

Wiltshire

Strategic

Analysis

2002

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Wiltshire Strategic Analysis, 2002

Purpose

This analysis of the key strategic issues facing Wiltshire has been commissioned by the newly-formed Wiltshire Strategic Board (the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Wiltshire except for Swindon). The purpose of the report is to inform and stimulate discussion at the Board's 3rd October Conference. It is there to be debated, challenged and added to, and is the start of a process which will lead to the adoption of an agreed strategic analysis by the Board by the end of March, 2003.

The report, after a section on Overarching Considerations, and some key facts and figures, is organised into 8 sections, one on each of the primary themes adopted by the Strategic Board as a way of structuring its work.

Overarching Considerations

When reading what follows there are a number of overarching concepts which can be used as a framework for understanding the specific themes described in the main body of the report.

- (i) Sustainability – This concept when used about either particular issues, or whole ways of life, looks at the resultant social, economic and environmental consequences, and assesses if the effects of continuing with these practices is acceptable in the medium to long-term. The effects assessed will be both within Wiltshire itself, and globally, and will crucially involve impacts on air, water, and soil quality, biodiversity, climate, and the use of scarce natural resources such as metals and minerals. The biosphere impacts are especially important because if the biosphere does not function effectively, human and other life could not continue. Other impacts will include those on poverty, crime, etc.

- The aim of sustainability assessments is to explore the interconnections between the 8 themes, and to identify ways in which current practices can be modified so that the positive outcomes are retained, whilst at the same time reducing the negative impacts. One way of looking at it is to say, in what way can we “create a county that is fit for our children”?

- (ii) Local Governance – This concept refers to how decisions about public services in Wiltshire are made, about how different interests and objectives are balanced and, about how legal regulations are enforced. Numerous public bodies are now involved in delivering local governance, with only local authorities having representatives directly elected by the local electorate. The Government has set in train a number of initiatives to improve the accountability of public bodies, to increase public involvement, and to promote partnership working and joint action. These initiatives include the introduction

of cabinets, the publication of performance information in annual Best Value Performance Plans, encouragement to set up local strategic partnerships (as which the Wiltshire Strategic Board is one) and to produce community strategies. Wiltshire is distinctive for using its 20 community areas as a basis for the production of local community plans. There is also a debate about what is best done and at what geographical level. This debate now includes the possibility of regional government, and a consequential unitary structure of local authorities, if the public choose it.

The Wiltshire Strategic Board is keen to promote efficient and effective decision-making structures in the county. An underlying question for readers of this paper is, if these are the issues, what are the most effective local governance arrangements for tackling them, and do existing structures need revising?

- (iii) E-Government – The impact of new information technologies has had, and will continue to have, a major impact on all aspects of life. The Government is encouraging public services to assess how information technologies can assist in establishing easier contact with the public, and how it can contribute to better, more integrated business practices both within organisations, and between organisations. As well as initiatives within organisations, there has been a broadly-based partnership approach to setting up common facilities in Wiltshire. This so-called Pathfinder project has now entered its second phase. The contribution that information and communications technology can make to tackling the issues identified in this report is another consideration that readers should bear in mind.

Some Key Facts and Figures

- Between 1991-2001 Wiltshire's population grew from 400,060 to an estimated 435,350, an increase of 8.8%. Over this period individual towns grew at a faster rate, for instance, Chippenham grew by 28.5% and Trowbridge by 14.2%.
- Between 2001-2011 it is projected that the population will rise to 466,300, an increase of 7.1%. Net in-migration is expected to account for 79% of this 31,000 increase.
- The 50-64 year old age band will exhibit the largest increase of any age band (approximately 13,000 more people), between 2001-2011.
- Those aged 80 years and above will number 22,000 people by 2011 (a 20% increase on 2001).
- The adopted Structure Plan (1991-2011) allows for 44,000 houses to be built in Wiltshire (excluding Swindon). As at April 2002, 20,100 of these houses have yet to be built.

- The towns that will experience the most housing growth (2001-2011) are primarily Trowbridge, followed by Chippenham, Devizes and Salisbury. Other towns that will experience somewhat lesser growth include Calne, Wootton Bassett, Westbury and Melksham. This growth is reflected in the fact that in 1991 54% of Wiltshire's population lived in towns with over 5,000 residents, whereas by 2001 this proportion had risen to 58%. The adopted Structure Plan seeks to concentrate new development in existing urban centres, as this is considered to offer the most environmentally sustainable pattern of development for Wiltshire.
- Only 5 of the 35 County Council areas in England have a population less than Wiltshire's, and only 6 have fewer persons per hectare i.e. are less densely populated.
- Wiltshire is the only completely inland County in the South West. It is also a large County with only 13 of the 35 County Council areas in England being larger in area. Its geographical location means that Wiltshire will be subject to a wide variety of influences from surrounding areas.
- Wiltshire has an exceptional landscape, with approximately 75% of the county being covered by some landscape designation (e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Special Landscape Areas, Green Belt and proposed New Forest National Park). This fact means that, of necessity, new development is especially concentrated in the remaining 25%. Sustainable development policies have further reinforced this pattern of development, given the basic geography of the county.
- 10% of the County is covered by the Salisbury Plain Military training area, virtually dividing the southern part of the county from the rest.
- Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (September 2001) divides Wiltshire between two spatial policy areas. The Northern Sub-Region contains the former County of Avon, Gloucestershire, and the northern and central parts of Wiltshire, including Swindon. This area is the most economically dynamic in the South West. The southern part of Wiltshire is assigned to the South Eastern Sub-Region centred on Bournemouth/Poole, and reflects the characteristics of the area, which mean that it is somewhat less economically dynamic than its northern neighbour, but is still a relatively buoyant area on a national scale, adjoining as it does Hampshire and the SE region.
- Regional Planning Guidance directs major economic and housing development to what it terms 'principal urban areas' (PUA's) of which Bath, Bristol and Swindon are likely to have the most impact on Wiltshire due to their proximity. Reading and Southampton perform a similar role in the South East region, which uses other terminology. Outside these settlements, guidance seeks to limit growth in market towns where it would fuel outcommuting. In particular, the guidance advises the local planning authorities to create greater self-containment in western and northern Wiltshire towns. It also suggests that Salisbury is a potential candidate for sustainable growth, subject to further studies.

- There were 48,772 people living in households where at least one person was in receipt of Housing Benefit, or Council Tax Rebate in Wiltshire in 1998, i.e. 11.4% of the population. Of this total 36% were pensioners, 30% were dependent children (0-19) of which 19% were in households headed by a lone parent. Lone parents constituted 10.4% of the benefits household population; 19.9% are disability benefit units and 6.9% are young adults aged 16-25. The greatest numerical concentrations of claimants were in particular neighbourhoods within the larger towns, but the highest proportions of the total populations of particular settlements were in some villages. Claimant households were very widely distributed across the whole County. With official unemployment levels low in the County, these figures seem to be particularly related to low incomes, associated with poor quality employment, and with retirement.
- According to the national Indices of Deprivation 2000, there are 56,000 income deprived people living in Wiltshire, and 17,000 children living in poverty. In nearly 20% of Wiltshire wards, at least one quarter of children are living in poverty. The worst affected wards for both the Income Domain and the Child Poverty Index were:- Bemerton (Salisbury), Westbury with Storrige, Warminster West, John of Gaunt (Trowbridge) and Amesbury.

