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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Council has been working together with the community and stakeholders to produce the Swindon Borough Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (“The Core Strategy”). The Core Strategy is the main overarching Development Plan Document (DPD) within the Local Development Framework (LDF) and will provide the planning framework that will guide development in the Borough over the Plan period to 2026.

1.2 What is this document?

This document illustrates the pathway of how we have formulated the Core Strategy Revised Proposed Submission Document. It provides an audit trail of how the different consultation stages, the Sustainability Appraisals and evidence base have shaped policy from the beginning of the process, as illustrated in Figure 1.1

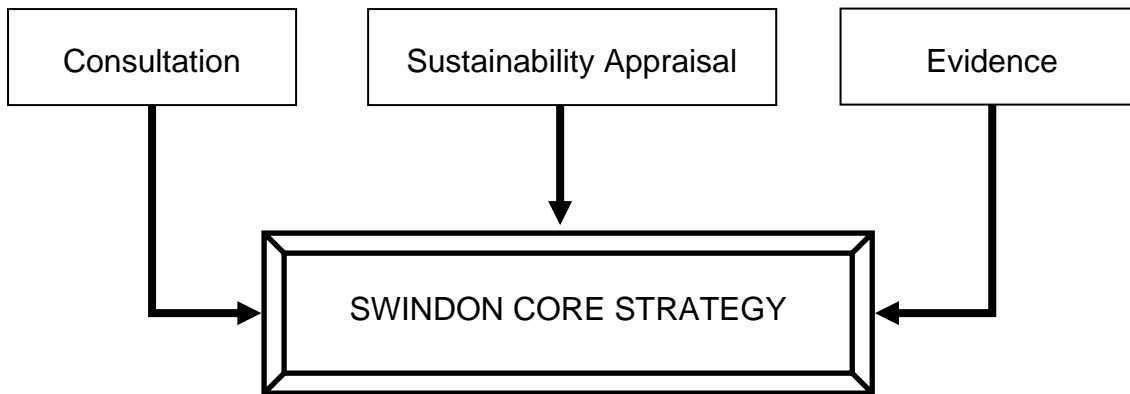


Figure 1.1: Formulation of the Core Strategy

1.3 This document includes the Statement of Consultation, which will accompany the Revised Proposed Submission of the Core Strategy. It will aid the Inspector at Examination in establishing whether the Core Strategy complies with government regulations and guidance.

1.4 The Statement of Consultation is a requirement due to the major changes introduced to the Planning System under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Amends). One of the key changes proposed to the system was that of early and effective consultation with key stakeholders and the community, also known as ‘frontloading’. In doing so a more transparent system, reflecting the aspirations of local people and key stakeholders has been produced.

1.5 The Statement of Consultation explains the consultation strategy used to consult and how the comments/representations of local people and key stakeholders have been considered and have helped to shape the Revised Proposed Submission Core Strategy. Also by illustrating how

the Sustainability Appraisal and evidence base have influenced the outcome of the Core Strategy, will aid the Inspector further at Examination in determining the transparency of the plan.

- 1.6 The Core Strategy, Statement of Consultation and other evidence base document can be viewed and accessed on the website www.swindon.gov.uk/corestrategy

2.0 Chain of Conformity

2.1 The Core Strategy provides the overarching policy framework to facilitate and guide development in Swindon over the plan period to 2026. Therefore it needs to be in conformity with national plans and the corporate aspirations of Swindon Borough Council.

2.2 Swindon Borough Council Strategies

The Core Strategy must be in accord with the various other plans and strategies produced by the Borough Council and our strategic partners and deliver the spatial aspirations of these strategies. The principals in these and other strategies have been synthesised into the Core Strategy's vision to enable the spatial implications of the strategies and vision to be met.

2.3 Sustainable Community Strategy

Swindon's Sustainable Community Strategy 'A Shared Vision for Swindon 2008-2030' demonstrates how the community of Swindon would like their Borough to be by 2030. This long-term plan entails all agencies serving the Borough to work towards this vision.

2.4 The Core Strategy will play a major part in helping to deliver this vision in terms of the spatial vision. To achieve this, Planning have developed relationships with business, voluntary and community groups and also with colleagues from different service areas across the Council. Continuous joint working with these groups has meant the Core Strategy will reflect the needs and aspirations of Swindons' communities.

2.5 One Swindon

One Swindon is being developed as the primary strategic framework to guide the planning and budget decisions of the Council and other members of the One Swindon Partnership over the period 2011-2015. It sets out the priorities for Swindon and more importantly signals a shift in the way that we will need to work to make Swindon the best place it can be. The following priorities for One Swindon have been developed:

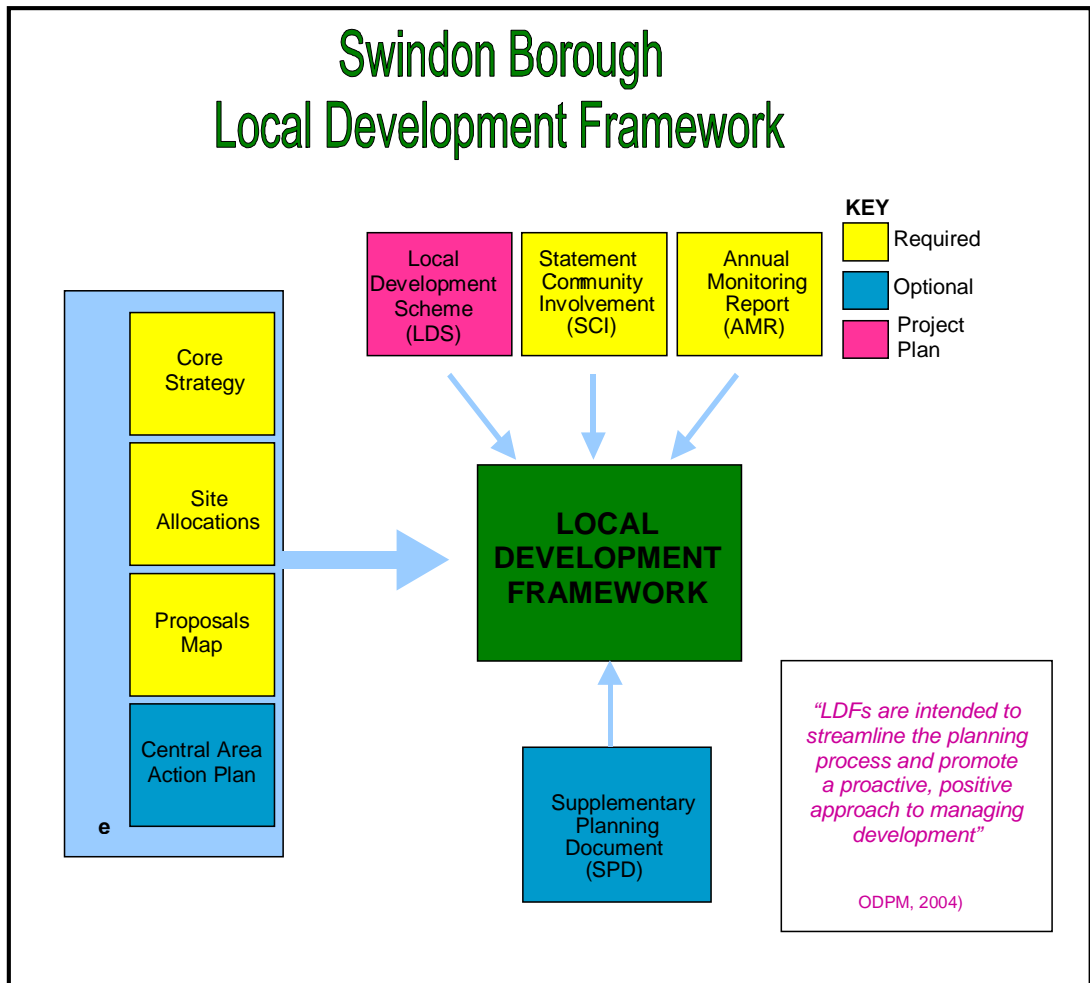
- I like where I live
- Regeneration, employment, skills and managed growth
- Everyone is enjoying sports, leisure and cultural opportunities
- Living independently, making a positive contribution

2.6 Local Area Agreement

A Local Area Agreement brings together key local partners and local government to bring forward a three year agreement, which sets out central priorities for the local area. It enables local authorities to deliver national outcomes, which reflect local needs and aspirations stated in the Community Strategy, which in turn will be feed into other strategies, in particular the Core Strategy.

- 2.7 Both 'One Swindon' and the Local Area Agreement reinforce the need to strengthen links with the community through consultation. This will give the Council constant and up-to-date knowledge of what the general public and stakeholders want for Swindon. Consultation on the Core Strategy started from the outset at 'Pre-Production' stage through using a variety of methods. The pro-active approach used within the consultation strategy for the Core Strategy will continue to be used throughout the Local Development Framework.
- 2.8 Local Investment Plan
The Local Investment Plan sets out Swindon's long-term investment needs to support the development strategy. It seeks to build on information in the Core Strategy Implementation Plan and bridge any funding shortfalls. It will be updated on a regular basis in light of changing circumstances and is developed with partner organisations and with community participation.
- 2.9 Central Area Action Plan (CAAP)
The Central Area Action Plan is part of the LDF and was adopted in February 2009. The aim of the CAAP is to facilitate town centre regeneration and provides a detailed policy framework to guide development in Central Swindon. The policies within the CAAP will have to accord with the policies and proposals taken forward in the Core Strategy.
- 2.10 Production of the CAAP commenced before work on the Core Strategy and therefore the policies within the CAAP have considered the policies within the emerging Core Strategy. If any conflicts are to arise then the CAAP will be reviewed at the earliest opportunity, however it is envisaged that this will not occur due to Core Strategy promoting the regeneration of the Central Area.
- 2.11 Swindon Borough's Statement of Community Involvement
Under the revised planning system all LPAs are required to produce a 'Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI). Swindon Borough's SCI was adopted in January 2007 just before the Issues and Options stage of the Core Strategy. Figure 2.1 illustrates the structure of the Local Development Framework and how the SCI fits in.
- 2.12 The SCI sets out how LPAs intend to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of all planning documents that comprise the LDF. The Council's SCI acts to guide consultation on Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and sets the scene on how efficient and effective consultation can be achieved. In accordance with paragraph 6.2.2 and Figure 6 of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) the Council embarked on what it considered to be a proactive consultation programme from the inception of the Core Strategy.

Figure 2.1: Swindon Borough Council's LDF



2.13 Shaping your Community Report (2011)

Significant public involvement was undertaken during the preparation of the Revised Proposed Submission Core Strategy. During the autumn of 2010 a series of community participation events were held across the Borough based on the Connecting People Connecting Places clusters. The outcomes of these events are detailed in 'Shaping your Community'.

