

Swindon Local Plan Review

Issues and Options Consultation

Agenda Item 16: Local Plan Issues and Options: Appendix 1 – Swindon Borough Consultation Paper

This document may be viewed or downloaded from our website **[address]**.

Copies of this document may be purchased from Swindon Borough Council. To request a copy, please either:

Write to: Planning Policy, Swindon Borough Council, Wat Tyler West, Beckhampton Street, Swindon

Telephone: 01793 46 6513

E-mail: forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk

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1. Foreword

This consultation is the first stage of the Swindon Local Plan Review, which will update the current Local Plan to provide a new policy framework for planning and development in the Borough up to 2036.

It is only two years since the Council adopted the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026. However, at the Local Plan examination, the report of the planning inspector recorded that the Council agreed to undertake an early review of the plan to extend the plan period to an appropriately long term end date in line with national policy.

At the national level, the Government is giving high priority to increasing housing delivery. Having up to date Local Plans in place ensures that development is planned and supports the ability of the Councils to shape sustainable growth. It is therefore important that the Council begins work to review the Local Plan, so that we remain in control and can identify where and how any outstanding housing needs can best be met.

The starting point for the Local Plan Review is therefore that some additional growth is needed for our area. At this stage we are not aware of the scale of development that we will need to allocate land for, but we need to start the plan-making process now. It is vital that development is directed to places where it will provide for the needs of our local communities, whilst protecting and enhancing the overall character and environment of the Borough. It is also important to ensure that the new development is fully supported by infrastructure improvements, for example to roads, wastewater and flood measures.

The issues in preparing a new plan are wide ranging and will involve not just the Council itself, but also many other organisations and individuals. This Issues and Options consultation provides an opportunity to get involved and give your views and comments. This is the first stage in shaping the Local Plan Review and no decisions have yet been made. Please respond to this consultation and your comments will be considered and will help us to develop preferred policy options in a draft plan.

2. Introduction

2.0.1 The Council has started work on a new Local Plan Review, which will provide the policy framework for planning and development in the Borough in the period up to 2036 as shown in the map below. This consultation provides an opportunity to help shape the future of the area. The Local Plan Review will:

- Set out a long term vision and objectives for the area.
- Provide a strategy for growth to deliver new homes, jobs, local facilities and infrastructure to meet the area's needs.
- Include policies to manage the future change whilst protecting and enhancing the area's outstanding heritage and natural environment.

2.1 Why do we need a Local Plan Review?

2.1.1 In March 2015, the Council adopted the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 which provided new planning policies and a strategy to deliver nearly 22,000 new homes and just under 80 hectares of additional employment land. However, at the Local Plan examination, the Council committed to an early review of the Plan in order to ensure development provision looks to an appropriate long term end date. In addition to providing further housing, the Local Plan Review will consider other development needs and, where necessary, review and update current planning policies. The Council is aiming to adopt the new Local Plan by the end of 2021. This consultation is the first stage of the Local Plan Review.

2.1.2 The Local Plan 2026 can be viewed on the Council's [website](#).

Swindon Local Plan Review Area

Insert map of Borough

2.2 How will the Review affect the current Local Plan Policies?

- 2.2.1 It is intended that the Local Plan Review once adopted will replace the Local Plan 2026. Much of what is in the existing Local Plan will be carried forward, including the key strategic developments at Commonhead, Tadpole Farm, Wichelstowe, the New Eastern Villages and Kingsdown. However, the requirement to plan for additional housing means that the overall development strategy will need to be updated, as will the policies to deliver supporting infrastructure and facilities. The Local Plan Review will also provide an opportunity to consider other policies in the current Plan to assess whether any other policy changes are needed.

2.3 What is this consultation about?

- 2.3.1 We are seeking comments and information that will help us to develop a draft strategy and policies to be included in the Local Plan Review. At this stage, the Council has not formed views on which sites and locations should be allocated for new development or how existing policies should be updated. The consultation responses that we receive will contribute to our work in preparing the Local Plan Review and will also help to inform what further evidence may be necessary. We will be providing further opportunities to comment on the emerging Local Plan Review strategy and policies as these are developed later in the Plan Review process.

2.4 National Planning Policy

- 2.4.1 The Council wants the Local Plan Review to reflect the choices and aspirations of the local community. However, the Plan must comply with a number of specific requirements set out in national planning policy. It must:
- reflect national planning policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated planning policy guidance;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and be supported by a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment;
 - aim to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements; have regard to the other strategies of the Council and its partners;
 - demonstrate joint working on cross-boundary issues;
 - take into account evidence of environmental constraints on development and the need to conserve the built and natural heritage;
 - be deliverable within the Plan period taking account of identified constraints, infrastructure
 - requirements and viability considerations.