The Wiltshire Economy

The Wiltshire economy benefits from the M4 corridor effect, and from its proximity to the SE region, and to the greater Bristol conurbation, but this also gives rise to significant housing pressures. The County also benefits from the attractiveness of its countryside, villages and some of its towns which make it a desirable place to live, visit and work.

The northern part of the County is relatively more economically dynamic than the southern part. Wiltshire's employment structure is similar to that of the Country as a whole, but is distinctive in having 'a significantly higher than expected number of people in various forms of manufacturing: especially electrical machinery and apparatus, food products, and beverages, furniture, rubber, and plastic goods. In addition, there is a high [locational] score for employment in public administration and defence, probably due to the scale of military establishments around the County' (Economic Assessment February 2002, p.21).

Wiltshire, unlike Swindon which is very entrepreneurial, has the characteristics of a steady growth economy. The County has rates of business formation that are below the English average, but this is compensated for by comparatively low rates of business failure. Between 1994 – 2001 only Salisbury district experienced a loss of total business numbers, whereas, in contrast, North Wiltshire district contributed 60% of the County's net growth in new business registrations. Similarly, in terms of change in numbers of businesses per 1000 of working age between 1996 and 2001, Salisbury district was the only district to lose business density, whereas North Wiltshire district experience 4.2% change, over twice the County average.

There were 17,279 VAT registered businesses operating in Wiltshire in the year 2000, 97% of which employed fewer than 50 people. Only 96 companies (0.6%) employed 200 or more people, but these firms collectively employ 28% of Wiltshire's employees. At the other extreme,

71% of firms employ less than 5 people, but, in total, employ 15% of all employees. (This profile is similar to that for England and Wales, but differs in that nationally firms with 200 or more employees account for 31% of employees, and firms with fewer than 5 employees account for only 12% of employees and 68% of firms.)

Employment growth between 1995–2000 has also favoured the more accessible northerly parts of the County, with Kennet experiencing 12.2% growth and North Wiltshire 11.7%. West Wiltshire was intermediate with 9.1% growth, whereas Salisbury District at 6% has seen only a modest increase.

Wiltshire is distinctive in being one of the highest areas in the region for the proportion of its working age population who are economically active – (86.6% in 1999-2000), and its low unemployment rates. Nevertheless, in contrast to Swindon, wages in Wiltshire are below the average for the SW region at £370.30 a week (£19,256 a year). Average earnings in North Wiltshire are higher than in other Wiltshire districts. Earnings in Salisbury, West Wiltshire and Kennet districts are comparable to neighbouring Somerset and Dorset.

There is a notable difference between the average gross weekly earnings of women compared to men, amounting to £114.40 per week in Wiltshire, which is similar to the national variance. This may be associated with female employment being concentrated in the lower paid sectors of public administration, education and health, and the distribution, hotels and restaurants sectors. It also results from the larger numbers of women who choose to work part-time, either because it enables them to combine work with childcare and other responsibilities, or because the associated costs of working full-time (child care, tax, etc.) outweigh the marginal benefits of a full-time salary.

The GDP level in Wiltshire did not reach the UK average in 1998, and was only marginally above the rate for the South West, furthermore, GDP for both Swindon and Wiltshire grew at a slower rate than the regional and UK averages between 1997 and 1998, ‘and in relative terms GDP in Wiltshire and Swindon has actually fallen in the area since 1995’. (Economic Assessment (February 2002 p. 14).

Table 1 - Wiltshire Sectoral Change 1995-2000 (employees)

Sector	Employee change 1995-2000 +% change		% change in SW 1995-2000	Total Employees in Wiltshire in 2000	% of total employees in 2000		
					Wiltshire	SW	GB
Public Admin. educ. and health	5,085	11.8%	9.8%	48,184	29.1%	26.8%	24.2%
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	5,230	14.6%	11.8%	41,157	24.8%	24.2%	26.6%
Manufacturing	-779	-2.6%	-0.2%	28,782	17.3%	15.2%	15.2%
Banking, finance and insurance (Business Services)	2,939	12.5%	9.7%	26,376	15.9%	16.5%	19.8%
Construction	2,109	34.8%	26.3%	8,174	4.9%	4.5%	4.4%
Other Services	1170	19.0%	18.8%	6,856	4.1%	4.6%	5.0%
Transport and Communications	-1189	-25.0%	10.3%	5,373	3.2%	4.9%	6.1%
Energy and water	-77	-17.2%	-40.8%	370	0.2%	0.7%	0.7%
Agriculture and fishing ¹	-	-	-	-	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%
TOTALS ³	14,000	9.4% ²	8.4% ²	166,167			

¹ These figures are not a complete picture of agricultural employment. For fuller picture, see under “Countryside and Land-Based Issues” theme.

² Source – Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Assessment, 2002 (p.16).

³ Total figures are based on Annual Employment Survey Rescaled Workplace Analysis (1995) and Annual Business Inquiry (2000 data) from Nomis.

In terms of business sectors, Wiltshire has seen declines since 1995 in both the manufacturing, and the transport and communications sectors. Manufacturing is of particular concern as Wiltshire still employs above the national average in this sector, and the concentration of employment in a shrinking number of firms suggests that competitive advantage is being eroded. The decline in manufacturing in Wiltshire has been less than that in Swindon over the same period. The transport and communications decline may be linked to the trend that has seen the closure of local wholesale and distribution centres in favour of larger, centralised regional or sub-regional hub centres in places like Swindon.

Table 2 - Wiltshire Districts – A Sectoral Comparison in 2000 – by % of employees in each sector

Sector	NW	K	S	WW	Wiltshire
Public admin. educ. and health	20.4	40.6	33.3	9.0	29.1
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	23.2	20.9	26.7	30.2	24.8
Manufacturing	25.1	11.9	9.5	9.5	17.3
Banking, finance and insurance	17.2	13.5	18.7	26.7	15.9
Construction	5.5	4.7	3.7	10.8	4.9
Other services	3.5	5.2	4.3	8.1	4.1
Transport and communications	4.0	1.8	3.2	5.1	3.2
Energy and water	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2
Agriculture and fishing	0.6	1.2	0.5	0.3	0.5

Table 3 - Wiltshire Districts – Further Comparisons

District	Total Nos. of Employees – 2000 + % of County total	Nos. of firms registered for VAT – 2000 + % of County total	% of County total population in district	Growth in employee Nos. 1995-2000, and % increase in overall district employee total
Kennet	25,900 (15.5%)	3,106 (18%)	18.4%	2,818 (12.2%)
Salisbury	45,800 (27.6%)	4,707 (27.2%)	26.8%	2,603 (6%)
North Wiltshire	46,500 (28%)	5,151 (29.8%)	29.2%	4,878 (11.7%)
West Wiltshire	48,100 (28.9%)	4,315 (25%)	25.6%	4,027 (9.1%)

The economy of the rural part of Wiltshire and Swindon (the relevant report doesn't separate out Wiltshire) when compared to the economy of Wiltshire and Swindon as a whole shows a more or less equivalent level of reliance on manufacturing and business services, a greater reliance on the public sector economy – health, social care, education and defence; a greater reliance on the leisure industry, particularly licensed trade, as well as the construction industry; less reliance on distribution, notably wholesale trade, transportation and communication; and less reliance on financial services.

Some of the strongest rural growth sectors, which in recent years have included business and engineering/design consultancy; computing, and property/real estate sectors, are primarily driven by urban markets and large companies outside Wiltshire. The local linkages of these “knowledge-based” businesses may be low, with certain parts of Wiltshire providing an accessible and attractive (but possibly temporary) location.

