

Why does Sustainable Calne want to share knowledge and discuss the Local Plan? Why does it matter?

Please note that these notes are compiled by a member of the Sustainable Calne Steering Group and while all efforts have been made to ensure what we are saying is accurate the document is long and complex so can't be guaranteed.

Introduction:

The Wiltshire Local Plan is essentially about how land is used across Wiltshire – about where land is designated for employment, where houses are built and where the infrastructure needed to support this will go.

The current consultation is a review of the document (Core Strategy) adopted in 2015.

It gives criteria for which sorts of houses are built, some of the design criteria, and what must be done if green field land is used for building to compensate for the loss of habitat.

Addresses huge range of issues including Climate Change, biodiversity, town centre developments & a Strategic Transport Network .

These things have a serious impact on Climate Change.

A few examples:

- If no employment in a town – residents have to commute to work – more carbon emissions.
- If new developments are a long way from facilities, people will drive – more carbon emissions.
- If estates are poorly designed with lack of natural drainage into the earth, more water enters the sewage system – this results in overflow of sewage into our rivers.
- If new houses are fitted with very high insulation and make use of new sustainable technologies for power carbon emissions are reduced.

The plan contains 101 policies – these are the key sections that must be adhered to. There is lots of other information in the document that is very complex and detailed that I don't think any of us here, who are not professionals in this area, would claim to fully comprehend.

Planning guidelines are based on 3 levels of planning guidance:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Wiltshire Local Plan
- Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan

Each level has to comply with the higher level.

Some of our thoughts about the plan:

1. The new draft Wiltshire Local Plan has some positive policies related to Sustainability that we should welcome:

- **There is a new policy to address climate change which underpins the whole plan. (Policy 4)**

Other positive policies:

- **Reduce need and distance of car journeys** – it supports sustainable transport improvements, employment being created near to housing. Acknowledges that reduction in traffic relies on reducing short journeys - so alternatives to cars need to be better. New developments should be where there is a choice of transport. Is more inclusive in the groups it argues should have safe access to transport network. Across Wiltshire focuses on railways links – such as re-opening of Devizes station Supports the development of electric charging points network.
- **Delivering energy efficient buildings** – good quality so need redevelopment, connected to renewable energy, operational net-zero – talks about retrofit but only where new planning permissions sought and then not obligatory – just looked on favourably. Supports larger scale retrofit at street or neighbourhood scales to reduce costs
- **Maximising carbon storage** – incorporate trees and woodland to sequester carbon from atmosphere, preserve and restore habitats
- **Mitigating and adapting to Climate Change** – residential developments to have water consumption of no more than 85l/head/day, non-household to achieve 40% reduction compared to baseline standards, all developments to incorporate water saving opportunities such as grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting All new developments to reduce rainwater run-off and incorporate SuDS. Sustainable Drainage Systems – efficiently managing surface water in the urban environment
- **Minimising and mitigating air pollution** – this is mostly addressed in a separate document which was recently published for consultation. Unfortunately for Calne the options offered were not very promising.
- **Protecting high grade agricultural land**
- **Protects natural and local landscapes** Extra weight given to Wiltshire's Designated Landscapes ie AONBs and National Park. Need to enhance and improve links between the natural and historic landscapes. Retain and enhance existing rights of way, maximising accessibility and new connections.
- **Will require a carbon assessment for all schemes**
- **Biodiversity – required to increase by 20% (was 10%)** Development proposals must show how mitigation hierarchy has been applied. They must demonstrate how they protect terrestrial, aquatic and geological features. Expected to show how the improvements will be maintained into the future. Must secure and implement measures to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and avoid negative impacts. New section on biodiversity in the built environment - with list of items that must be included as a minimum
- **Improved open space and play facilities** Development must make provision for public open spaces and, where appropriate, play facilities. All development must protect & improve the quantity, quality and accessibility

of/to public open space. All development which will have an adverse impact on public open space must submit an Open Space Assessment.

- **Support for existing community facilities**
- **New policy on Dark Skies**

Developments must ensure all opportunities to reduce light pollution are taken.

Points that we would comment on:

Sustainable transport links is an old policy from previous strategy – it hasn't delivered in the past and why should we think it will in the future?

The approach to transport is a demand led approach so still favours the car.

Primary bus routes are supported – but not secondary ones (eg Calne to Marlborough)

Doesn't identify the types of places where electric charging points should be.

Open spaces will be maintained by local management groups – charging residents – unfair – especially as charges applicable to those in affordable housing.

A lot of the policies – particularly with reference to climate change and building carbon neutral housing allow for developers to say it's not viable and to make mitigations. Without national framework it will be hard to enforce.

How the policy affects Calne:

The plan sees Calne as 4th Largest of 16 main settlements in Wiltshire.(19,100)

“Has potential for significant development to help sustain, and where necessary enhance their services and facilities, promoting better levels of self-containment and viable sustainable communities.”

Town seen as having fewer environmental constraints than other similar towns – AONB doesn't come close to the town

Requirement for 1230 homes 2020-2038,
635 completions and commitments, residual 600,
Increase for Calne despite decrease in overall numbers.

Employment land of 5.1ha

Neighbourhood designation of 130 homes Calne plus 30 in Derry Hill)

Site allocation of 570 homes and 0.5ha employment land North of Spitfire Road

Site allocation of 2.7 ha employment land off Spitfire Road

Wiltshire have allocated 2 sites from their pool of 8 sites:

Positive points:

Affordable Housing increased to 40%

There is an allocation of Employment Land at Calne and continued protection of the Porte Marsh Trading Estate

Accessibility

Community Facilities policy

Health and Wellbeing policy

However, if some of the developments gain permission before the Local Plan comes into force then these benefits to Calne will largely be lost as most of our housing allocation will have been built.

- No attempt to find site for cemetery.
- Easy pickings, applications already coming forward
- Doesn't help to bring forward health care provision
- Employment Allocation for Calne - concern that it will not be implemented and so will become housing - as has happened in past - not addressed in document.
- No comment on the transport capacity of a settlement in the development strategy including for large villages.

No consideration of Air Quality issues within settlements as part of the settlement strategy. Major concern for Calne.

Recent developments have not brought forward significant infrastructure to the town and still not. Only suggestion is that to get this we would have to significantly increase number of houses which goes against policies.

Added to this – no acknowledgement that the additional housing in Chippenham which is where A350 and A4 will link – is likely to further increase the traffic flow through Calne.

When I asked an officer about this at the consultation meeting he told me a study would be done on the traffic implications of any development – but wouldn't specify that it would cover neighbouring towns. And this would happen after the plan was agreed – so essentially too late.