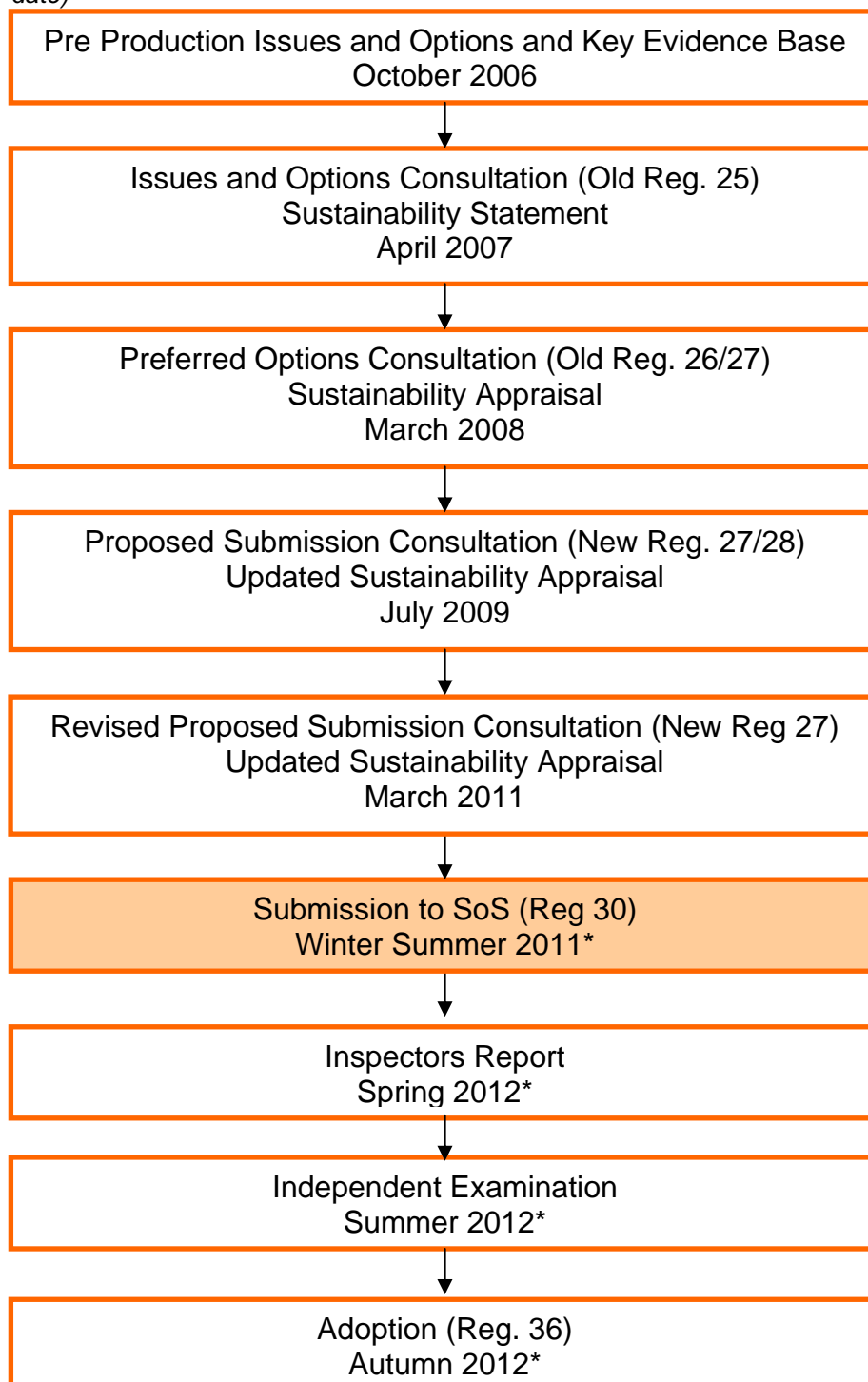
2.14 This work revealed a strong sense of identity and sense of belonging by people to their local area. Also, the community highly value their green spaces, especially places like Lydiard Park, Coate Water and Stanton Park.

2.15 To reflect the community aspirations for their local area and planning's role in facilitating them, the Core Strategy now includes a series of place based policies for each of Swindon's geographic communities as defined by the Connecting People Connecting Places cluster areas, as well as the rural parts of the Borough.

3.0 Statement of Consultation

3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (amends) has led to major changes in the consultation process. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have to demonstrate how, when and who they have consulted throughout plan production. One of the key principles behind this is to ensure involvement of the broader community early enough in the planning process and subsequently the needs and concerns of the community are reflected through the LDF.

Figure 3.1: Core Strategy Timetable (*Draft timetable subject to actual submission date)



- 3.2 This section seeks to highlight how Swindon Borough Council has consulted throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy. It illustrates for each stage who was consulted under Regulation 25, how the general public and stakeholders were invited to make representations, the issues raised from consultation and finally how policy has been developed throughout this process. The Core Strategy is being prepared under the transitional arrangements from the old to the new Town and Country Planning Regulations 2008.
- 3.3 The Core Strategy has been subject to extensive public consultation as Figure 3.1 illustrates, with each phase of consultation meeting the minimum requirements set out by the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.4 Sustainability Appraisal
The Sustainability Appraisal (“SA”) ensures sustainable development is promoted throughout the planning system. An SA advises the Core Strategy to whether the policies proposed have a positive or negative effect on achieving sustainability principles and from this, the SA suggests ways in which to mitigate harmful effects and maximise the positive effects.
- 3.5 Since Issues and Options an SA has been undertaken on each version of the Core Strategy and published alongside the document for consultation. This has ensured SA principles are firmly integrated into the plan from the outset. An SA has been undertaken on the Revised Proposed Submission Core Strategy and the outcomes have been fed into the audit trail in Chapter 8.
- 3.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment
The European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive) protects habitats and species of European nature conservation importance. This Directive requires an HRA to be undertaken on proposed plans, which are likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites either individually, or in combination with other plans or projects.
- The HRA process has been undertaken alongside the evolution of the Core Strategy. A HRA Update note accompanies the Revised Proposed Submission Core Strategy, as a full assessment is not required however recommendations from previous assessments have fed into this version.
- 3.7 Diversity Impact Assessment
A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) assesses whether the Council is carrying out its functions and delivering its services in the way they are intended and to everybody. It advises the Core Strategy to whether the policies are providing potential equality opportunities or possible negative impacts. A DIA has been undertaken throughout the evolution

of the Core Strategy however due to a change in Council guidance, it was determined a more detailed DIA was required.

3.8 Local Policy Forum

The Local Policy Forum was established in 2006 for key stakeholders and the local community to have their input on the production of all documents within the LDF. It is a continuous venture, which is convened at key stages of the plan production process. The Forum, which is independently facilitated, allows for ongoing debate on planning issues and for the outcomes to inform the relevant plans and relevant strategies.

3.9 During the preparation of the Core Strategy the Local Policy Forum has taken place 12 times to ensure key stakeholders and the local community are kept up to date with the Core Strategy and other related work on the LDF.

3.10 Community Forum

The Planning Community Forum was set up in December 2005 to provide an opportunity for a range of organisations and individuals to engage with the Local Planning Department. The Forum meets every 3-4 months and comprises a diverse range of stakeholders representing both voluntary and community sectors active in Swindon.

During the preparation of the Core Strategy, the Community Forum has been informed of the progress of the Core Strategy including the attendance of officers at meetings to provide further information on how to make representations.

4.0 Pre-Production Consultation

4.1 The aim of the Pre-Production stage of the Core Strategy was to establish general themes for the policies, which will later be refined. Hence, this stage was about promoting and encouraging the general public and stakeholders to provide comments on the Core Strategy.

4.2 Who was consulted

A wide range of specific and general consultation bodies were consulted at this stage through using a consultation database and the emerging Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which was not adopted until January 2007.

4.3 When and how we consulted

As stated above, the aim of this consultation was to inform the public and stakeholders of the existence and the purpose of the Core Strategy therefore the methods used were aimed to maximise engagement. The consultation period ran from January 29th to March 9th 2007. The methods used included;

4.4 a) *Newsletter and Questionnaire* –

These were distributed to over 1,000 specific and general consultation bodies that were likely to have an interest in the Council's Core Strategy preparation process. In addition, the newsletter and questionnaire were made available at all libraries in the Borough, at the Council's Wat Tyler and Premier House offices, at the Oasis and Link leisure centres and on the Council's website in which the questionnaire could be completed online. The newsletter included a brief explanation of the LDF and the forthcoming preparation of the Core Strategy, whilst the questionnaire included nine questions relating to a wide range of planning issues relevant to the Borough of Swindon.

4.5 b) *Parish / Community Council Packs* –

With respect to consultation with parish councils, community councils and residents' associations within Swindon, this followed a slightly different format. Whilst these groups received the same newsletter as the consultation bodies mentioned above, their questionnaire was more tailored to the planning issues within their administrative areas, and included related Ordnance Survey plans for annotation purposes. However, the consultation period for these groups was the same as that for the more general questionnaire.

4.6 c) *Meetings with Stakeholders* -

Officers within Planning arranged a number of meetings and seminars with both internal and external stakeholders following the inception of the Core Strategy. With respect to internal stakeholders, a workshop was arranged at the start of February 2007 with other Swindon Council services area. The purpose of this was to gain exposure of the Core Strategy and to explain the importance of the Core Strategy in delivering corporate objectives

and the need for joint-working between Council service areas to achieve this aim.

4.7 Similarly, officers engaged with external groups and organisations to ensure the document is as inclusive as possible and truly reflects community aspirations. The outcomes from these meetings have been recorded to enable comments to be incorporated into the 'Issues and Options' version of the Core Strategy. Meetings with internal and external stakeholders will continue for the foreseeable future but, to date, they have included:

- Local Policy Forum
- Internal Stakeholder event (i.e. Borough Council service areas)
- Swindon Strategic Partnership (SSP)
- Swindon Coalition of Disabled People
- Swindon Developers' Forum
- Swindon Community Forum
- Community Organisations Advisory Forum (COAF)
- Primary Care Trust

4.8 *d) Articles-*

The importance of the Core Strategy preparation process has also been addressed through the inclusion of informative articles in a number of publications, including:

- Swindon News
- Members Bulletin
- Newsround (internal)
- Outlook
- Swindon Advertiser
- School newsletters
- Link magazine

4.9 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

The first stage of a Sustainability Appraisal is the production of a Scoping Report. This was released for public consultation from 24th July 2006 to 5th September 2006 and was published in December 2006.

4.10 Results of Consultation

The bulk of representations made at this stage were through the questionnaires. However the internal and external meetings did prove to be a success as the majority of the meetings has become a regular occurrence throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy. As a result, groups and organizations have been kept up to date with the preparation of the Core Strategy and the LDF, providing valuable input throughout the process.

4.11 The general outcomes from the questionnaire were;

- The need for a integrated, accessible and affordable public transport system with frequent services
- Emphasis on renewable energy, sustainable building and to reduce travel needs
- Housing developments to be built on brownfield land, provide more affordable homes and a mix of house sizes.
- Better infrastructure provision
- Better education provision
- Improve Swindon's local distinctiveness by promoting Swindon's existing heritage
- Protect villages from coalescing with Swindon however still allow some growth within the countryside to accommodate housing need
- Provision of facilities for the young
- Overall provide a place people are proud to live in including an impressive gateway into the town

4.12 The internal stakeholder meetings with other services areas, proved valuable as a lot of feedback on specialised areas was received. The main themes were:

- The need for continuous dialogue with communities to keep them interested and informed
- Main priority should be to get people out of their cars – support sustainable travel
- Need to change the image of Swindon – break the current mind set and think big and iconic
- Explain what the strategic development areas are bringing to existing communities in particular integrating new facilities
- Opportunity for big inward investors and for existing big companies to expand
- Chance to create iconic venues including good integrating of a university into Swindon

5.0 Issues and Options Consultation

5.1 The purpose of the 'Issues and Options' consultation was to stimulate debate on key issues facing Swindon over the next twenty years. It was informed by the evidence gathering and community consultation at the pre-production stage.

5.2 The paper sets out 30 principles derived from consultation and national, regional and corporate strategies. They suggest means to maximise Swindon's potential in the context of sustainable levels of development.

5.3 Who we consulted

The Council consulted specific and general consultation bodies and the general public in accordance with Regulation 25 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, which was adopted in January 2007. All consultees are recorded on the Planning consultation database; therefore all the respondents at Pre-Production stage were engaged at this stage of the process. A list of consultees can be seen in Appendix 1.

5.4 When and how we consulted

A variety of methods were used to maximise engagement in the process. The consultation period ran from April 11th to May 23rd 2007. The methods used included;

5.5 *a) Issues and Options Paper, Consultation representation Form & Summary Leaflets -*

These were distributed to specific and general consultation in line with the SCI and to all consultees that responded at pre-production stage. A letter and comments form was sent to all consultation bodies with either the Issues and Options Paper or a summary leaflet informing where and when you can access the paper. The comments form included 19 questions over a wide range of planning issues aiming to make sure the Core Strategy is addressing the right issues.