Strategic economic issues

- The need to generate enough local jobs to balance in-migration and housing growth in the county. A failure to do this will lead to increased levels of out-commuting, and a consequent loss of those workers, their skills, and a proportion of their spending, to the

Wiltshire economy. Alternatively, some might say we should reduce housebuilding growth to levels that will match likely rates of employment growth.

- The lack of a co-ordinating structure, and an overall strategic economic vision for the 7 western Wiltshire towns. The original case for a co-ordinated economic development and transport strategy were set out in the document “Western Wiltshire Regeneration – the A350 Transport Corridor” (1997). In particular, Chippenham’s potential to extend the “ripple effect” of Swindon further south into the county, particularly for computing and electro-mechanical engineering, is unrealised.
- The lack of any sites in Wiltshire capable of being designated a “Strategic Employment Site” by the Regional Development Agency. This issue is linked to the scale and pattern of development in the county, and the role of Swindon as a principal urban area (PUA) which has the greatest potential for accommodating change and growth.
- Should the different entrepreneurial levels north and south of Salisbury Plain be accepted as reflecting different business environments, or should future expectations be for a full convergence of south Wiltshire’s employment and business formation rates with those of more northerly parts of the county?
- Is sufficient emphasis being given to ICT (Information and Communications Technology), both as a sector, and as a strategic component underpinning the productivity of the wider economy? Particular issues include the need to project a strong digital technology/wired-up communities image for the county; extension of broadband connectivity where this will contribute to business efficiency; and a major push on improving the level of ICT skills in schools, colleges and work places.
- Environmental technologies constitute an emerging small sector which the Rural Development Agency has identified for growth. Wiltshire experienced growth in this sector between 1995-2000. Do we want to build up this sector significantly as it has world-wide and ongoing potential, and matches the environmental quality of the county. Energy systems, in particular, are likely to be a high-value growth sector over the next decade. The SW Regional Development Agency have predicted that there will be 12,000 new jobs in renewable energy in the region.
- Is biotechnology likely to be any more than a niche industry in Wiltshire, given the generally low presence of the sector in the South West, and the remoteness of the Salisbury Research Triangle from Southampton and Bath Universities? Nevertheless, there remains the need to maximise the benefits to Wiltshire of the considerable research investment that the Ministry of Defence has made in the Porton and Boscombe Downs areas, one of the three key biotechnology concentrations in the SW region.

- The need to continue to be proactive in working with existing manufacturers to identify ways in which their core expertise can be extended to other products and materials, especially ones that have a higher value-added component (diversification), and to identify ways to increase the productivity of existing processes. Some manufacturing has remained competitive due to low wage earners being effectively “trapped” in Wiltshire. This is not sustainable, as such types of manufacturing will often be vulnerable to foreign competition from parts of the world where labour costs are significantly lower.
- The general need to embed businesses in Wiltshire to a greater extent than at present, through local supply chain development; networking; creation of business premises for expanding businesses; creation of clusters; training and skills links with local colleges, schools and private sector providers; and through supportive land-use planning policies that are sensitive to the geography of the Wiltshire economy.
- Need to make Wiltshire an attractive place for young graduates to work in. The progressive development of the University of Bath’s presence in Swindon will assist with this, although there is a need to ensure that the whole of Wiltshire benefits from this initiative. At present, it appears to be a county that is appealing to skilled in-migrants in their middle years, often with young or teenage families. The latter group is adding significantly over time to the raising of general skills levels in the county.
- The defence presence in the county despite successive closures, is still an important element of the Wiltshire economy. There is a need to ensure that the Wiltshire economy maximises the benefit of the armed forces’ presence, particularly the opportunities provided by the expansion of the garrison towns under Project Allenby. The creation of wider employment opportunities for the wives and partners of soldiers stationed on the Plain is important. The uncertain future of RAF Lyneham is also a key issue.
- Finding ways to boost the rural economy (outside of land-based industries) is key to supporting the rural areas and to developing better quality jobs and pay for those dependent on local employment.
- The need to further increase tourism and visitor spending through continued development of the sector. Estimates indicate that there is the potential to expand the capacity of the sector by a further 40%. Tourism not only contributes to sustaining rural and market town services, but also contributes to the overall image of the county as an attractive place in which to locate businesses.
- How can average pay levels be lifted in the county, and the gap between male and female earnings narrowed? Plus what can be done to encourage women into sectors other than those traditionally associated with female employment?
- How can economic development be used to revive and expand the residential and nursing homes sector in the county, and to take up the wider opportunities associated with the growing numbers of elderly people?

- For the issue of farm incomes being under pressure, see under the “Countryside and Land-Based Issues” theme.

Transport

Observed traffic growth in Wiltshire between 1986 and 1996 was 35%, similar to the national trend. Several factors lie behind this growth:-

- (i) The state of the national economy. Traffic growth tends to increase most during times of economic prosperity.
- (ii) The high economic activity rates in Wiltshire. The growth particularly in part-time female employment has led to greater car ownership and usage for predominantly local trips, as women seek to combine employment, child care and other household and social activities.
- (iii) The increased propensity of particularly men to commute longer distances to work. In 1991 35,800 (about 17.5% of the total workforce) commuted to work destinations outside the county, with 17,700 travelling in the other direction. This represents a net outflow of 18,100. The main external destinations were Swindon, the former county of Avon and Hampshire.
- (iv) The perceived and real dangers of walking or cycling to school has led to greater car use, often combined with travel to work trips.
- (v) In 1991 78.9% of households had at least one car, and 32.1% had 2 or more cars. Both of these figures were above the national average, with households owning more than one car being significantly higher than the national average. The number of cars in Wiltshire increased by 54,000 (43%) between 1981 and 1991, and the latest census figures will undoubtedly show a further increase.
- (vi) The increased propensity of people in their late teens and early twenties to own a car, whereas formerly they shared a parent's.
- (vii) Car ownership has allowed the creation of more geographically wide-ranging, and diversified social, leisure and employment patterns. Public transport has not been able to keep pace with these changes, both in terms of frequency of services, or geographical coverage. For many trips either there is no public transport alternative, or, the cost and perceived inconvenience of public transport, particularly for families, lead existing car owners to choose to prefer to bear the marginal extra motoring costs. The Government has set national targets of increasing bus patronage by 10%, and the proportion of rural households with access to a minimum hourly bus service by a third, by the year 2010. In a rural county such as Wiltshire, these will be very challenging to achieve, particularly of the current financial pressures and the shortage of drivers that the bus industry is facing. Currently the County Council subsidises services which cover a third of the Wiltshire bus network.

- (viii) Road infrastructure in the county offers few efficient north/south options. This has tended to focus traffic growth in the A350 corridor. This is also the area of greatest population density.
- (ix) Western Wiltshire is the area closest to the major employment centres of Bristol, Bath, Swindon and South Gloucestershire. This encourages outcommuting, in the area where road capacity and condition is most under pressure.
- (x) The centralisation of services and facilities in towns and larger urban centres, along with the public's preference for significant concentrations of retail and leisure choice, e.g. shopping malls, multiplex cinemas, etc.
- (xi) In Wiltshire, some 5.4 billion tonne-kilometres are moved annually, 81% of which is carried by road. This results in about 32,000 HGV movements on Wiltshire's roads each day. At present 85% of HGV movements in Wiltshire have business in the county. The biggest generators of HGVs in Wiltshire are the areas around Melksham, Trowbridge, Westbury and Swindon.