2.5 Strategic Planning and the Duty to Cooperate

- 2.5.1 The Local Plan Review must be prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, which sets a legal duty for the Council and other public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis on planning issues which affect more than one local planning authority. To meet the Duty to Cooperate, the Council will need to work with Wiltshire Council and other neighbouring Local Authorities, statutory advisory bodies (the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England and Highways England) and other infrastructure providers to ensure that the Local Plan address cross-boundary issues and reflects wider strategic priorities. The Council will also consult with parish and town councils, residents and businesses, including working with those which have chosen to prepare neighbourhood plans.
- 2.5.2 For the current (adopted) plan, joint working was undertaken on an informal basis with Wiltshire Council, which culminated in agreement at examination of Statements of Common Ground between the two authorities. However, given the functional geographies it is considered that a different, more robust, approach is now required to ensure a sound basis for plan making.
- 2.5.3 The suggested approach to joint working is to pursue separate but aligned plans alongside a joint non-statutory framework. This is considered to be the most effective and proportionate option for Wiltshire and Swindon. A Joint Strategic Framework Issues and Options Consultation Paper has been produced jointly with Wiltshire Council and is available at: **[insert website address]**

2.6 Challenges facing the Local Plan Review Area

- 2.6.1 The most important challenge facing the Local Plan Review is to deliver growth and development to meet local needs, whilst protecting and enhancing the area's character, environment and heritage. More specifically, the Local Plan Review will need to:
- Deliver sufficient new housing to address the future needs of the area;
 - Provide a range of housing that meets the needs of local people, including affordable housing and specialist accommodation (including housing for older people and gypsy and traveller sites);
 - Provide land and premises to enable local businesses to grow and to support and diversify the local economy, including delivering the regeneration of Swindon Town Centre
 - Ensure that new or improved infrastructure is delivered to support the planned new development, including transport improvements and increased wastewater capacity; Plan for improved local facilities to meet the needs of the growing population; Provide for new and improved open space and green infrastructure;
 - Preserve the attractive landscapes of the area, including the North Wessex Downs (AONB)

- Protect and enhance the area's biodiversity and habitats, including designated areas of international and national importance;
- Conserve the area's outstanding heritage and historic assets.

2.7 What Local Plan Review work is being undertaken?

2.7.1 The Council is at an early stage in the Local Plan Review, but is undertaking a number of studies to provide evidence for developing the Plan strategy and policies. Further studies and evidence work will be undertaken at later stages of the Plan process. Key evidence to support the Local Plan Review will include:

- Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (produced jointly with Wiltshire Council)
- Functional Economic Market Area Assessment (produced jointly with Wiltshire Council)
- Employment Land Review Study
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
- Wastewater Treatment Study
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
- Transport Assessment
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Whole Plan Viability Analysis

2.8 Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Assessment

2.8.1 Sustainability appraisal is a key element in developing the Local Plan Review strategy and policies. The Council is legally required to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of all proposals in order to help assess how the Plan Review will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, by contributing to relevant economic, social and environmental objectives. The Council has prepared a Sustainability Appraisal scoping report and framework for the Local Plan Review.

2.8.2 Additionally, the Council will need to carry out scoping to establish whether the plan policies are likely to have a significant effect on European protected habitats or species. If significant effects are likely an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations would need to be done.

2.8.3 Further Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment will be carried out at each stage of Local Plan Review process.

2.9 How will the Local Plan Review affect Neighbourhood Plans?

2.9.1 A number of parishes within the Borough have 'made' or are preparing neighbourhood plans in accordance with the adopted Local Plan.

Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted local plan, but can set their own policies on matters of a non-strategic nature. Once a neighbourhood plan has been 'made', the policies form part of the development plan used by the Council when determining planning applications.

- 2.9.2 As the Local Plan Review moves forward, the current neighbourhood plans may each need to be reviewed to bring them in line with the strategic requirements of the emerging Plan Review. For most parishes, this is likely to include the identification of land for development. As part of the Local Plan Review process, the Council will have discussions with each parish to ascertain how they wish to plan for new development.

2.10 How do I respond to this consultation document?

- 2.10.1 The Local Plan Review consultation will run for a six week period starting on November 6th 2017. The deadline for responses is 5pm on 18th December.

- 2.10.2 We would encourage you to provide your comments in writing via email to forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk. This is the quickest way of replying. Alternatively you can send us your comments by post by using the address below.

Forward Planning, Swindon Borough Council, 5th Floor Wat Tyler West, Beckhampton Street, Swindon SN1 2JH

- 2.10.3 In all cases you must make it very clear which part(s) of the document you are commenting on.
- 2.10.4 Please note that responding means that we will automatically notify you of future Local Plan consultations unless you request otherwise.