5.6 The 'Issues and Options' paper and associated documents were made available at all libraries in the Borough and at Wat Tyler House and Premier House. It was also made available on the Council's website with an online response form. Internet links to these web pages were made available on the Swindon Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement website.

5.7 *b) Exhibitions -*

Public exhibitions were held in 2007 at the Brunel Centre and the Council's Civic Offices throughout May. These exhibitions were used to consult the public on the Core Strategy and the Central Area Action. The exhibitions were well publicised to ensure the public knew the exhibitions were being undertaken and to gain interest on the Core Strategy. At both exhibitions, officers were available for the public to



Figure 5: Photos of the Brunel Exhibition

ask any questions and address any doubts they may have over the 'Issues and Options' paper.

- 5.8 There were a variety of methods the public could use to express their views including a suggestion box, comments forms, interacting with officers and also a comments board. The comments board included a selection of questions, which the public could state whether they agreed or disagreed with. Figure 5 shows the exhibition at the Brunel Centre and the comments board.
- 5.9 At the Swindon Festival of Literature in May 2007, A0 boards were used to publicise the Core Strategy combined with summary leaflets for the public informing on how to make representations.
- 5.10 *c) Meetings with Stakeholders*
 Through the Pre-production stage of the Core Strategy, relationships and lines of communication had been created with external and internal groups and organisations. Therefore the same meetings were used to consult and update stakeholders on the progress of the Core Strategy as well as an array of new meetings.
- 5.11 The Local Policy Forum and meetings with Swindon Strategic Partnership, Swindon Developer Forum, Swindon Community Forum, Community Organisations Advisory Forum, Swindon's Coalition of Disable People all took place. As well as meetings with Swindon Primary Care Trust, Wiltshire Association of Local Councils and a range of internal meetings with different service areas. These meetings enable the Planning Group to gain expertise from these groups and take forward a holistic approach to the development of the Core Strategy.
- 5.12 *d) Summary Leaflets and Posters*
 Leaflets and posters were distributed to council offices, libraries, leisure centres, large supermarkets, key employers, district councils and

parish councils including adjacent parish councils. The leaflet provided a brief explanation of the LDF and Core Strategy Issues and Options including response forms. The posters were displayed to inform the public to have their say on the Core Strategy through the leaflets and the online facilities.

5.13 *e) Articles*

A number of articles were placed within the local newspapers, Member's Bulletin, school newsletters and Newsround (internal communication). These articles state what the Core Strategy is, the purpose, why the public's input is needed and how they can make their representation.

5.14 *e) Press Release*

Press release circulated to the Swindon Advertiser, GWR FM, Brunel FM, BBC Radio Swindon, Western Daily Press, Thames Valley TV News (Swindon and Abingdon newsrooms), BBC Points West (Swindon and Bristol newsrooms) and the Wiltshire Gazette and Herald GWR FM's website and Forward Planning Newsletter, 9th edition. Through using local press and different types of local media, the progress of the Core Strategy would reach as many people as possible.

5.15 Sustainability Statement

A Sustainability Statement was produced to accompany the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper, providing a brief commentary on the key sustainability issues in order to stimulate further debate. It will help ensure that the Sustainability Appraisal process is comprehensive and robust enough to support the Core Strategy during the later stages of consultation and examination. The Sustainability Statement was released for consultation alongside the Issue and Options paper between 11th April and 23rd May 2007.

5.16 Results of consultation

Many representations were received through conducting the exhibitions and meetings, however most representations were made using the comments form.

5.17 In September 2007, acknowledgement letters were sent to all those consultees that responded to the Issues Options paper. Libraries and Parish Councils were also sent summary copies of the comments, with an accompanying poster to be made available for public viewing. All responses were also made available on the Council's website and a hard copy kept at Premier House.

5.18 The feedback gained from the exhibitions were mainly base upon transport and housing issues and the provision of facilities and services within the Borough. The following issues were raised:

- Park and Ride is too expensive, need a more cost effective Park and Ride system
- More parking spaces are required as well as more and better quality cycle routes
- Too many flats
- Need for cheaper, lower cost housing including sustainable, social housing
- Lack of facilities for existing population in particular for children
- Easier access to Council properties is required
- Need to improve linkages across boundaries with other boroughs

6.0 Preferred Options Consultation

6.1 The principles set out in the Issues and Options paper received general support through the consultation process and formed the basis of developing issue-based, specific key objectives in the 'Preferred Options' paper. Clear reasons for the selected preferred options together with a summary of the alternatives that were also considered were explained.

6.2 Who we consulted

A variety of methods were used to maximise engagement in this process. All statutory and general consultees were consulted in line with the SCI. Everyone who responded to the Issues and Options paper was contacted to engage and inform them of this stage of the Core Strategy.

6.3 How and when we consulted

Consultation for the Preferred Options took place pre and after production. The majority of the pre production consultation took place through out the summer of 2007 in conjunction / tandem with consultation on the emerging work on the Sustainable Community Strategy. This developed linkages between the two documents, which is essential in delivering the vision set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The consultation period for the preferred options ran from 31st March to 12th May 2008. The methods used included:

6.4 *a) Preferred Options Paper and Comments Form*

Letters and comment forms were sent to specific and general consultees in line with the SCI and to all consultees who responded at pre-production and issues and options stages. The letter informed of where and when you can access the paper and how representations could be made. The paper was made available at Wat Tyler House, Premier House, all Borough libraries and online.

6.5 The comments form was split into 21 sections inviting consultees to make comments on each key objective. This could either be completed in writing or submitted online. Before the comments form and letters were distributed, they were taken to the Local Policy Forum to be examined. The general consensus among the groups at the LPF was that the draft leaflet was concise and gave a good brief introduction to the Core Strategy. However there was some criticism in terms of the questions being too leading and also too much planning jargon being used. The leaflets were amended in light of the outcomes of the Local Policy Forum.

6.6 *b) Summer Roadshow–*

Swindon Strategic Partnership and Forward Planning worked together during a Summer Roadshow that was held at various locations throughout the Borough to encourage community engagement on the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy and the Core Strategy. This

took place at the pre-production stage of the preferred options paper to highlight the linkages between the documents. A0 display boards were produced to promote the Core Strategy at the following roadshow events:

- North Swindon Library, Northern Orbital, Swindon
- The Forest Festival, The Lawns, Swindon
- Launch of the draft Sustainable Community Strategy, Oakfield Campus
- Civic Campus
- Outside Debenhams, Central Swindon

6.7 *c) Exhibitions*

A number of public exhibitions were held at the following locations:

- Swindon Festival of Literature, former Railway Museum
- Swindon by the Sea, former Railway Museum (spanned over two weeks)
- Safe and Clean event, Central Community Centre
- Premier House reception area (two week period)
- The Brunel Centre, Central Swindon

6.8 *d) Engaging with internal and external groups and organisations -*

The use of meetings with external and internal groups has been consistently used throughout the consultation strategy. This was to ensure the document is as inclusive as possible. Meetings with internal and external stakeholders will continue for the foreseeable future. To date, they have included many organisations/groups:

- Local Policy Forum (included workshops)
- Internal Stakeholder event (i.e. Borough Council service areas)
- Swindon Strategic Partnership (SSP)
- Swindon Coalition of Disabled People
- Swindon Access Action Group
- Swindon Developers Forum
- Swindon Community Forum
- Community Organisations Advisory Forum (COAF)
- PCT Board meeting
- Attended a class at Swindon College
- Internal meetings with Community, Children's Services, Leisure, Resources, Transport, Economic Development, Education
- Wilts and Berks Canal Trust
- Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)
- North Wiltshire District Council
- Director of the North Wessex Downs AONB
- Parish Clerks Forum

6.9 *e) Articles -*

The importance of the Core Strategy preparation process has also been addressed through the inclusion of informative articles in a number of publications, including:

- Swindon News
- Members Bulletin
- Newsround
- Outlook
- Swindon Advertiser
- School newsletters
- Link magazine

6.10 *f) Press Releases -*

A press release was circulated to all local papers and magazines, all of which are mentioned within the Issues and Options section under press release.

6.11 Sustainability Appraisal

A Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken at this stage and went out to consultation alongside the Preferred Options paper between March 31st and May 12th 2008.

6.12 Results of Consultation

Many representations were received from this stage of consultation. The common themes that arose were:

- Concern over the EDA and growth areas (i.e. loss of biodiversity/ flooding)
- Concern over the canal (route / viability)
- Protecting against coalescence between the rural villages and the central area.
- Concerns over the green infrastructure (i.e. loss of)
- Some concern but also support over housing (i.e. need for inclusion of affordable housing at 30%)
- Objection specifically aimed at Commonhead (i.e. allocation of housing and business)
- Comments relating to a need for sustainable transport.
- Acknowledgement and support for the need to build a university.
- Support for the objectives of the Central Area.
- A lot of general supportive comments especially towards the spatial vision and the key objectives.

7.0 Proposed Submission Consultation

7.1 This was intended to be the last stage of consultation before the Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State. The plan should be considered sound at this stage thus this phase of consultation refers to the soundness and legal compliance of the Core Strategy. The procedures used to produce the Proposed Submission Core Strategy can also be taken into consideration.

7.2 Who we consulted

All statutory and general consultees were consulted in line with the SCI. Everyone who responded to the previous stages of Core Strategy was contacted to engage and inform them of this stage of the Core Strategy.

7.3 How and when we consulted

Consultation took place from 27th July 2009 to the 21st September 2009. Consultees were invited to make representations on the Proposed Submission Document and accompanying documents (Sustainability Appraisal, Implementation and Monitoring Plan and Statement of Consultation). A range of methods were used, these are all explained below.

7.4 *a) Proposed Submission Document, Representation Form and Summary Leaflets*

All specific and general consultees were informed of the Proposed Submission Document at the beginning of the consultation phase in line with the SCI. A letter and representation form was sent to all consultees with either the Proposed Submission Document or a summary leaflet which informed of where the Proposed Submission document could be accessed, Wat Tyler House, Premier House, all Borough libraries and online, how representations could be made and when the public exhibitions would be taking place.

The representation form invited consultees to make comments on whether the Proposed Submission is sound, legally compliant and what changes they feel would be necessary to make the Core Strategy legally compliant or sound. It also included a section on whether the consultee would like to participate at the examination if there representation is seeking a change.

7.5 *b) Public Exhibitions*

A number of exhibitions were held at the following locations;

- Central Library
- North Swindon Library
- Wroughton Library
- Covingham Library
- Brunel Centre

- Highworth Library
- Nationwide Building Society HQ, Swindon
- Zurich Financial Services, Central Swindon Offices

7.6 The exhibitions were well publicised, took place at various locations throughout the Borough and times to ensure maximum engagement was achieved and to give everyone the opportunity to have their say. At all the exhibitions, officers were available to answer any queries and summary leaflets and representation forms were available for the public to take away with them. A0 boards were used to display summaries of the different sections of the Core Strategy including the Key Diagram.

7.7 *c) Engaging with internal and external stakeholders*

The use of meetings with external and internal groups has been consistently used to ensure the document is as comprehensive as possible. To date, this has included:

- Local Policy Forum (included workshops)
- Swindon Strategic Partnership (SSP)
- Swindon Access Action Group
- Swindon Developers Forum
- Internal meetings with other council departments
- Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)
- Parish Clerks Forum
- Meetings with Redhouse Residents Association
- Meetings with Bishopstone and South Marston Parish Councils

7.8 *d) Articles*

A number of articles were placed within the local newspapers, Member's Bulletin and circulated to schools. These articles state what the Core Strategy is, the purpose, why the public's input is needed and how they can make their representation including details on the public exhibitions.