The London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS) was commissioned by the Government Office for the South West and undertaken by Halcrow Group Limited. Within the strategic transport corridors examined, it is significant that Wiltshire receives relatively few road recommendations with most attention focussed on Swindon, and improvements to Junctions 15 and 16. The report notes that 'the levels and location of development in some parts of the study area would bring substantial increases in travel demand on already hard-pressed parts of the network. The Swindon, Bristol (and Thames Valley) areas present particularly difficult challenges in this respect' p.43. Improvements are recommended on the A303 on the Wylde-Stockton Wood, and the Chicklade-Mere sections.

Public transport recommendations are more numerous in the SWARMMS report, including possible new stations at Wootton Bassett, Wilton, Devizes Parkway and Porton (the County Council would add Corsham to this list, but has reservations about the Devizes Parkway option at this stage subject to further work on the viability of the proposal). The extension of the Paddington/Bedwyn train service to Westbury to provide two trains an hour to London, the incremental twin tracking of the entire Salisbury to Exeter line to enable at least an hourly frequency of service. The Swindon to Kemble line also recommended to be enhanced. The County Council has expressed support for these proposals, provided that they do not encourage greater long distance commuting, nor that they detract from local rail services.

Also, improved public transport interchange facilities at Marlborough, Salisbury (bus and train), Wilton and Chippenham, and improved express coach services connecting Bristol to London (via a Swindon M4 Coachway facility) and Salisbury to London. The County Council doubts whether there is demand for the proposed increases in frequency of coach services.

Each year in Wiltshire, as in every county, people are killed or injured in road traffic accidents. In 2001 there were 1,399 injury accidents on Wiltshire's county roads, which resulted in 33 fatalities and 241 serious and 1,735 slight casualties. This is a reduction in casualties for the fifth consecutive year.

Strategic Transport Issues

- The urgent need to generate enough local jobs of sufficient quality in the county to substantially reduce out-commuting, and longer distance commuting within the county. This is particularly severe with respect to the towns of the Western Wiltshire corridor where significant housing growth is focussed, but there are indications that even the county's most self-sufficient settlement in 1991, Salisbury, will be shown to be less so by the 2001 census results.
- The need to facilitate a far greater use of the county's existing rail network, including promotion of the implementation of the SWARMMS report recommendations, as modified by local debate.
- Finding ways to address the substantial backlog in road maintenance requirements.
- The need to encourage a more coherent public transport provider structure in the county in order to address escalating tender prices for supported bus services, and driver shortages, particularly for evening and Sunday services, and to encourage greater innovation in patterns of provision, including more demand responsive services, like the Wiggly Bus in the Pewsey Vale.
- The need to address rural access issues particularly for those who do not own a car, but at the same time to establish realistic expectations about levels of service within likely available resources. Parts of Wiltshire scored particularly highly for this factor in the national Index of Local Deprivation. In 2001-02, 84% of rural population had access to a daily or better weekday bus service, and 52% had access to an hourly or better weekday bus service. (rural = settlements of under 3,000 population.)
- The need to give greater emphasis to road traffic reduction measures, including workplace green commuting plans, walking and cycling to school plans, cycle ways, improving the frequency and cost of public transport (particularly for journey to work trips), video-conferencing, car parking regimes and charges, etc.
- Ensuring that transport infrastructure developments keep pace with (and ideally occur in advance of) housing and employment growth, and if this is not possible to consider restricting the rate of housing development.
- Implementing the proposed Westbury railfreight terminal, and By-pass.
- Continuing to reduce the number of road traffic accidents and casualties on Wiltshire's roads.
- Agreeing a route for the Wylve Valley relief road.
- The need to create better facilities at railway stations, and to create bus stations in towns where they do not exist to encourage better inter-modal transfer of passengers.

Crime and Community Protection

Wiltshire is a low crime area when compared to other areas nationally. Its settlement pattern means that there are a relatively large number of small and medium-sized market towns, the centres of each will provide a local focus for, particularly weekend, drinking and socialising, often in association with drug-taking, dealing, and the resultant criminal damage and anti-social behaviour, including fighting.

This may account for the fact that criminal damage is way and above the largest category of crime in Wiltshire, with an incidence of 9.6 crimes per 1000 population. This is of concern as it is known that, nationally, less than a fifth of incidents of criminal damage are estimated to be reported and recorded. Salisbury district at 11.8 incidents per 1000 population has the highest incidence of this crime of any of the four districts.

In addition to criminal damage crime patterns in Wiltshire tend to be dominated by a small number of crime categories, including violence against the person (5.6) theft from vehicles (5.1) and burglary from dwellings (3.3) (statistics refer to recorded crime figures per 1000 population for 2000/01-2001/02). Crime tends to be particularly concentrated in the largest population centre of each district i.e. Chippenham, Trowbridge, Devizes and Salisbury. These are also the areas where poverty and deprivation are also mostly concentrated. Crime Audits have begun to explore these connections, but as yet, no full exploration of the possible linkages have been undertaken. Any such analysis should apply the extensive national research on the key offending-related factors to the Wiltshire situation.

Common assault, and domestic violence are acknowledged to be crimes that go unreported. The levels of these crimes are almost certainly under-represented in official crime statistics in the county. A review of refuge accommodation is being undertaken as part of the Supporting People (shadow) strategy, as the scale of need has been largely unassessed, to date.

Surveys have shown that the public feel that the most important issues to tackle are sex crimes, vandalism, supply and possession of drugs, drunkenness, and anti-social behaviour, assaults and domestic violence and speeding.

Despite being a low crime area, there is still a widespread fear of crime.

Offending nationally peaks in the 16-24 year old age group, with males being 5 times more likely to offend than females.

Strategic Issues

- Producing more specific analyses of crime patterns so that better targetted solutions can be devised. At present the audits give little impression of the age spread of offenders, when and where the crime was committed (day of the week, plus time of day), and whether a lot of the crime is generated by a few individuals, or whether a larger number of individuals are committing a few crimes each? Crimes where alcohol was a related factor also need to be identified.

- Measures to encourage more reporting of domestic violence, and appropriate services and facilities to respond to these incidents need to be put in place.
- Drugs, especially heroin, are a significant problem, which is expected to worsen. Heroin addiction, in particular, has a big impact on acquisitive crime.
- More holistic approaches to town centre management and policing, particularly at weekends need to be explored.
- Further measures need to be taken to address the earlier and earlier regular use of alcohol and drugs amongst teenagers.
- Ensuring that Wiltshire, with its strong military presence, is well prepared against terrorist attacks.
- The ongoing need to further improve the effectiveness of how young offenders, and particularly persistent young offenders, are dealt with, as they are responsible for a significant amount of crime.

Housing and the Built Environment

The SW Regional Planning Guidance requires Wiltshire and Swindon to build, on average, 3,000 dwellings a year up to 2016, subject to any review of the Guidance. This represents a lower rate of building than is allowed for in the Structure Plan 1991-2011, which provides for 3,350 dwellings per year in Wiltshire and Swindon (67,000 in total).

