objective of the Core Strategy is delivering a thriving economy, with a range of policies which aim to support this, including the following which may be particularly relevant to Wilton;

Core Policy 34: Additional Employment Land – broadly supports proposals for employment development within Local Service Centres, provided they are compliant with the other policies of the Strategy.

Core Policy 35: Existing Employment Land – protects employment land from other uses to promote economic growth and sets criteria other uses must meet in order to be considered as potentially suitable alternative uses.

Core Policy 36: Economic Regeneration – broadly supports the redevelopment of brownfield sites within Local Service Centres for alternative employment uses.

Core Policy 38: Retail and Leisure – guides retail and leisure development towards town centres, noting a sequential test approach for larger developments outside centres.

Conservation Area and Local Distinctiveness

It is also worth noting the following Core Strategy policies in relation to development within the Conservation Area and affecting sensitive sites and buildings;

Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Throughout the community survey, the desire for local distinctiveness and style came out strongly, and there is a need to retain the identity of Wilton as separate and distinctive from Salisbury; the Core Strategy states that “the social dynamic and individuality of the two settlements should be maintained” (paragraph 5.174)

5 Environment and Open Space

5.1 Key Environment and Open Space Issues

Environmental concerns such as air quality and the need for generating low carbon energy were felt to be important by many of those who completed the community survey. Residents also made it clear that environmental protection, wildlife habitats and biodiversity were key factors. There was a desire for more green space, play space and accessible countryside. Allotments and community gardens were also supported by some residents.

5.2 Plans and policies which relate to the environment and open space

5.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The foundation of the National Planning Policy Framework is a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”, which encompasses social, economic and environmental facets. The environmental objectives are “to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.” (paragraph 8c)

This principle, along with the social and economic elements, underpins the NPPF’s approach and each element should be considered in setting planning policy and in determining planning applications.

The NPPF provides policy on promoting healthy communities and proposes that provision is made for the social, cultural, and recreational facilities needed by the community, and that planning has a key role to play in building strong and resilient communities. Paragraphs 96-98 provide the national level policy on the importance of open space, retention of community facilities, playing fields and the designation of local green spaces.

5.2.2 Wiltshire Core Strategy

Sustainability and Green Energy

Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy provides guidance on these aspects in working on Neighbourhood Plan policies. They support the principles of sustainable construction and low carbon/renewable energy production and give guidance as to how they should be implemented.

Natural and Historic Environment

The Core Strategy’s Strategic Objective 5 is “protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment”, with the following policies from this section being particularly relevant to Wilton’s Neighbourhood Plan development;

Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity – sets out how biodiversity and geodiversity will be protected and enhanced (in the case of biodiversity) through the planning process, aiming for net

gains, rather than losses. The policy provides measures for the protection of sensitive sites, and how development must work with rather than against these assets.

Core Policy 51: Landscape – Landscape Character Assessments have been carried out which identify the distinctive areas of character across Wiltshire. The term ‘landscape’ is used to refer to the built, historic and natural environment in urban, semi urban and rural areas, and so has relevance for Wilton as a built-up area. Planning policies should be seeking to enhance the built and natural landscape and referring to the relevant Landscape Character Assessment when being developed.

Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure - policy includes parks, open spaces, recreation areas, paths and playgrounds. The policy supports the retention and improvement of such areas. Wiltshire Council is currently preparing a Green Infrastructure Strategy to support the protection and enhancement of these spaces.

Core Policy 55: Air Quality – this policy will be significant for Wilton given its location on arterial roads, and the concerns raised by residents over air quality especially on these routes. The policy requires that development proposals take account of air quality issues and sets out measures for protection and mitigation from air pollution.

6 Getting Around

6.1 Key Getting Around Issues

Encouraging sustainable transport and reducing car use is a local as well as national priority due to issues such as congestion, pollution and the encouragement of healthy active lifestyles. Residents who commented in the community survey were concerned about traffic management, safe walking and cycling, and sustaining high quality public transport services.

Many residents also raised concerns about parking and road safety. High quality, dedicated pedestrian and cycle routes which are away from traffic would help people feel safer and this would make these transport options more attractive.

6.2 Plans and Policies relating to Getting Around

6.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 9 of the NPPF is concerned with the promotion of sustainable transport, especially focussed on promotion patterns of development which reduce the need to travel. Transport issues should be considered at the earliest stages when development is proposed so that negative impacts can be mitigated. High level considerations to be taken into account in setting parking standards are also set out in this chapter.

6.2.2 Wiltshire Core Strategy

Core Policies 60: Sustainable Transport and 61: Transport and Development set the broad context for traffic and road issues, aiming to reduce the need to travel, reduce dependence on the private car and make other transport options such as walking, cycling and public transport more viable.

Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure (P196) is supportive of the retention and improvement of existing paths. Developer contributions can help to secure these improvements, and the creation of new paths.

The third Wiltshire Local Transport Plan was published in March 2011 and sets transport policy alongside the Core Strategy. Wiltshire Council's LTP3: Car Parking Strategy (adopted 2011) provides more detail on parking for various land uses.

7 Summary

The Issues Report aims to signpost and flag up the wider planning considerations the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group should be aware of in progressing with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is encouraged to add local detail to the policies in place at higher level (for example Wiltshire and national policy), it is important that Neighbourhood Plan policies do not contradict the measures of higher-level legislation. It is therefore suggested that the Issues Report (and the documents referred to within it) is used as a guide when carrying out the options and policy making phases of the Neighbourhood Plan work, to ensure that policies are developed in conformity with wider policy.

It will also be important for the Steering Group to help local residents to understand that the Neighbourhood Plan does not have the freedom to set policy without boundaries, however supported or desired a particular option or policy direction may be. This can be especially true in the case of housing growth, where the level of housing allocation is not something the Neighbourhood Plan is empowered to challenge; with clear justification, a Neighbourhood Plan may propose more housing growth than required but not less.