7.9 *e) Press Releases*

A press release was circulated to the Swindon Advertiser, GWR FM, Brunel FM, BBC Radio Swindon and other local radio and newspapers. The press releases included details on the Proposed Submission Document, the consultation phase and also the schedule of public exhibitions.

7.10 Sustainability Appraisal

An update of the SA was undertaken and went out to consultation alongside the Core Strategy.

7.11 Summary of Representations

Many representations were received through conducting the exhibitions and meetings. Over 1400 comments were received from various organisations, agents and the public.

7.12 Conclusion

Throughout all stages of consultation all statutory stakeholders and organisations have been consulted through a variety of methods in accordance with Government Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement. Figure 6.1 is a summary of all the consultation methods used throughout each stage. It clearly demonstrates that our consultation strategy aimed to reach all corners of the community through using an array of methods.

	Issues & Options	Preferred Options	Proposed Submission
Local Press	✓	✓	✓
Local Radio	✓	✓	✓
Roadshow/ Exhibition	✓	✓	✓
Libraries	✓	✓	✓
Parish Councils	✓	✓	✓
SBC Website	✓	✓	✓
Council Newsletter	✓	✓	✓
Schools and Colleges	✓	✓	✓
Forums / Focus Groups	✓	✓	✓
Local Businesses	✓	✓	✓
Statutory Consultees	✓	✓	✓
Elected Members	✓	✓	✓

Figure 6.1: Summary of consultation methods

8.0 Pre Revised Proposed Submission Consultation

8.1 Since the Proposed Submission consultation phase, major governmental changes have taken place, which has led to changes to the Core Strategy. Subsequently there is a need to re-consult as to give the public and stakeholders a chance to comment upon these changes.

8.2 The overarching change to the Core Strategy has been the proposed reduction in growth due to the intent to abolish the RSS and the need for locally derived housing and employment figures. Also more focus has been placed on localism and the community becoming more involved in planning their communities. Due to these factors, pre-consultation has been undertaken with internal and external stakeholders which has helped formulate the Revised Proposed Submission document.

8.3 Who, how and when we consulted

This consultation took place between the summer 2010 through to winter 2010. This consultation phase is not statutory therefore only relevant stakeholders were consulted, this included cross-working with many internal colleagues:

- Development Management Officers
- Parks and Landscape Officers
- Transport Officers
- Forward Swindon
- Primary Care Trust
- Leisure Officers
- Housing Officers
- Education Officers

This involved a range of working sessions reviewing the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies to ensure the policies are deliverable and consistent across the organisation.

As well as these working sessions, a range of community events were held around the Borough reflecting Connecting People, Connecting Places. Community events were held in all of the seven clusters lasting approximately 2-3 hours each and took place as evening meetings or as part of existing meetings, such as library coffee mornings. The aims of the events were to establish what the community values, what problems exist in their community and future aspirations of the community. To do this, each table discussed these points and then fed back to the whole group. Table 8.1 lists all of the community events and the dates they took place.

The outcomes of these events have been collated and are presented in a 'Shaping your Community'. This forms a part of the Core Strategy

evidence base and the main priorities have been put forward in the Core Strategy in policies SC3-SC9 and RA1-RA3.

Table 8.1: List of Community Events

Date	Details
8 th September	Drop in event at St John's Church, Parks South
8 th September	Meeting with 360 Team to discuss different ways of engaging
13 th September	Meeting with the Community Engagement Officer to discuss if the meeting format and how to go forward
16 th September	Stand in the Academy School
19 th September	Stand at the Tesco community fair, Ocotal Way, Swindon
20 th September	Meeting with Mohamound Ibrahim to discuss ways of engaging with the black and ethnic community
21 st September	Meeting with Joe Backshell to discuss ways of involving disabled members of the community
28 th September	West Cluster Event
29 th September	East Cluster Event
1 st October	Town Centre Cluster meeting
13 th October	North Rural Event
19 th October	North East-Stratton Event
21 st October	North East-Highworth Event
22 nd October	North-Urban Event
28 th October	South-Rural Event
29 th October	Stand in Swindon College to gather the views of young people
2 nd November	North Central Event
16 th November	Splash Meeting in Penhill
18 th November	Pinehurst Initiative meeting
18 th November	Parks drop in coffee morning
19 th November	Community Meeting in Pinehurst Baptist Church
24 th November	Meeting in Dorcan School to discuss bring the community events into the classroom
29 th November	Platform youth group event
3 rd December	Liden and Eldene drop in coffee morning
6 th December	Walcot drop in coffee morning
9 th December	South-Urban Event
14 th December	Coffee morning in Parks

9.0 Development of Core and Spatial Policies

- 9.1 The formulation of the Spatial Vision, Core Policies, Spatial Strategy and Development Management Policies have all been influenced by consultation, evidence, Sustainability Appraisal, Diversity Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment. This section illustrates how these factors have influenced the evolution of the Core Strategy to what is presented within the Revised Proposed Submission document.
- 9.2 As the Core Strategy has evolved, policies have evolved and changed. Therefore the audit trails are shown for various themes and not for individual policies as to ensure transparency.
- 9.3 For each theme and Spatial Strategy, the audit trails explain the following:
- The 'Evidence Base' section states the relevant pieces of evidence which have influenced each theme.
 - The Issues & Options, Preferred Options and Proposed Submission sections illustrate what the Core Policy/Spatial Strategy was defined as at that stage and what consultation outcomes arose.
 - The 'Sustainability Appraisal' section includes the issues that were raised through undertaking the SA and if there are any impacts how this can be mitigated.
 - The Habitats Regulation Assessment section states if any issues or recommendations have been raised through the report. This section will only appear where it is applicable.
 - The Diversity Impact Assessment section will explain if the Core Strategy will affect equality groups and the life chances of equality groups. This section will only appear where applicable.
 - The Revised Proposed Submission section states the outcome of all of the above in terms of each Core Policy, Development Management Policy (if it applies) and the Spatial Strategy. This will also include justification if the policy has changed since Proposed Submission.
- 9.4 This section is essentially signposting the fundamental factors that have helped shape policy throughout the whole preparation of the Core Strategy. The following diagrams will therefore act as a vital tool for the Inspector at Examination on how the Core Strategy has been developed.

Spatial Vision

Issues and Options

A working and evolving vision was suggested as a result of plans and strategies in the evidence base and discussions with stakeholders.

The vision read:

“By 2026 Swindon will be a regional centre that meets the challenges of global climate change and delivers sustainable development that meet the social, cultural, environmental and economic needs of both urban and rural communities. This will be achieved by supporting existing and creating sustainable communities which are supported by a prosperous economy; regeneration and renewal; a university’ and an integrated and sustainable transport network.”

Consultation Outcomes:

The vision received general support through the Issues and Options consultation.

Preferred Options

The vision read:

“In 2026 Swindon will be a regional centre that has raised its image through developing its own identity built on sustainable economic growth and respect for its railway heritage. It will have a thriving regenerated town centre that includes a cutting edge new university, the reinstatement of the canal through central Swindon and linked to the countryside by a strategic network of multifunctional open spaces and water spaces.

An integrated and sustainable transport system will enable easy movement around the borough. Communities will be sustainable, cohesive and healthy and residents will enjoy a quality of life that does not use more resources than the environment can provide.”

Consultation Outcomes:

The vision received general support through the Preferred Options consultation.

Proposed Submission

The vision read:

“In 2026 Swindon will be a regional centre that has raised its image through developing its own identity built on sustainable economic growth and respect for its railway heritage. It will have a thriving regenerated town centre that includes a cutting edge new university, the reinstatement of the canal through central Swindon, and linked to the countryside by a strategic network of multifunctional open spaces and water spaces.

An integrated and sustainable transport system will enable easy movement around the borough. Communities will be sustainable, cohesive and healthy and residents will enjoy a quality of life that does not use more resources than the environment can provide.”

Consultation Outcomes:

There was general support for the Spatial Vision at the Proposed Submission stage however comments were made that the proposed EDA should be a means of delivering the vision and not part of the vision itself.

Revised Proposed Submission



The vision reads:

The Borough of Swindon will become a place where people choose to live, visit and invest. As an important regional centre, Swindon's appeal will stem from having an attractive and well-equipped town that has successfully blended traditional architecture with high quality contemporary buildings that incorporate sustainable design and construction principles. The possibility of a high quality public realm fully restored canal in the heart of the town could provide a real focal point for visitors and Swindonians alike. Swindon will become one of the best business locations in the UK, offering a high quality of life, not just to its residents, but also to those from a much wider catchment area. New jobs will be created and there will be the fullest range of employment opportunities for the whole community.

Swindon will be a community that has responded to the needs of a growing population in a way that has protected our natural environment as much as possible. In 2026, people in Swindon will live a longer, healthier, happier and more active life. This goal will be achieved by public sector organisations, voluntary and community groups and local people all working closely to promote healthy living and to create caring, cohesive neighbourhoods. Increasingly, people will take more personal responsibility for the healthy lifestyle that they lead but will be well supported in doing so.

Swindon's young people will increasingly be aiming high and achieving well. Local people of all ages will have a much greater appetite for learning new things throughout their life. This will include learning for pleasure and to improve employment prospects. Employers will see the skilled potential workforce as a major asset and a key reason to locate in this area. Local communities will be working with public organisations like the Police, the Borough Council and a wide range of voluntary groups to reduce crime, keep people safe and develop a sense of community and belonging."

Justification for Change

It should be noted at Revised Proposed Submission Stage, the Spatial Vision for the Core Strategy has been updated to strongly reflect the vision of the Swindon Sustainable Community Strategy (2008 – 2030) which has been widely consulted on and received general support.

Sustainable Development

Strategic Objective

By 2026 Swindon Borough will have become an exemplar sustainable community, delivered the anticipated growth in a way that enhances the quality of life for existing and future residents including addressing the impact of climate change, and will be known for the quality of development.

Evidence

UK's Sustainable Development Strategy – Securing the Future (2005), Swindon Sustainable Development Policies project (Fulcrum Consulting) (2009), Swindon Climate Change Action Plan (2006), Swindon's Community Strategy (2008-2030), Swindon District Heating Feasibility Study (2011), Wind potential in Swindon (derived from information published by RegenSW)

Issues and Options

Climate Change/Developing Swindon in a sustainable way - Key Principles (iii), (xii), (xiv), (xiii)

Global climate change has been identified as the biggest issue to be tackled in the 21st Century and it is therefore not a side issue for the Core Strategy. Approach has 2 aspects: mitigation and adaptation and ensuring Swindon develops in the most sustainable way.

Consultation Outcomes:

- Holistic consideration of social, environmental and economic issues
- Infrastructure and affordable housing delivery.
- Transport impacts
- Development locations, levels and mix
- Services to the rural areas
- Renewable energy/sustainable construction

Preferred Options

KO1 Sustainable Growth and KO2 Sustainable Development and Climate Change (zero and low carbon energy sustainable design)

Important that housing and jobs are delivered in a balanced way to help Swindon maintain economic position. Supporting infrastructure is vital. Growth needs to be delivered in a sustainable way ensuring jobs, housing and infrastructure are planned in order to create sustainable communities.

Consultation Outcomes:

- A complementary approach between the planning framework and building regulations is required.
- Ensure viability in the context of delivering housing development
- Integration of social, economic and environmental issues.
- Application of standard to various scales and types of development.
- Addressing the existing stock
- Focus on renewables (not necessarily on site)

↓

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP1 Sustainable Development, DM1 Design and Sustainability, DMP1A Flood risk Assessment and DMP1B Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

These policies set out a robust and proactive approach to addressing the challenges of climate change. The key principles of design and sustainability are explained in depth including sustainable construction standards and assessment considerations for renewable and low carbon energy developments.