Table 4 – **The distribution of house building in Wiltshire**

District	1991– 2011 allocation (gross)	Built as at April 2002 (11 years)	Remaining to be built (9 years)
Kennet	about 7,000	3,687	3,313 (47%)
West Wiltshire	14,000	6,991	7,009 (50%)
North Wiltshire	13,500	7,651	5,849 (43%)
Salisbury	9,500	5,551	3,949 (42%)

Wiltshire, being on the edge of the SE region, and within the M4 corridor is experiencing fast growth. The Structure Plan (January 2001) notes that Wiltshire including Swindon is one of the 10 fastest growing counties in the country, for both housing and employment. As noted in the introductory section of this paper, housing is being directed specifically at existing larger settlements, as this is likely to provide the most sustainable pattern of development. Consequently, the largest settlements in each district (Trowbridge, Chippenham, Devizes and Salisbury) are planned to expand most. Wiltshire is predominantly a place of small to medium-

sized market towns, but it is possible that this level and rate of development will alter this character, and lead to the creation of suburbs in the larger towns, which will begin to require their own local services (e.g. libraries, shops, etc.), and start to become detached from their town centres. Although it could be observed that the current rate of building is lower than when the new estates of the 1960s and 1970s were built.

House prices have been rising significantly in Wiltshire, but as was noted under the 'Economy' section, the county has relatively low rates of pay. This means that those that are tied to particularly lower quality jobs in Wiltshire will fall further and further behind the buying capacity of in-migrants moving from more expensive (often SE regional) areas, and from out-commuters who can command higher salaries in surrounding counties. Providing affordable housing for lower paid residents of Wiltshire is a crucial issue.

District Council housing strategies admit that despite successes in enabling affordable housing, new provision has not been able to compensate for losses due to the Right to Buy policy, particularly in rural areas, and the relative proportion of social housing to total housing stock has in some cases declined in recent years. Estimates of the need for affordable housing, to rent or to buy, suggest that a significant proportion of each district's new housing would have to be affordable if need is to be met. This is unlikely to be achievable, but does point to the importance of seeking to secure as much affordable housing as possible as part of new developments, either on site, or on other sites funded by commuted payments by developers. One and two bedroom smaller properties are especially needed to enable young people to stay within their communities.

Housing authorities in Wiltshire and Swindon are co-operating in producing a co-ordinated approach to supporting people with special housing needs – the homeless, elderly people, disabled people, women who have been the victims of domestic violence, etc. The Wiltshire and Swindon Supporting People Team has produced a Supporting People (Shadow) Strategy. The strategy identifies the need to assess the adequacy of temporary accommodation for vulnerable people leaving prison, women leaving abusing partners, 16-17 year olds who have no housing, etc. in Wiltshire, and recognises that a co-ordinated approach to providing floating support for particular client groups e.g. the elderly in their own homes, is preferred to more institutional solutions like sheltered housing. There is also the Care Direct project whereby vulnerable people can access a wide range of assistance through a single telephone number.

Strategic housing issues

- Integrating both the scale, design and layout of new housing into existing settlements in a way that enhances rather than damages the essential character and scale of particular Wiltshire towns
- How to bridge the gap between the estimated need for affordable housing in Wiltshire's towns and villages, and the level of supply existing resources have been able to achieve?
- Meeting the Decency standard for all social housing by 2010, including energy efficiency standards.

- As one of the major town centre redevelopment opportunities in Wiltshire, to ensure that the ‘Vision for Trowbridge’ is successfully implemented, so that it has an image and environment commensurate with its status as the county town, and as a major focus of housing development in the county.
- How to ensure that sustainable housing construction is incorporated into new housing development, e.g. water conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy including passive solar, sustainable materials, and the creation of wildlife areas and green space?
- Re-examine Wiltshire’s capacity to absorb new housing at the rate and on the scale arising from the review of Regional Planning Guidance to 2021 and beyond, given that the options for siting new development are severely constrained due to the inadequacy of existing transport infrastructure, and the large part of the county that is protected from significant development by landscape conservation designations. Given the likely scale and nature of economic development, will Wiltshire be progressively acting as a dormitory for neighbouring areas?
- Can Wiltshire’s existing total housing stock be significantly improved in terms of energy efficiency, and, if so, how can this be achieved? As well as meeting statutory environmental targets, this also brings a wide range of other benefits including savings on energy bills, creation of employment and health improvements. Should we be considering bringing together all work on energy-related issues (e.g. housing, economic development, etc.) to give the issue greater momentum and a higher profile?
- How to minimise the take of greenfield sites for new development in a county where there are limited opportunities to use previously developed sites?

Social Care and Health

a) Social Care

Waiting lists for placements of older people in residential and nursing care are an on-going problem, caused by shortage of funding and by the changing market within the care industry. At 8th March 2002 the waiting list was 174. Over the last three years the capacity available to Social Services in the independent sector reduced by 15%. Similarly, unit costs for residential and nursing care for people with learning disabilities more than doubled between 1998/9 and 2000/01.

A report of the Joint Review of Social Services in Wiltshire (October 2000) noted that ‘where the Authority continues to miss out is in respect of childcare services for the garrison towns. Most recently, the cost of the additional work created by the transient population of these towns, over and above that which might be demographically expected ... was calculated at £598,000 per annum. This shortfall will be exacerbated by the projected expansion of the garrison towns (p.68). The report also stated that given this situation ‘it would be advantageous to have the Army more formally involved in the [service] planning process’ (p.34).

In 2011 there will be over 22,000 people in Wiltshire aged 80 or over, an increase of 20% on the 2001 figure. This will mean that the trend whereby available resources are progressively concentrated on those with very high levels of need will continue. At present approximately 1,500 older people are supported in residential and nursing home care, and 5,800 are supported in their own homes, this contrasts with the figure of 54,865 residents in Wiltshire and Swindon who considered themselves to have a limiting long-term illness or disability.

Similarly, in child care approximately 260 children are “looked after” at any one time, although over recent months this has risen by 5% in line with national trends. This figure is comparatively small by national standards, but it is crucial that it does not grow if standards of care are to be maintained within existing resources. Already there are difficulties in recruiting and retaining sufficient foster Carers able to care for the increasingly complex needs of looked after children, and this is reflected in growing expenditure on agency placements.

Strategic Social Care Issues

- Meeting the needs of the growing number of over 80’s.
- Resolving problems in the working of residential and nursing care market, and in the funding of Social Services placements such that there are sufficient numbers of beds at affordable rates.
- Resolving the issue of underfunding with respect to the child care needs of Wiltshire’s garrison towns.
- The need to ensure that preventive work with families is effective in avoiding the need to look after increasing numbers of children, as the latter absorbs a disproportionate amount of scarce resource within the service.

Health

Table 5 – Standardised Mortality Rates (SMR) for selected causes of death in Wiltshire and Swindon – pooled years 1998 – 2000

Condition	SMR (100 = England and Wales average)	Average number per year
Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)	98	1267
Stroke	91	562
All cancers	80	1399
Lung cancer	80	269
Breast cancer (f)	98	128
Malignant melanoma – skin – male	111	10
Malignant melanoma – skin – female	105	9
Colorectal cancer – male	99	87
Colorectal cancer – female	109	87
Prostate cancer – male	106	102
Road traffic accidents	107	37
Suicide and undetermined – male	79.9	32
Deaths under 1 year of age (in 2000)*	5.7	40
All causes mortality	94	5824

*Deaths per 1000 live births.

Source: Compendium of Clinical and Health Indicators 2001.

The main causes of death, as elsewhere, are coronary heart disease, cancer and stroke. As can be seen from the overall index of mortality Wiltshire and Swindon people are dying less frequently from the main causes of death than the average for England and Wales. Life expectancy in 1997-99 was also good with males living 76.5 years (13th out of 123 health authorities) and females 80.7 (33rd out of 123 health authorities).

As well as mortality rates, another indicator of health is self reporting of limiting long-term illness (LLTI) in the 1991 Census. For Wiltshire and Swindon the indirectly age-standardised index was 83.9 against a figure of 100 for England. 54,865 or 10.5% of all residents reported having an illness that restricted their lives. Within Wiltshire, Kennet had the lowest index at 76.2 and West Wiltshire the highest at 82.2 (Swindon had an index of 95.0). The Annual Report (1997) of the Director of Public Health for the Wiltshire Health Authority noted that ‘at the aggregate population level in the community areas, the lower the average income for economically active residents, the higher tended to be the level of self-reported LLTI over all ages (p.31)’. There is a lack of information of what people were suffering from but other evidence suggests that it is likely that the following will be common conditions:- mental health problems, especially depression; endocrine disease – diabetes; back pain and other skeletal/muscular disorders e.g. rheumatism and arthritis, etc; and asthma and other respiratory disorders. Evidence could be gleaned from G.P. records and prescribing patterns, and hospital admissions and activity data. Preventive programmes could then be focussed on the antecedent causes or predisposing factors, especially those where diet or exercise regimes, smoking reduction, etc. could reduce future risk. Increasing levels of obesity in society are being seen as a major threat to public health.

As with Social Services provision, the growing proportion of the population who are aged over 80 years will create a greater demand for health services.

Strategic health issues

- The need to devise a standard public health profile of Wiltshire residents that allows changes in health status of the population to be reliably tracked over time, at the county, district and community area levels.
- Determining the future role, number and location of local hospitals.
- How to assess and influence the quality of the district general hospitals that are used by Wiltshire people?
- How to prepare for the increase in demand that will come with the growing number of elderly people aged over 80 years?
- The need to develop a fuller understanding of how illness and deprivation are linked in the Wiltshire context. The Wanless report estimated that a switch from curative to preventative medicine could save £30 billion per annum, nationally, within 20 years.
- The need to have a joint public health strategy that creates a co-ordinated approach to preventive activity in the county.
- The shortage of NHS dentistry services in many areas, particularly for adults.

Education, Skills and Learning

Pupil performance is improving but is uneven. Results in Key Stage 2 (11 year olds) “dipped” nationally in 2001, and Wiltshire was no exception, but have improved again in 2002. Results at this stage are broadly in line with national averages, but are below those found in comparable LEAs.

Attainment at Key Stage 3 (14 year olds) is above national averages.

The percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades in GCSE examinations continues to be well above national averages, and better than our comparator Councils. The % has risen by 4.9% between 1997-2001.

It has been demonstrated that the experience of learning at school crucially affects later attitudes to learning and training, post 16.

“A” levels, and similar academic and vocational qualifications achieved by 17 and 18 year olds – Wiltshire is significantly above the national average in terms of points scored. Numbers of examination entries are another important factor, but changes in statistical reporting make time series comparisons problematic.

During the last 18 months the number of schools in special measures has been reduced to three, and only one school has been placed in this category since November 2000. In the same period, up to September 2002, the numbers of schools with serious weaknesses has been reduced to seven.

The local Learning and Skills Council’s Local Strategic Plan largely deals with Wiltshire and Swindon together for post-16 and adult learning but states that:

- participation in structured learning by 16 and 17 year olds is the 7th lowest of the 47 local LSC areas, and lower than any neighbouring area. There are indications that this problem is particularly concentrated in Swindon, where it appears that more 16 year olds enter (particularly retail) employment without structured learning than is the case regionally, and nationally.
- The Basic Skills Agency has estimated that 79,000 adults in Wiltshire and Swindon have poor literacy skills, and 78,000 have poor numeracy skills. These figures are comparable to the regional averages, but below national averages. On the assumption that those with higher skills are more mobile, it may be the case that these people will have gone to school and worked in Wiltshire all their lives.

The Strategy also gives evidence to show that women are more likely than males to be part of the 26% of the workforce who have no formal qualifications, and are also more likely to have NVQ level 2 as their highest qualification. At NVQ level 3 or equivalent there are more males, and females are under-represented. Higher education expansion has led to significant expansion of those qualified to NVQ level 4 above, although some employers regret the lack of work-based intermediate skills that graduates lack. 19.1% of the working age population held level 3

qualifications, and 27.6% held level 4 in May 2001. Both figures are above regional and national averages.

The strategy notes that “the anomaly between the higher achievement rates of adults and lower achievement rates of young people is partly explained by inward migration of higher skilled workers servicing the economy, particularly in Swindon. This effect is less evident at lower skills levels, for example, [where] local basic skills levels are similar to the national levels.”

Over a half of the economically active population hold general/academic qualifications, with only a quarter having vocational qualifications.

One of the key issues is that those that need training the most, are the least likely to engage in training. 50% of unskilled workers and 31% of semi-skilled workers are non-learners. Local FE college research found that non-learners, as national research confirms, are more likely to be older (over 45/50), lower socio-economic groups and males. Significantly, there will be nearly 17,000 more people aged 50 and over in the Wiltshire workforce in 2011, than there were in 1996.

Conversely, nationally, it has been shown that those with higher skills, those in larger firms, and younger people are more likely to participate in training. 30% of those in “professional” occupations participate in training. Wiltshire’s economy has few large firms, and is characterised by small, medium-sized, and micro-businesses. Such firms are the least likely to provide training. There is a risk of perpetuating a situation whereby those in low skills jobs are tied to the local area, and to low pay, but are, inadvertently, inhibiting the attraction of higher quality jobs that would require the demonstration of the availability of higher skills levels to move into the area. The choice of Wiltshire and Swindon as one of the national pilots for the Employer Training initiative, which is particularly focussed at those with NVQ level 2 or below qualifications should assist with this issue.

High economic rates and low unemployment has led to a tight labour market in Wiltshire with rates of skills shortages and skills gaps amongst the highest reported for any LSC area. No sector is immune from skill shortages vacancies but skills shortage vacancies are particularly concentrated in manufacturing, construction, business services, and health and social care. There is a general lack of ICT skills.

There is anecdotal evidence that Wiltshire graduates are not being attracted back to Wiltshire but are seeking opportunities in cities, only returning, if at all, in their middle years with young families, along with other professional and managerial contemporaries who had no previous local ties, seeking a more rural lifestyle. Again, this suggests a “two tiered” economy with the poorer quality jobs being taken up by those who did not achieve sufficient qualifications to be mobile in employment terms, whereas the better jobs are part of a wider market that includes the south east and the M4 corridor, and in many cases the whole country. A key challenge will be to create local career structures that will attract back Wiltshire graduates to the area. The Bath University in Swindon project may be a key part of this strategy, when combined with the spin-off business that will hopefully be created across the county as a result of the University’s presence, especially in such key areas as biotechnology. GWE is managing a two year biotechnology skills and training project, and the LSC’s Local Training Network.

The level of out-commuting in Wiltshire (35,800) workers a day travelling to workplaces outside Wiltshire in 1991), represents both a skills loss, but also can be seen as a resource that could be attracted back to take up local employment in Wiltshire, if the employment is of the right kind. These people could also be potential starters of local businesses if the right support is available.