Consultation Outcomes

General support for the principles of sustainable development, flexible approach to sustainable requirements and for design-led development. Highlighted there are significant opportunities to engage with developers to secure delivery of sustainable buildings/renewable energy. However concerns were raised over the need to define inclusive design, possibility of place specific sustainability requirements and SUDS needs to be appropriate to site characteristics.

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Sustainability Appraisal

- Ensuring all development is underpinned by sustainable development principles will help to meet all the sustainability objectives
- The implementation of a modular energy and district heating system will provide environmental and economic benefits in the long term
- DMP1 & DMP2 provide a strong framework for delivering a high quality, sustainable built environment.
- There are concerns over the viability of implementing DMP2 in the short term however the policy does address this.

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Habitats Regulations Assessment

HRA concludes no significant impacts likely from this policy however it did suggest the policy should make explicit reference to water demand and solutions including cross-boundary solutions where appropriate, to avoid and mitigate potential impacts. Also policies should include CSH and BREEAM requirements which DMP2 does.

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Diversity Impact Assessment

The DIA has highlighted potential cost implications of implementing sustainable design and construction will have upon lower income groups. This is an uncertain impact.

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Revised Proposed Submission

Core Theme Policies

CP1: Swindon: A Destination of Choice
CP3: Safeguarding our Environment

Development Management Policies

DMP1: High Quality Design
DMP2: Energy and Sustainable Construction
DMP3: Flood Risk

Infrastructure Requirements

Strategic Objective:

By 2026 the infrastructure needs for and arising from the growth of Swindon will have been provided in a timely and co-ordinated manner, including having been adequately funded.

Evidence Base

Circular 05/2005, Developer Contributions Development Control Guidance Note (September 2006) and associated daughter documents (August 2006 and September 2006). EDAW Swindon Social Infrastructure Study (January 2009), Community Infrastructure Levy (August, 2008), Land Value Uplift and Viability Sensitivity Analysis (Report to SBC by Alder King, August 2008)

Issues and Options

Key Principle (xvi)

Development will be phased so that the infrastructure necessary to support it is in place when it is needed. This will require early and continuous liaison with the infrastructure providers to ensure that their forward strategies are compatible with the development strategy of the RSS and Core Strategy. Given forecast shortfalls, this will be particularly critical in respect of the supply of water and the disposal of wastewater.

Consultation Outcomes:

- There should be no more growth at Swindon' it is big enough',
- Any growth should be contained within the existing urban area,
- Acceptance that growth is inevitable but significant infrastructure is needed to support it
- Infrastructure must be delivered at the same pace as population growth, providing
- More affordable housing and including green infrastructure as a requirement of developer contributions.

Preferred Options

KO1: Sustainable Growth

It is important to ensure the delivery of the infrastructure necessary to support new housing areas. To help plan this, the Core Strategy will contain a housing trajectory showing not just where, but our best estimates at forecasting when. All the new development that will take place will require a considerable amount of new infrastructure to support it and it is important to plan properly for its provision. All this takes time and setting out these estimates shows our expectations, not just for developers and landowners, but also infrastructure providers who will also need to invest. These include utility companies and many of the Council's own services.

Consultation Outcomes:

Comments can be consolidated into the following points:

- Support for a standardised approach to planning obligations with a need to update and streamline the evidence base for development contributions, and integrate sustainable transport infrastructure
- Improvements in built and natural environment help to integrate new development

↓

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP2 The Provision of Essential Infrastructure and DMP2 The Provision of Essential Infrastructure Community Benefits / Planning Obligations

These policies ensure infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner, adequately funded and in implemented in the right place. They also ensure infrastructure needs of both existing and new communities are met.

Consultation Outcomes:

There was general agreement that new development should fund the infrastructure required as a result of the development. There were concerns that economic viability should be taken into account and that the definition of 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure should be clear and appropriate. The importance of affordable housing was stressed. There was concern that the approach should be pragmatic and flexible, and it was suggested that all major developments, not only the EDA, should be subject to a site/proposal specific S.106 Agreement that is directly related to each proposed development.

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Sustainability Appraisal

- The implementation of a sufficient level of services and infrastructure is key to meeting the needs of substantial economic and housing growth, which potentially could have significant positive effects upon the sustainability objectives.
- The SA has identified concerns in relation to water demand, pressures on the transport network and a higher rate of waste production. Mitigation measures have been provided in policies CT3 and CT7, which are essential to keep up with the extra pressures related to growth.

↓

Diversity Impact Assessment

The DIA has enforced the need for timely delivery of infrastructure as to not create physical or social exclusion.

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Revised Proposed Submission

Core Theme Policies:

CT1: Swindon: A destination of choice

Development Management Policies

DMP4 Infrastructure needs arising from Development

Economy

Strategic Objective

By 2026 Swindon will have met forecast growth in economic activity and will have enhanced its position as the UK's best business location.



Evidence Base

Economic Development Vision & Framework 2007, Wiltshire & Swindon Economic Strategy 2003-2008, Economic & Market Review 2006, Employment Land Review 2007, Swindon Workplace Strategy 2009, Swindon Economic and Housing Projections



Issues and Options

Employment - Key Principles (i), (ii)

Swindon will be a vibrant and economically prosperous place based on its status as the UK's best business location and the functional centre of the sub-region. Future development will make Swindon a regional centre, bringing opportunities for new inward investment.

Consultation Outcomes:

- Swindon should achieve its full economic potential by adopting the RSS job growth figure.
- The housing / employment balance needs to be considered to promote sustainability.
- The skills shortage in Swindon needs to be addressed to enable full advantage to be taken of inward investment opportunities in knowledge-based sectors.
- Existing employment areas should be assessed in terms of their 'fitness-for-purpose' and their contribution to Swindon's stock of employment land / business opportunities.
- A more diverse range of uses should be allowed on some existing employment areas.
- The specific employment needs of Swindon's smaller towns / villages and rural areas needs to be addressed.



Preferred Options

KO3: Economy and Employment

Provision will be made for the level of job growth specified in the RSS. A sustainable economy will be achieved through a 'smart' approach to economic growth. Key industries will include ICT, biotechnology, environmental technologies and the creative industries.

Consultation Outcomes:

The main theme to emerge was the need to maintain a flexible approach to employment generation that supports all types of business. More specifically, flexibility in terms of:

- The need to accommodate a wide range of uses on employment areas to promote sustainability.
- The need to regularly review the role and function of existing employment areas.
- The need to consider adaptable design to enable commercial buildings to accommodate different business requirements in the future.

↓

Proposed Submission

Policies CP3 Economic Development and SSP3 – Distribution of New Employment Land and Floorspace

CP3 ensures Swindon's economy maintains a flexible and responsive supply of employment land, sites and premises. Focusing office development in the Central Area, diversification of economies in rural areas, supporting a range of employment sectors and how much new employment land will be delivered.

Consultation Outcomes

There was general support for most of the policies including the distribution of employment land. Employment in rural areas should be encouraged. More flexibility was needed to bring forward more sites, with allocations for major sites to attract national/international companies and other allocations for subdivision for smaller businesses. It was commented that there was over-reliance on urban extensions, which might not come forward at an early stage because of their infrastructure requirements. A framework for allocating further employment land, if required, should be provided. Additional comments that the least valuable employment land could be re-used for affordable housing; development adversely impacting on central area regeneration should not be permitted; a holistic approach to regeneration is preferable to site specific allocations; and Cheney Manor should be included in the category that would benefit from upgrading.

↓

Sustainability Appraisal

- Balancing provision of jobs and homes is creating a sustainable environment and will encourage more sustainable travel patterns within new and existing areas.
- The policies will strengthen the local economy by providing a good supply of quality employment land, providing a wide range of housing for the local workforce and an attractive environment in which to live and work.
- The effects of growth on the transport network could harm the local economy however sufficient mitigation measures have been employed in CP7.
- DMP5 ensures employment land uses are located in the appropriate locations and thus deter other uses. This will ensure there is no additional pressure to release unsuitable land for B-uses. This is maximising PDL and provides appropriate land and premises for businesses. The reintroduction of quality employment areas and uses appropriate for varying quality reflects the need to rejuvenate and modernised under used and poorer quality employment site providing economic benefits in the short and long term.
- Focus for locating new development in the central area will aid regeneration adding to the range of high quality office accommodation thus meeting the contemporary needs of businesses.

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Revised Proposed Submission

Core Theme Policies:

CT2 All Swindon people benefit from our growing economy

Development Management Policies:

DMP5 Key Employment Sites

DMP6 Employment Development Proposals

Housing

Strategic Objective

By 2026 housing needs will have been met in Swindon. A more balanced well-designed mix of housing will have been provided at a range of densities that maximises brownfield redevelopment and access to facilities and services.

Evidence

Swindon Sub-Region Housing Market Assessment 2006, Swindon Borough Housing Needs Survey 2006, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2009), Swindon Economic and Housing Projections,

Issues and Options

Housing - Key Principles (vi), (vii), (ix), (vii), (x)

A choice of housing needs to be provided for those unable to purchase in the private housing market. This will need for affordable and intermediate housing provision to increase. 'Swindon 2010' requires that about 300 affordable dwellings per year are provided. Existing areas of council owned affordable housing also needs to be maintained to modern standards. Household sizes are reducing which means more homes are required for the same population. The conversion of large houses to flats and the inclusion of single person properties in new developments is an important means of accommodating this extra need and a choice of house types will need to be provided to reflect the housing market.

Consultation Outcomes:

Strong support for housing developments to be concentrated on previously developed land. Issues were raised over the number of dwellings that need to be provided within the Borough and sufficient land needs to identify this supply. Also more clarification of affordable housing targets required.

Preferred Options

KO9 Housing Density and Size & KO10 Affordable Housing

KO10: New housing developments will include provision for affordable housing needs, including an appropriate mix of social rented and intermediate housing schemes, to ensure that decent homes are available to meet the needs of the resident population with a wide range of incomes.

KO9: To meet all segments of the market a range of housing types and densities should be provided in Swindon Borough within the overall context of providing housing at Swindon of at least 50 dwellings per hectare. The current under-supply of larger and prestigious housing within Swindon should be addressed.

Consultation Outcomes:

General support for KO10. Some comments that the affordable housing quota should be revised to be in line with the RSS. Concerns the Core Strategy will be too prescriptive on affordable housing tenure mix which should be informed by an up to date Housing Market Assessment. General support for density of 40-50 dph however some concerns that higher densities should only be applied where appropriate. Some support for prestigious housing but concerns over sustainability in relation to transport. Concerns raised over Houses in Multiple Occupation.

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Proposed Submission

Policies CP4 Housing, SSP1 Settlement Hierarchy, SSP2 – Distribution of New Dwellings, DMP4A – Affordable Housing, DMP4B – Subdivision of dwellings and Houses in Multiple Occupation and DMP4C – Provision for Disabled People in New Housing

These policies explain how the RSS target will be achieved including the distribution of dwellings. The needs of the community will be met by delivering affordable housing, a mix of types and sizes of dwellings and housing which meets the requirements of those with disabilities.

Consultation Outcomes

There was general agreement with the policy, but there were concerns that the affordable housing target should be reduced to 30%; that density requirements were too prescriptive; and that the level of growth could put pressure on urban greenfield land and on rural communities. It was also highlighted that there was a need for greater emphasis on safety of HMOs through inspections.

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Sustainability Appraisal

- Balancing provision of jobs and homes is creating a sustainable environment and will encourage more sustainable travel patterns within new and existing areas
- There will be adverse impacts upon the landscape and biodiversity due to the high amount of development on greenfield land.
- Potential adverse impacts on rural settlements due to possible coalescence with Swindon due to the proposed urban extensions however the new community policies do seek to mitigate this.
- The type, mix and densities of housing will need to reflect need as well as character as to provide social benefits.
- Provision of affordable homes will provide social and economic benefits but viability is a concern in the short term.
- The Development Management policies provide opportunities for innovative housing developments as well as seeking to achieve a decent quality of life for those occupying HMOs.

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Diversity Impact Assessment

The DIA has highlighted that housing delivery will need to strongly correlate with need. Also a DIA will be a requirement of the Site Allocations DPD as a lot of impacts cannot be determined until more detail is provided.

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Revised Proposed Submission

Core Theme Policies

CT2: All Swindon People Benefit from our Growing Economy

Development Management Policies

DMP7 Affordable Homes and Wheelchair Accessible Housing

DMP8 Subdivision and Houses in Multiple Occupation

DMP9: Self Build

Justification for Change

The housing quantum for Swindon Borough has been reduced from 33,000 in the 2009 version to 25,000 in the 2011 version, due to the proposed abolition of RSS and the use of updated local data.

Shopping

Strategic Objective

By 2026 Swindon Town Centre will have achieved growth in retail activity commensurate with the anticipated size of Swindon. A range of shopping needs will be provided at district and local centres to serve the needs of existing and future residents.

Evidence

Central Area Action Plan, PPS6, Swindon Retail Study (2009)

Issues and Options

Retail - Key Principle (iv)

If Swindon is to attract employers, and to encourage workers to live in the town, there will need to be a step change in shopping facilities, particularly in the town centre. At the same time, district and local shopping areas will need to be created or enhanced in both existing and new communities to make them attractive to local residents and minimise car travel to remoter centres.

Consultation Outcomes:

Would like to see a variety of shopping facilities and also incentives for smaller retailers. Swindon town centre needs to be extended and become a unique, enjoyable shopping experience to encourage shoppers to the centre.

Preferred Options

Policy: KO6 Shopping

Regeneration of the central area will deliver a retail capacity in line with forecast growth, and improve the range and quality of shops to ensure that Swindon's retail ranking is commensurate with its sub-regional status.

Consultation Outcomes:

There was general consensus that the Core Strategy should seek to protect and enhance Swindon Borough's hierarchy of retail centres and acknowledge the importance of local centres and small shops to meet the daily needs of local residents. Regeneration of the central area of Swindon is supported and that all major retail growth should be concentrated within this area. Retail provision should also be made to serve locations in new developments

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP5 Shopping and SSP4 Swindon Central Area

The focus for retail development is the Central Area with smaller scale shopping development focused towards the District and Local Centres.

Consultation Outcomes

The comments were mainly focussed upon the policy repeating national planning guidance on shopping centres (PPS6). There was also support for the regeneration of Swindon's Town Centre.

Sustainability Appraisal



- The SA strongly supports the provision of an improved retail offer in the town centre. This will aid regeneration, boost the local economy by attracting visitors to Swindon and benefit from sustainable transport links.
- It is recognised that appropriate retail facilities should also be located close to where people live, reducing the need to travel and maximising PDL which should be achieved through DMP13
- The most significant adverse effect of an enhanced retail offer is likely to be an increase in traffic volumes, particularly in the town centre however CT7 seeks to mitigate this.

Revised Proposed Submission



Spatial Strategy Policies:

SC1: Swindon's Central Area

SC2: Swindon Existing Communities

Development Management Policies:

DMP13 Centres

Justification for Change

Following comments made at Proposed Submission, Development Management Policy DMP13 'Centres' has now replaced Policy CP5. The purpose of this policy is to reduce repetition and to ensure the protection of existing centres, at development management level.

Education

Strategic Objective

By 2026 education provision will be provided to meet the anticipated growth in population. Knowledge and skills will be improved across all levels, particularly through the provision of enhanced tertiary education opportunities.

Evidence

Swindon School Place Planning Study, Central Area Action Plan, February 2009

Issues and Options

Education - Key Principles (xxv), (xxvi), (xxvii)

University education facilities will be provided for that meet the highest national standards. It will be a key economic driver, meeting the needs of the community and local businesses. A high standard of local education provision will be made for existing as well as new housing areas to ensure that the attainments of Swindon's children are within the upper quartile of national results

Consultation Outcomes:

Swindon education under funded, new schools planned should be large enough to allow children to attend schools in their own area. Schools and community centres should be combined when newly built or redeveloped therefore utilizing a system whereby the school can use all community facilities in the day/week term time and the local community/public can use the community facilities at all other times. Erosion of the rural community risks population decline and thus maintaining rural schools, post offices and other key facilities.

Preferred Options

KO5: Higher Education Facilities

Higher education facilities, particularly a University, will be improved and expanded to improve the local skills base to meet the requirements of the knowledge based economy and provide linkages into the local economy.

Consultation Outcomes:

General consensus supporting the provision of a university within Swindon. Many consultees state a town the size of Swindon should have the presence of a university, which will bring direct and indirect economic benefits to the town.

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP6 Education, SSP5 Swindon's Established Communities and Areas, SSP8 EDA and SSP9 Tadpole Farm

Future educational needs are explained including a university to support the growth of the economy and retain some of Swindon's brightest young people. Schools will be provided at the heart of communities in particular in the proposed growth areas.

Consultation Outcomes:

Continued support for the provision of a university at North Star and welcome provision of education for all levels. Issues were raised over whether the evidence base was robust to support the policies.

Sustainability Appraisal



- Developing a range and high quality educational facilities will raise the skill levels of Swindon's population, which has been highlighted in the Scoping Report as an issue. This will benefit young people and also help local businesses.
- Then increased provision will help to meet the extra demand due to major population growth however the location of facilities will need to reflect need.
- The Central Area represents the ideal location for the university as it will maximise PDL, be accessible for all and bring economic benefits to the area.

Revised Proposed Submission



Core Theme Policies:

CP5: High aspirations supported by superb education provision

Transport

Strategic Objective

By 2026, a comprehensive and sustainable transport network will be in place that is efficient, safe, affordable, accessible and easy to understand. It will support Swindon's long-term growth, linking existing and new communities, with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport and provide a genuine choice of modes.

Evidence

Small Scale Urban Extension Study; Swindon Joint Area Transport Study (Parsons Brinkerhoff) Swindon Transport Strategy, July 2009, Local Transport Plan 3 (2010)

Issues and Options

Transport - Key Principles (xvii), (xviii)

The level of development proposed by the Draft RSS over the next 20 years will place increased pressure on the highway system, which in some areas is already inadequate. This can be minimised by encouraging non car use, such as improving public transport, providing for jobs, shops, community facilities within or near housing areas, improving the cycle and footpath network, widening existing roads, improving junctions, road pricing, or building new roads.

Consultation Outcomes:

- Support for sustainable transport including park and ride, pedestrian and cycling.
- Better integration of travel modes e.g. bus/rail and improved links across the railway
- Public transport should be accessible, reliable and affordable
- Self containment therefore minimising the need to travel
- The need to provide infrastructure

Preferred Options

Policy: KO7 Transport

Ensuring that development is sustainably accessible; reducing the need to travel, especially by car; through promoting travel plans and use of sustainable transport; and ensuring that development contributes towards infrastructure provision that helps promote sustainable transport choices. In doing so it will be necessary to ensure the safe delivery of routes to schools.

Consultation Outcomes:

- The need for a transport evidence base
- Promote of sustainable transport including reducing the need to travel
- Providing appropriate infrastructure
- Integration of all travel modes

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP7 Sustainable Transport and Movement and DM5 – Transport Requirements of Development

These policies set out how we will deliver a comprehensive and sustainable transport network including the provision of a rapid transit network, new bus exchange, comprehensive cycle and footpath network and significant, strategic transport improvements as so the transport network can meet the needs of the proposed level of growth.

Consultation Outcomes

- Support shown for the rapid transit route, although some commented that there was no justification for it
- Support shown for the principle of sustainable transport and movement, and specifically for new and improved cycle and pedestrian links, reviewed bus services and park and ride (subject to demand)
- Concerns that the strategy does not consider the impact of traffic on areas outside of the Borough Boundary
- Concerns that the transport element of the strategy will increase CO₂ emissions whilst the Government requires a reduction in them
- Concerns over future congestion on the roads
- Support for investment in the road network, but concerns over where the funding will come from and the fairness of developer contributions



Sustainability Appraisal

- The proposed level of growth will present significant transport implications however the proposals within policy CP7 will help to mitigate impacts.
- The promotion of sustainable forms of travel and equality of opportunity and access will improve social inclusion, reduce congestion thus reducing indirect impacts this can have on the local economy
- Requiring travel plans, transport assessments or a transport statement will ensure the impacts of traffic from development are fully considered and are minimized.
- Consideration should also be given to provision of transport infrastructure to allow access for mobility-impaired people, elderly and people with young children.



Habitats Regulations Assessment

The HRA recommends that the Council place strong emphasis on the delivery of sustainable transport solutions, in particular for developments to the North of Swindon where increased traffic on the A419 may impact the favourable condition status of North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC.



Revised Proposed Submission

Core Theme Policies:

CP7: Keeping Swindon Moving

Development Management Policies:

DMP1: High Quality Design

DMP10: Transport Requirements

Culture

Strategic Objective

By 2026 Swindon's cultural and leisure facilities will have been enhanced to be commensurate with Swindon's regional role. Culture will add to the cohesive communities of the Borough. Growth at Swindon will have occurred in a way that respects and enhances its historic environment.

Evidence Base

Swindon Design Guide, Culture Strategy for Swindon 2010-2020, Swindon Retail & Leisure Study 2007, Leisure Facilities Strategy (2009), Big Arts Plan 2009-2011

Issues and Options

Culture, Leisure & Tourism - Key Principles (xxi), (xxiv)

Swindon will become a centre for tourism, and Swindon's heritage, particularly its railway legacy, and the historical heritage and countryside of the sub-region, will attract both visitors and local people.

Consultation Outcomes:

- Promoting Swindon's assets (such as AONB and heritage) for tourism
- Long term policies to change Swindon's image through culture and leisure
- Facilities required to improve and maintain cultural offer (currently lack of facilities of adequate quality)

Preferred Options

KO4 Swindon's Image

Whilst respecting Swindon's historic identity, as a railway town the actual and perceived image of Swindon, particularly the central area, will be significantly improved, through regeneration, including the provision of regional museums, galleries, theatres and cinemas, and good design.

Consultation Outcomes:

- Importance of improving cultural offer of Swindon Borough as a whole through regeneration.
- Respecting Swindon identity as a railway town and links to the Mechanic's Institute
- Highlighting Swindon's assets (AONB)
- Importance of good design and community facilities.

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP8 – Culture (in leisure, heritage and tourism)

This policy ensures culture will play a key role in all aspects of Swindon's growth including regeneration of the Central Area. Culture can influence community cohesion and sense of identity and image of Swindon therefore this policy ensures historical assets are protected and enhanced and a high quality network of specialist sport and community facilities are provided.

Consultation Outcomes:

General support was received for this policy as it highlights' the value of cultural natural environment. The importance of the Outlet Village, leisure and recreation are integral to achieving growth, regeneration and inward investment including the existing provision of good quality community and cultural facilities as these play a key role in quality of life, character and function of Swindon. It was highlighted the importance of protecting archaeological remains especially in eastern Swindon and gaining developer contributions for storage of remains.



Sustainability Appraisal

- Regeneration of Central Area through SC1 is key to provision of new and improved cultural and leisure facilities.
- New and improved facilities put forward in CT4 would raise Swindon's profile as a destination for tourism, and increase potential for urban regeneration.
- Maximising development in the urban area may adversely affect buildings and areas of historical importance, but could also help raise profile of an area. e.g. Great Western Railway Conservation Areas. Development will need to be sensitive to the area, which DMP14 seeks to do.



Revised Proposed Submission

Core Policies:

CP4: Healthy, caring, safe and supportive communities

Community & Health Facilities

Strategic Objective

By 2026 the need for community and health facilities arising from growth and demographic change in the Borough will have been met as and when they occur. Flexible design and service co-ordination will maximise the potential of facilities.