Strategic education, skills and learning issues

- The need to continue to improve educational attainment levels at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and at GCSE and A level, and equivalent vocational examinations, in response to PSA, national and local targets.
- The need to address low post-16 participation rates in structured learning where this is a problem in Wiltshire, and to motivate those who are tied to lower quality jobs to improve their skills. This may be as part of a more general regenerative strategy in those neighbourhoods where there is evidence of multiple problems, deprivation and isolation. There are generally lower rates of pupils continuing in structured education post 16 if they attended schools that didn't have a sixth form.
- To address the lack of basic skills in numeracy and literacy in a significant section of the adult population.
- To particularly focus training on women who have no formal qualifications, or have not progressed beyond NVQ Level 2.
- To bring the review of the three tier system of education to a satisfactory conclusion in south Wiltshire.
- To creatively use the new flexibilities offered by the new Education Act to promote new forms of relationship between rural schools, that will increase their economy, effectiveness and viability.
- The need to address skills levels in manufacturing, so as to demonstrate higher value-added per employee to justify UK and in particular Wiltshire operations.
- To ensure that there is adequate resource to cope with the educational issues associated with the high turn-over of pupils in the garrison towns (and in other towns where new housing has led to shifts of populations within towns).

Countryside and Land-Based Issues

(a) Farming

Wiltshire is an agricultural county with 82.5% of its area being farmed in 1999, by 3,282 farm holdings. The farm size structure in Wiltshire is distinctive, with the most common size class being holdings of less than 20 hectares, which total 43% of holdings but only 3.6% of the agricultural area. Of this 43%, 28% are holdings of less than 5 hectares, which seem to be either specialist farms (e.g. mushrooms) or more commonly, those that are not economically significant, i.e. lifestyle or hobby farms.

At the other extreme, 214 holdings farm 41.3% of the agricultural area. These large farms are particularly associated with cereal, and in particular, wheat production. Associated with this is also a greater area of temporary grassland (8.3%) in the county than in the south west as a whole, probably indicating that such grassland is part of the arable crop rotation.

In the period 1981-1999, dairy cows numbers have declined by over 30%, whereas the breeding beef herd has increased by 70% as compared to a figure of about 50% for England as a whole, in the same period. The numbers of sheep rose to a peak in 1989 of 50% above 1981 figures before falling to just 10% above that baseline in 1999. The pattern for England as a whole was less volatile. The impact of the Foot and Mouth epidemic on longer terms trends is uncertain.

Overall, the county differs from the south west region in that it has fewer cattle and sheep farms (22% cf 35% for the region) and twice as many cropping farms (20% cf 9% for the south west). This results in over half the agricultural area being covered by either winter cereals or permanent grassland.

The total agricultural labour force in the year 2000 was 7,010, a 19% decrease in the 1990 figure, of these, 2,115 are employees (other than regular family workers), with 1,463 being full-time and 652 being part-time. Only 28% of holdings have employed labour.

Farm incomes are currently low. The key factors that will affect future profitability will be the level of subsidy, the strength of sterling, and the state of world food commodity markets, as influenced by international trade agreements.

The long-term prospects for commodity production, which will remain the mainstay of farming incomes, are not good. Applied technology has steadily increased the supply of products into a market which, in the developed world at least, is fully supplied. This will result in a continuation of the trend where some farmers will go out of business, with consequent farm amalgamation. In general, commodity production will favour large-scale producers. Alternatively, some farmers will seek to use farm resources to generate sources of income other than from commodity food production. It is in relation to this latter option that there is most scope for local advice, support and encouragement. Initiatives connected with the growing demand for local food, and other niche markets, illustrates the potential.

(b) Biodiversity

As we have seen, the vast majority of the county consists of farmland, and so changes in farm practices are the most significant influence on overall biodiversity. In general, arable farmland and improved grassland are with the exception of a relict arable weed flora, poor in plant diversity, but are important for the farmland birds, especially the stone curlew, corn bunting and tree sparrow, and for the brown hare.

The public interest in biodiversity is demonstrated by the fact that Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has 10,000 members, making it the largest voluntary organisation in the county.

One third of People's Voice respondents expressed a wish to get involved in environmental projects.

The county is estimated to contain 55% of the remaining calcareous (chalk and limestone) grassland in England. A significant part of this area lies within the MOD areas of the Salisbury Plain Training Area and Porton Down. Some national rarities have their stronghold in Wiltshire, including such species as the early gentian, juniper, bastard toadflax, marsh fritillary and the Adonis, chalkhill, small blue and silver-spotted skipper butterflies.

Clattinger Farm, and North Meadow in the Thames and Avon Vales provide rare examples of unimproved neutral grassland that is seasonally inundated. 80% of the remaining UK snakeshead fritillary population occurs in the county. After Oxfordshire, Wiltshire has the largest area of neutral grassland of any county in the UK.

Wiltshire chalk streams and winterbournes and their associated crowfoot communities are of national importance, as are their water vole and Desmoulin whorl snail populations. There is a need for a county-wide co-ordinated approach to reduce diffuse pollution from soil erosion, road drainage, and down wash of slurries and other wastes entering these streams.

Wiltshire contains remnants of several royal hunting forests at Savernake, Chute, Braydon, Groveley and Buckholt, which were managed as wood-pasture for deer. Several former woodland areas were converted to parkland, e.g. Stourhead, Longleat and Bowood. These are likely to contain our most important ancient trees.

The Cotswold Water Park, only a part of which is in Wiltshire, is one of the few areas of open water in the county, and is becoming an important site for waders and nesting birds, otters and water voles.

Wiltshire is also important for bats, particularly at Chilmark and at the Box and Winsley stone mines, and for particular species of bees.

The chief causes of species decline are intensive farming leading to fragmentation of wildlife sites, and practices inimical to species habitat needs, e.g. winter as opposed to spring planting of cereals, and land drainage. Other factors are development (roads and housing) and increased rural leisure.

The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan was launched in 2002 after several years of development.

(c) Waste

81% of municipal waste is currently landfilled and 19% recycled/composted in Wiltshire. The Government has set ambitious recycling targets for the household waste element (which currently amounts to 240,000 tonnes, 95% of all municipal waste) to reduce the amount that goes to landfill. Household waste, due to the increasing population and increased consumer spending, is currently growing at 5% a year, so the recycling targets

represent an increasing proportion of an increasing amount of waste each year. Currently, it costs £12m a year to collect and dispose of Wiltshire's waste, of which £2.5m is a Landfill Tax to Government. This cost is equivalent to about £68 per household.

The County Council's contract with Hill's Waste is unusual in that it includes the costs of recycling agreed tonnages. In most County Councils the costs of recycling are additional to disposal.

In its national Waste Strategy 2000 the Government has set targets for the future management of municipal waste to reduce the amounts landfilled which includes recovering value (by recycling, composting and energy from waste) from 40% of municipal waste by 2005/06. Of this at least 30% must be recycled, and the balance of 10% can be achieved by recycling, or "other" recovery processes, e.g. waste to energy.

Local authorities in Wiltshire have agreed a pooled recycling target of 33% as this makes it easier to focus effort in urban areas where it is easier to make progress than in dispersed rural areas. It also allows a focus on North and West Wiltshire where recycling rates achieved to date have been lower than in the other two districts. The Government's insistence on a high level of recycling, the most expensive form of disposal by far, means that the costs to Wiltshire authorities will be unrealistic. By the year 2005/06 there will be a requirement to recycle or recover 40% of the household waste collected in Wiltshire. In total the cost to the County Council for waste disposal will be £16m of which £2.6m will be Landfill Tax. The sharing of the recycling element of this cost with the four districts results in sums that are too high, particularly for the district councils, to bear without further Government support.