Evidence

Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011, Healthcare Impact Assessment 2006 – 2026, (Swindon PCT, Swindon and Marlborough NHS Trust), Delivery Excellence for Swindon Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013 (Swindon PCT, 2008), Community Risk Strategy (Wiltshire Fire and Rescue, 2009), Policing Demand and Accommodation Review (Wiltshire Police), Active Swindon Strategy.

Issues and Options

Inclusive Neighbourhoods and Equalities, Health - Key Principles (xix), (xx), (v), (xi), (xxviii)
Healthy minds are as important as healthy people. This can be achieved through increasing the quality of life, such as bringing about integrated communities, improving the work/life balance, reducing the stress of the journey to work, increasing opportunities for leisure, and creating a clean, green, safe environment.

Consultation Outcomes:

The availability of local facilities including shops and community halls can help create a sense of community. Failure to reflect that new development can enhance facilities and services to existing communities. Provision of additional services and facilities to benefit new development areas on the outlying fringes of the town. Flexible use of health, education and community infrastructure. Better provision of health facilities especially hospital which is not meeting the needs of the growing population. New development to provide a mix of services and facilities to support underserved areas.

Preferred Options

KO11 Inclusive Communities and KO12 Community Facilities

KO11: Inclusive communities will be encouraged and enhanced by regeneration and renewal in those areas of the Borough in need of priority improvement; by the understanding the needs of all neighbourhoods and planning for those with mobility or other requirements, for example through lifetime homes and 'access for all'.

KO12: The need for health, education and other community facilities arising from growth and demographic changes in the Borough will be met as they occur and where possible will be 'future-proofed' through good design and service co-ordination.

Consultation Outcomes:

There was strong support for inclusive communities through regeneration of the town centre and through other opportunities that can be delivered throughout the Borough. Consultation raised the issue of partnership working and the role of the voluntary sector in community and health care provision. A Sustainable Neighbourhoods Study has identified where community needs are currently under met and where opportunities exist to maximise the benefits from proposed future development. Core Policy 8 promotes improved access to cultural and leisure facilities.

Core Policy 9 promotes improved access to community and health facilities; and Core Policy 10 promotes improved access to recreational areas; and thus contributing to health and well being. Reference was made that new development can only provide or contribute to community facilities where they are reasonable and necessary in accordance with Circular 5/05

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP8 Culture, CP9 Health and Community Provision, CP10 Green Infrastructure, SSP5 – Swindon’s Established Communities and Areas and DMP7 Health and Community Provision

Health and community provision will be person-centred enabling the services to be responsive to demographic changes. Multi agency centres will be at centre of delivering community, health, education and safety in the Borough. These policies ensure emergency services, emergency and non-emergency health care facilities are implemented in to meet the needs of the new and existing communities.

Consultation Outcomes

A range of comments were made including many around the delivery of health services, in particular how these services should be provided. The health benefits of GI are not recognised within the Health and Community policies. It was highlighted there is a lack of community meeting places which this policy does not address.

Sustainability Appraisal

- The provision of further health, social and emergency services will be required in light of the level of growth and extra demand.
- Positive effects will arise from the provision of sports centres and promoting an active, healthy and safe lifestyles including reducing social exclusion, improving health reducing health inequalities.
- DMP12 ensures new or extended community facilities are accessible especially by public transport, which promotes social inclusion and sustainable transport modes. This provides social and environment benefits.

Revised Proposed Submission

Core Theme Policies:

CP4: Healthy, caring, safe and supportive communities

Development Management Policies

DMP12: Community Facilities

Green Infrastructure

Strategic Objective

By 2026, building on its green assets, Swindon will sit at the heart of a far-reaching network of connected and multi-functional open spaces, which provide an attractive and inspirational environment to live, work, learn and play.

Evidence

Swindon Green Infrastructure Strategy, July 2009; Open Space Audit and Assessment (2007), Playing Pitch Strategy, 2007; Canal Feasibility Studies, Great Western Community Forest Plan, Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan, Swindon Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2007), Swindon Water Cycle Study (Phase 1)

Issues and Options

Green Infrastructure/Landscape/Countryside - Key Principles (xxiii), (xxii)

Swindon will be a green city through the provision and protection of green infrastructure including extensive tree planting in and around the built up areas and urban extensions. Blue infrastructure will be enhanced through the restoration of canals and the creation of lakes and ponds in new developments, where appropriate

Consultation Outcomes:

- Highlighted the importance of protecting Swindon's open spaces
- There should be an increase in the provision of green infrastructure.
- The provision of green infrastructure can help mitigate the effects of climate change
- Green infrastructure strategies should be produced for new development areas.

Preferred Options

KO8, Green Spaces, Rivers and Canals

Building upon the existing open space network; high quality multifunctional green & blue infrastructure, will be delivered throughout the Swindon sub region, to ensure that there is a range of safe and accessible environmental and recreational assets, which contribute towards the development of the sustainable living environments both in urban and rural areas.

Consultation Outcomes:

- Protecting open spaces is important
- Supportive on the basis that new developments have opportunity to contribute to wider green infrastructure
- Existing open green space should be maintained and enhanced
- Within green corridors it is important to consider the requirements of cycle ways and connectivity with the existing highway network.
- Canal route was premature of Inspector's decision on canal route through the town centre

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP10 Green Infrastructure, CP10A Canal Route and DM9 Green Infrastructure Principles

These policies ensure a green infrastructure network is delivered throughout the Borough providing connected and multi functional open spaces which provide an opportunity for a healthy and active lifestyle. CP10A safeguards certain canal routes for future restoration.

Consultation Outcomes

At Proposed Submission stage there was general support for the safeguarding of the canal, however concerns were raised with regards to the feasibility and deliverability of the canal in some parts of Swindon, particularly outside central Swindon and at proposed development areas.

Sustainability Appraisal

- The proposed Green Infrastructure (GI) policy is likely to lead to significant multi-functional benefits for people, wildlife and landscapes in the Borough.
- Continued significant growth poses a real threat to biodiversity and habitats in the Borough, and the predicted impacts of climate change pose an additional, if somewhat unknown, threat. However, wildlife and habitats can be protected and enhanced if development is properly planned, and through a well thought out GI policy that allows people and wildlife to co-exist.
- Significant opportunities to improve health & wellbeing and reduce health inequalities among the whole population, through recreational activities, walking, cycling and access to natural areas.
- A GI policy can play a positive role in reducing flood risk, with potential for flood storage and re-creating functional floodplain.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Natural England advised the Core Strategy GI policy should consider the recreational pressures on GI assets.

Revised Proposed Submission

Core Theme Policies:

CT3: Safeguarding our environment for future generations

Development Management Policies:

DMP3: Flood Risk

DMP11: Green Infrastructure

Justification for Change

The Revised Proposed Submission continues to acknowledge the long standing ambition to re-establish a canal through central Swindon. However, the plan does seek to replace the existing policy with more detailed reference to the safeguarding of the canal at the proposed Eastern Villages, Wichelstowe and between Commonhead and Acorn Bridge (to link Wilts and Berks Canal to the River Thames). Furthermore, future canal restoration between

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People

Strategic Objective

By 2026 the accommodation needs of the nomadic communities will have been met in a way that enables such communities to be integrated into the settled population.

Evidence

Wiltshire & Swindon Gypsy Travellers Accommodation Assessment 2006, Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment

Issues and Options

Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

Recent changes to government guidance make it clear that the LDF system will need to help identify suitably located sites and reduce unauthorised encampments and developments. Not identified as a key principle at this stage. Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, however were discussed as a boroughwide issue.

Consultation Outcomes:

A need to define standards for the type, maintenance and location of facilities for the Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople.

Preferred Options

KO14 Gypsies

The need to accommodate the identified additional requirements of the gypsy and travelling community will be met, taking into account the views of those communities and the established population.

Consultation Outcomes:

Site identification should include consultation with all stakeholders

Proposed Submission

Policies: CP11 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People and DMP9 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People

These policies explain how the needs of the Gypsy and Travelling community will be met by ensuring an adequate supply of pitches.

Consultation Outcomes

The only comments received related to the need to refer to ongoing joint working with Wiltshire Council to deliver sites for travelling showpeople, and to opposition to additional transit sites in Chiseldon.

Sustainability Appraisal

- No significant adverse effects were predicted.
- The Core Strategy should facilitate the traditional way of life of travelling showpeople, creating inclusive communities where travelling showpeople have fair access to suitable accommodation and services.
- The identification of sites is possible more appropriate to a future Site Allocations DPD, which will be subject to a more detailed SA analysis.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

HRA concludes no significant impacts likely from this policy.

Revised Proposed Submission

Core Policies:

CT2: All Swindon people benefit from our growing economy

Spatial Framework

Evidence Base

Swindon Small Scale Urban Extensions Study (March, 2008), Regional Spatial Strategy for the South west 2026, Swindon Workplace Strategy (2009), West of Swindon Study Update (January, 2009), East of Swindon Evidence Base Update, EDA Transport Study, Swindon Economic and Housing Projections, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2009), Shaping Your Community (2011)

Issues and Options

Proposed 3 Options for Growth

Option 1: Growth within existing places in Swindon Borough Council

Option 2: Proposed new growth within Swindon outside existing places

Option 3: Contain growth within existing allocations and through proposals in draft RSS

Issues and Options Consultation Outcomes

Overall Spatial Strategy

- A combination of option 1 and option 2 represent the most sustainable way of fulfilling housing demand though not at the RSS levels proposed.
- Option 1 on its own is unlikely to achieve the RSS objectives, but we have always supported residential development close to the town centre to ensure a viable city centre
- Option 2 is considered the most sound option; but RSS requires "urban extensions" to be identified, not "more than one" Otherwise, Option 2 is supported.
- Option 3 proposals for concentration of development on one site at EDA raises serious reservations about timescales of DPD production which has knock on effect of housing delivery. Multi site delivery is preferred. Option 3 is not supported.
- Option 3: retains of growth at existing allocations in the urban area, NDA, Wichelstowe, EDA - Commonhead, increase their densities accordingly.

Eastern Development Area

- The sole reliance on the EDA to make significant contributions to the levels of housing growth as per the RSS is flawed given the site constraints and the protracted development programme envisaged for a development of this scale
- EDA should incorporate a wide range of housing and facilities in its district and local centers connected to each other and what they serve by foot/cycle/bus.

Tadpole Farm and Kingsdown

- Tadpole Farm north of NDA received support from Structure Plan Panel/Local Plan Inspector. Provision for 3000 dwellings, no technical constraints to the development.
- Swindon joint study additionally identified growth areas (east, northwest, southwest) and seven non-strategic urban extensions potentially becoming available in advance of/in conjunction with the strategic areas. Kingsdown included.

Urban Extension in Wiltshire

- Some of Swindon's development will have to locate over the boundary within North Wiltshire (Ridgeway Farm a key example) Thus joint working will necessitate and has to be built into the Core Strategy.

Commonhead

- 1800 units significant high density of 45dpha, increasing this density even if achievable and creating a sustainable community, provides only a small amount of housing against requirements at any rate.

Preferred Options

Preferred Option

Focusing development within

1. The existing urban boundary on previously developed land
2. Strategic Urban Extensions already with permissions (Wichelstowe and Northern Development Area)
3. A new major urban extensions (East of Swindon)
4. Small Scale Urban Extensions (Tadpole Farm, Kingsdown and Moredon Bridge / Ridgeway Farm in Wiltshire)

Preferred Options Consultation Outcomes

Overall Spatial Strategy

- The Spatial Vision is totally "Swindon Town Centric". The Spatial Strategy must refer to the wider area of the Borough as well.

Eastern Development Area

- Supports Key Objective 7 and suggests a tram on a light rail system is essential for the EDA.
- Suggest flood risk in the area means the choice of location for many houses should be reconsidered.
- State no development within the EDA should be agreed until the necessary infrastructure and funding is in place first.
- EDA development threatens the rural character and setting of Wanborough (in particular any development along Wanborough Road)

Tadpole Farm and Kingsdown

- The identification of Tadpole Farm as a Preferred Option will result in the need for transport infrastructure improvements.
- Supports the identification of Tadpole Farm as a small-scale urban extension.
- The need for additional allocation and the merits of the allocation at Kingsdown are unclear. Hence a review of the allocation.
- At Kingsdown the 500 dwellings are not required and the A419 is a major obstacle.
- It is considered that the core strategy should consider the Land at Kingsdown Road as one that can contribute towards the Borough.

Central Area

- Strong support for the regeneration of the central area

Urban Extension in Wiltshire

- Swindon does not have the right to dictate future development in North Wiltshire

Commonhead

- Objections to the allocation of housing and business use at Commonhead.
- Disappointed by the proposal to build 750 houses and allocate 15 hectares of land for business use at Coate.
- Objects as suggests we should not be even considering building at or near Coate, we have already lost the front garden to development.

Proposed Submission

Overall Spatial Strategy

The approach to development will be focused highly on the urban area with priority for the regeneration and expansion of the town centre. Alongside this development it is proposed that a major urban extension to the east of Swindon, a number of small scale urban extensions including an urban extension within Wiltshire will need to be delivered to meet the RSS housing figures. Policies SSP1, SSP2 and SSP3 identify the overall distribution of development.

SSP1: Settlement Hierarchy

SSP2: Distribution of New Dwellings

SSP3: Distribution of New Employment Land and Floorspace

Existing Communities

SSP4: Swindon Central Area

SSP5: Swindon's Established Communities and Areas

Allocations

SSP6: Wichelstowe

SSP7: Commonhead

SSP8: Eastern Development Area

SSP9: Tadpole Farm

SSP10: Urban Extensions to Swindon in Wiltshire

SSP11: Urban Extensions to Swindon (Reserve Sites)

Proposed Submission Consultation Outcomes

Overall Spatial Strategy

There was general support including for the urban extensions, but there were some concerns that there was no demonstrated five-year land supply and that the housing trajectory was overoptimistic, so that further housing sites were needed to provide flexibility

Existing Community

Concerns were raised over the proposed provision of fire stations and further clarity is required. Issues were raised around the extension of the hospital and whether this policy appropriately addresses this. Support was given to the regeneration of inner Swindon especially in relation to leisure and tourism opportunities.

Central Area

At Proposed Submission there was general support for regeneration, which reflects the adopted Central Area Action Plan. However, there were concerns with regards to inconsistency with PPS6 and with the presence of a University at North Star.

Eastern Development Area

- Support for sustainable transport measures however there is need for clarification on the Rapid Transit
- Concerns over the scale and form of development, preferably reduced
- Further consideration is required over impact on flooding, infrastructure requirements and traffic
- Support for integration of GI and woodland mitigation measures
- Concerns over the level of detail as provides an inflexible policy – the SPD/Masterplan should provide this.

Tadpole Farm

The main issue raised involved the increase in traffic and its impact on congestion, noise, pollution, and the safety of children, cyclists, and pedestrians, particularly in adjacent areas of north Swindon. Concerns were also expressed regarding the need for infrastructure/services/facilities both within the urban extension and to address current shortfalls in adjacent areas. Other concerns related to potential flooding and the need to protect archaeology. Some respondents called for a reduction in housing numbers to 1500.

Commonhead

There is mixed support for the development at Commonhead. Some comments support the location stating it is based on sound evidence and is very suitable for development. However many concerns were raised over the impacts upon traffic, North Wessex Downs AONB, Coate Water SSSI and how the buffer will be delivered. There is some confusion over the location of the GWH extension and this should be made more explicit.



Sustainability Appraisal

Overall the housing figure has decreased thus the adverse impacts will have lessened especially the effects arising from the proposed Eastern Villages.

Commonhead:

- Potential adverse effects upon biodiversity, landscape, historic environment and transport due to development upon greenfield land, visual impact on environmental designation (Country Park & AONB) and increased traffic.
- Promoting sustainable modes of transport will help to minimise traffic generation and the indirect benefits associated with this.

Eastern Villages:

- The benefits that will arise are provision of a wide range of high quality facilities, services, provision of a high quality sustainable transport network and the creation of a GI network benefitting wildlife and residents.
- Potential adverse effects are the risk of flooding, impact on biodiversity due to large amount of greenfield land being developed upon, impacts upon ancient scheduled monuments, increased traffic, physical coalescence and impact on surrounding villages however this policy does seek to mitigate these effects.

Urban Area

- Developing and providing for the needs of the existing communities will provide social & economic benefits including improved accessibility & facilities and providing opportunities for the population to carry out a more active and healthier lifestyle.
- Development GI and a district-heating network will provide environmental benefits in relation to biodiversity and climate change.
- This policy also ensures the level of growth is not detrimental on existing policies.

Central Area

- Regeneration of the Central Area will provide a range of economic and social benefits.
- High quality design, provision of a range of uses and improved health, leisure and education facilities will bring economic benefits.
- Identifying specific roles of particular areas of Swindon will help to protect the historic environment.

Tadpole Farm:

- An increase in traffic will be generated which will impact the road network and to provide indirect adverse impacts on the environment and health.
- There is a shortage of education provision in the north of Swindon and this development will increase this pressure.
- There will be impacts on biodiversity and landscape due to development on greenfield land.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

HRA Screening found that the Spatial Strategy was likely to lead to impacts including increased recreational pressure, impacts on air and water quality and pressures from water abstraction. Recommendations to increase water efficiency in new development and promote more sustainable forms of transport have been incorporated into Core Strategy.

Diversity Impact Assessment

Existing Communities:

The DIA highlighted that policies SC3-SC9 mention the provision of activities however these activities should be available for all and not just the young. SC2 does not include provision and protection of community facilities and local centres to provide for the need of the local population. This policy also does not mention the provision of affordable housing, which provides essential accommodation for those in need.

Overall Spatial Strategy

Development will be focussed within the Swindon urban area and within allocated sites. This approach is a realistic approach which will meet the needs of the existing and new population. This is the same approach as was put forward in the Proposed Submission version.

DS1: Development Strategy

Existing Communities

- SSP1: Swindon's Central Area
- SSP2: Swindon's Existing Area
- SSP3: Swindon Town Centre Communities
- SSP4: East Swindon Communities
- SSP5: North East Swindon Communities
- SSP6 North Swindon Communities
- SSP7: North Central Swindon Communities
- SSP8: South Swindon Communities
- SSP9: West Swindon Communities

New Communities

- NC1: Delivery
- NC2: Wichelstowe
- NC3: Commonhead
- NC4: Proposed Eastern Villages
- NC5: Tadpole Farm

Justification

At the Revised Proposed Submission stage very little has changed in terms of the priorities for the Central area. However, the policy does offer an update on the amount of comparison retail floorspace (reduction of 65,000m² to 53,700m²), office floorspace (slight increase from 85,000m² to 90,000m²) and the number of new homes provided in the central area (reduced from 3,500 homes to 1000 new homes).

The housing quantum for Swindon Borough has been reduced from 33,000 in the 2009 version to 25,000 in the 2011 version, due to the proposed abolition of RSS and the use of updated local data.

Countryside and Rural Areas

Evidence

The Community Strategic Action Plan for Wroughton 2007-2017, Vision for Wroughton (V4W), Highworth The Vision: Our Future Is In Our Hands (2008), Rural Facilities Survey, Wiltshire and Swindon (2008), Shaping Your Community (2011)

Issues and Options

Highworth and Wroughton

Issues raised:

- Should additional employment opportunities be delivered
- Should new housing be restricted to provide for local needs only
- If new housing and employment provision limited – how do we deliver a sustainable range of shops and leisure facilities

Villages

Issues raised were maintaining adequate level of facilities, provide appropriate level of housing, and allow for local rural employment and protecting and enhancing the village communities.

Countryside

Issues raised over the need to protect landscape and rural economy and taking the next step in how and whether these can be strengthened and enhanced.

Issues and Options Consultation Outcomes

- The towns and villages should maintain their character and integrity. Change should enhance rather than simply expand communities. Encourage local distinctiveness and sustainable lifestyle whilst on the fringe of a large urban area. More smaller properties are needed to retain young and old people in their communities.
- Issues concern lack of affordable housing and community facilities
- Need to reinforce local distinctiveness and should state the importance of maintaining the separate identity of settlements.
- Employment opportunities in Highworth are limited and should be improved to provide a better balance between jobs and housing. Blackworth Industrial Estate should be expanded.

Preferred Options

Rural Development Strategy Preferred Option and KO13 Rural Areas

Proposing how to sustain the rural settlements by:

- Supporting and encouraging local community facilities
- Identify where affordable housing is needed in rural areas and facilitating an appropriate level of housing is delivered
- Support rural transport initiatives
- Ensure new development respects special character, sense of place of rural settlements and provides conditions for a thriving rural environment

Preferred Options Consultation Outcomes

- Priority is needed for appropriate employment opportunities and public transport provision in the smaller rural settlements to improve sustainability and self- containment.
- Highworth has good facilities and transport links and should be allowed to grow
- Communities are different and disparate – there is no One-Fits-All solution.
- A more flexible approach to rural development is needed
- South Marston is omitted from the rural hierarchy but is a primary settlement with three brownfield sites and the ability to provide a sustainable urban extension.
- The spatial strategy should provide for a pattern of development among a variety of rural settlements to sustain and regenerate rural communities. It should be flexible to allow appropriate levels of new development in the villages.

Proposed Submission

It has been identified that each rural area has its own specific needs and each area has its own character and landscape. Therefore a more flexible approach has been identified to planning in rural communities. SSP12 and SSP14 state how the rural settlements and countryside will be improved. SSP13 is in response to consultation and due to the identification of the Eastern Development Area as an urban extension.

Spatial Strategy Policies SSP12: Rural Settlements, SSP13: South Marston and SSP14: The Countryside and Smaller Settlements

Proposed Submission Consultation Outcomes

Rural Settlements and Countryside

There was general support for the rural settlements policy, with additional support for development at Highworth. There was support for the extension of Primary and Secondary Settlements to assist in the retention of facilities, but further work is needed to demonstrate the deliverability of sustainable growth at villages, including an assessment of the environmental and social impact. There was general support for the Countryside & Smaller Settlements policy, apart from the need to explain what is meant by “inappropriate” development, and the need for greater flexibility regarding the re-use of rural buildings.

South Marston

- General consensus that a SPD / Masterplan should be developed for South Marston
- Community and local Facilities should be appraised
- Proposed development should improve and enhance the character and form of South Marston
- Roads are not currently suitable for through traffic
- SPD / Masterplan should deal with specific matters not the Core Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal

Rural Settlements and the Countryside

- Overall these policies promotes vitality and sustainability of rural communities.
- Strengthening the role of the central areas of the settlements will strengthen identity and support local economies.
- Restricts housing to reflect local need so settlements will retain character and identity
- Supports the development of appropriate local economic development which will provide a range of economic benefits.

South Marston

- The policy ensures South Marston will retain its identity, prevents coalescence and that essential infrastructure will be put in place.
- There are concerns over the amount of traffic that will be generated which will present indirect environmental and economic adverse effects.
- The growth of the village will support and reinforce local services and facilities and there will be improved public transport.
- There will be loss of views and noise and light pollution will be generated.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

HRA screening identified the rural areas policy as having the potential to lead to pressures on sites from recreational activity and pollution incidents. However, the HRA concludes that the Core Strategy will successfully mitigate these impacts.

Revised Proposed Submission

The approach to villages, smaller towns and the rural area is consistent with what was proposed within the Proposed Submission version. The policies allow for limited development which can support the long-term viability of the areas and provide local job opportunities. The policy concentrating on South Marston has remained.

Rural Areas:

RS1: Highworth & Wroughton

RS2: South Marston

RS3: Small Settlements and the Countryside