(d) Minerals Extraction

The bulk of the minerals which are extracted in the county are required for use as aggregates – bulk granular materials such as sand and gravel which are used in the construction industry for purposes such as the making of concrete and concrete products, mortar and asphalt, or for constructional fill material, or drainage media (e.g. railway ballast). Extract has to follow geology. The most significant sites in the County are the Cotswold Water Park for sharp sand and gravel; quarries east of Calne for soft sand; and clay and chalk extraction at Westbury. Significant freight movements in the county are associated with minerals extraction, particularly in the Cotswold Water Park and the east Mendips in Somerset. Extraction activities are progressively becoming concentrated in fewer and larger sites.

(e) Rural Facilities

Wiltshire has 351 villages and hamlets, of which 314 (89%) have populations of 1000 or less, and 189 (54%) have 250 or fewer residents.

The 1997 Rural Facilities Survey showed that while there had been an increase since 1976 in some commercial facilities – mobile shops and services, and commercial services (e.g. fish and chip shop, independent garage workshop, hairdressers, video shops, etc.) –

and increases in the public use of school halls, and in health clinics, there were marked losses in some basic facilities. For example, there are now about 35% less post offices and 55% less general food shops in villages than there were in 1976.

The community areas that experienced an overall loss of facilities are in North and West Wiltshire districts, on the other hand, the loss of “basic” facilities – i.e. general food shop, post office, primary school and journey to work transport – has been more widespread. In 1997 only 70 (20%) villages had all these facilities compared to 113 in 1986. Local studies have shown that, in general, the larger villages are able to support a wider range of facilities, but that the relationship between new housebuilding and the retention of facilities is complex as greater use of the car has led to the loosening of ties between where people live, work and shop. This has led to a policy within the Structure Plan that encourages an approach based on an assessment of the local circumstances of individual villages or groups of villages, regardless of their size. Similarly, small employment developments will be allowed where this creates local employment. Between 1991 to 2011 it is estimated that the rural share of house building will be broadly 15% of the total, or about 500 houses a year, this represents a fall in the rate that was experienced between 1978 and 1991 of 20%. New housing will normally be on infill, gap or redevelopment sites, and in many villages, the structure plan states ‘there would be advantages in encouraging the construction of smaller houses, affordable by a wider range of residents’ (p.64).

Comparisons between Wiltshire and England as a whole indicates that the incidence of key services is similar to the national average.

Strategic Countryside and land-based issues

- Assisting farmers, particularly those unable to compete in producing commodities for sale on the international market, to diversify their businesses in order to remain profitable, and, where possible, create greater employment choice for local people.
- To give particular emphasis to increasing the amount and range of Wiltshire produce that is consumed within the county.
- To encourage the widest possible uptake of agri-environmental schemes by Wiltshire farmers, and to develop a Wiltshire brand that links farm and woodland products to environmental benefits.
- To ensure that the growth of garrison towns envisaged by Project Allenby doesn’t lead to a more intensive use of the Salisbury Plain Training Area in a way that would damage its internationally important chalk downland habitat.
- How to achieve improvements in waste recycling levels, but at a pace and cost that is affordable locally? There could be a growing role for community enterprise in this. The need to negotiate with Government extra funding for waste recycling and recovery, including the opportunity to reinvest the Landfill Tax paid by Wiltshire people to benefit local recycling schemes and facilities. Also to agree with Government how green waste

diverted from the waste stream through home composting can be acknowledged as a contribution to the achievement of the national recycling targets.

- The need to provide support for the retention of rural shops, post offices and other basic local facilities, in order to meet the needs of those who find it difficult to travel to local towns to access services. Also, to find innovative alternative ways of delivering these services through outreach, mobile services, combining services, and through the use of ICT.
- How to respond to the Government's regional and national targets of 15% of energy to come from renewables.
- To resolve the future of the County Farms estate so that it contributes to the future of farming and the rural economy in the county.
- How to maximise the opportunities provided by Rural Renaissance, LEADER +, and the AONB Management plans to assist the rural economy, and to promote landscape quality and biodiversity in their respective areas?
- Public concern over the safety and impact on wildlife of genetically-modified (GM) crops and animals.

Culture

This theme is one of the most unresolved of the 8 themes, partly due to the broadness of the definition promoted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which includes sport, the arts, libraries, museums, landscape conservation, festivals and attractions, archaeology and the built heritage, architecture, parks and open spaces, countryside recreation, children's play, etc. There is no single criteria which unites all these disparate activities into a single concept. There are, at least, 4 strands within the definition –

- (i) recreation, and leisure – this will include sporting activities, countryside recreation such as horse riding and walking, parks, children's play, etc.
- (ii) local creativity – covering local writers and playwrights, photographers, artists, galleries, film makers, comedians, sculptors, musicians, theatres, arts festivals, reading groups, dance, small publication presses, etc. In certain areas these activities could be enlisted in the service of a wider community regeneration approach.
- (iii) local distinctiveness – this will include local archaeological remains, local history, museums, local building styles and materials, landscape, local traditions and folklore, local food, etc.
- (iv) links to local economy – cultural activities can be seen as key contributors to the local economy, e.g. tourism, Avebury/Stonehenge World Heritage Site, Salisbury Cathedral. This strand feeds off the other three.

Furthermore, people nowadays have a wide range of ways in which they can create their own individual cultures through the use of television, the internet, travel, reading, video, cinema, recorded music. People are no longer solely dependent on local performances of plays, music, or on seeing the originals of paintings. Much popular culture has an urban source, and this is central to its appeal, particularly to young people. As Howard Newby stated, somewhat controversially, in his book 'Green and Pleasant Land', 'Only in terms of land use is rural England now agricultural England. In all other senses – economically, occupationally, socially, culturally – rural England has been comprehensively 'urbanised' (p.302).

District and County Councils have to prepare 'cultural strategies, either together or separately'. This process is currently underway, and should begin to clarify where public bodies can best facilitate and support the further development of a lively and dynamic cultural scene within Wiltshire.

Some facts and figures –

- There are thirty static libraries and four mobile libraries which make 14,000 stops each. A new approach to providing the mobile service, called 'Mobile Plus' is about to be trialled.
- In 2000/01 the library service loaned 3.3 million books and other materials to 150,000 members.
- Wiltshire libraries received 828,000 information enquiries during the year.
- There is a Wiltshire Music Centre in Bradford on Avon, and theatres in Salisbury, Trowbridge and Devizes.
- District Councils provide sports and leisure centres, and grants and development programmes for sport and the arts, including local events and festivals. The County Council contributes support to some of the same festivals and arts events.
- The Record Office contains 7 miles of shelving, containing archives and public records.
- There are 20,600 sites of archaeological interest in the county.
- There are, at least, 18 museums in the county, with Devizes and Salisbury containing collections of national importance.

Strategic cultural issues

- The successful replacement of the existing Records Office.
- Completion of the Gateway to Wiltshire's Heritage and Culture project by 2004. The project will enable web-based access to both the Photographic and Archive collections and also enable local museums to feature more of their records and exhibits on the

internet. It will also include the digitalising of local history records on CD-Rom to make them more universally available.

- Completion of project, funded through the New Opportunities Fund, of allowing the public internet access in all public libraries by December, 2002.
- Addressing the lack of a multiplex cinema in western Wiltshire.
- The need to bring to a successful conclusion the Stonehenge Visitor Centre project, and associated road works.
- Need to address the high drop out rate of young people in sport, and to encourage greater participation, particularly by ethnic minority people, women and elderly people.
- The need to improve access to cultural and leisure opportunities, particularly for those in rural areas.
- Need to provide a greater range of leisure activities for young children and teenagers.
- Need to maximise the contribution of cultural and sporting activities to other themes, particularly health and the economy.