2.11 What happens next?

- 2.11.1 All representations received in response to this consultation will be considered in detail by the Council and published for information. Taking account of the consultation responses and further evidence work, the Council will prepare a Local Plan Review Preferred Approach document setting out a proposed development strategy and draft policies. This Preferred Approach document will then be published for further public consultation.
- 2.11.2 Once the Council has reviewed the representations made on the Preferred Approach document and then agreed the Proposed Submission Local Plan Review document, it will be published for formal representations and then submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent planning inspector. The inspector will determine if the submitted Plan has met the required legal and procedural requirements, and whether the strategy and policies are 'sound' when judged against national planning policy requirements. Subject to the Plan being found sound, the Council will then adopt it.

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2.11.3 The key stages in the preparation of the new Swindon Local Plan Review are shown in the diagram below.

Table 1 Local Plan Review Timetable

Local Plan Review		
2017	Q1	Plan Preparation & Evidence Gathering
	Q2	
	Q3	
	Q4	Issues & Options Consultation (reg. 18)
2018	Q1	Plan Preparation & Evidence Gathering
	Q2	
	Q3	
	Q4	Preferred Options Consultation (reg. 18)
2019	Q1	Submission Draft Preparation
	Q2	Submission Draft Consultation (reg.19) commences
	Q3	Final Submission Plan Preparation
	Q4	
2020	Q1	Submission (reg 22)
	Q2	Examination Process
	Q3	
	Q4	Inspector's Report
2021	Q1	Adoption

2.11.4 Further information and regular updates about the Local Plan Review will be provided in the Planning Policy section of the Council's website.

2.12 Any further queries

2.12.1 If you have any further queries regarding any of the issues raised in this document, please contact the Planning Policy team on X or email forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk.

2.13 Data Protection

2.13.1 All documents will be held at Swindon Borough Council, and representations will be published online. All responses will be publicly available and identifiable by name and organisation (where applicable). Please note that any other personal information provided will be processed by Swindon Borough Council in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

3. Questionnaire

3.1 Strategic Planning Context

- 3.1.1 The Local Plan Review must be prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, which sets a legal duty for the Council and other public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis on planning issues which affect more than one local planning authority.
- 3.1.2 As previously mentioned, for the Local Plan Review, the suggested approach to joint working with Wiltshire Council is to pursue separate but aligned plans alongside a joint non-statutory framework. This is considered to be the most effective and proportionate option for Wiltshire and Swindon.
- 3.1.3 The preparation of a Joint Spatial Framework enables effective input from community and stakeholders on cross border issues, and will inform the respective Local Plan reviews by providing a clear strategic context across the wider area.
- 3.1.4 The Joint Strategic Framework Issues and Options Consultation Paper has been produced jointly with Wiltshire Council and is available at: **[insert website address]**

Question 1.

Are there any cross-boundary planning issues that the Council should consider in preparing the Local Plan Review?

Please provide details.

3.2 Vision and Objectives

Vision

- 3.2.1 The current Local Plan 2026 sets out an overall Spatial Vision that describes the sort of place that the Plan area should be by 2026. The Vision was shaped by the challenges in the Plan area and was drawn from the Swindon Sustainable Community Strategy: A Shared Vision for Swindon, which was widely consulted on and received general support. The Vision embraces the whole community including businesses, residents and visitors and aims to provide a clear view of what the Plan should achieve and how it aims to shape places for the whole community to live, work and enjoy.
- 3.2.2 Looking ahead, we need to consider how the Vision needs to be updated for the Local Plan Review.

The Spatial Vision

“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 achievement of a high quality public realm in the heart of the town linked to the countryside will 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 at the centre of a network of multifunctional green spaces linking the town to the wider countryside. Swindon will have responded to the needs of a growing population in a way that has protected and enhanced our natural and historic environment.

People in Swindon will have the opportunity to live active, healthy and learning lifestyles.”

Question 2.

Do you agree with the Vision for the Local Plan area set out above?

Question 3.

Please suggest any changes that you think should be made to the Vision for the Local Plan Review.

Objectives

- 3.2.3 The current Local Plan sets out a set of ten Strategic Objectives¹, which reflected the main challenges in the Plan area and key issues identified from the evidence base and stakeholder comments. The Local Plan addresses how these objectives will be delivered through policies for development and land use.
- 3.2.4 Although most of the objectives for the Local Plan Review are likely to be carried forward from the current Plan, they may need to be updated to take account of changes over the past 2-3 years.

Question 4.

- a) Do you agree with the Objectives for the Plan area set out above?
- b) Please suggest any changes that you think should be made to the Objectives for the Local Plan Review.

3.3 Settlement hierarchy

- 3.3.1 The Local Plan Key Policies 2026 outlines the settlement hierarchy for the Plan area. The settlement hierarchy forms the basis for the distribution of growth outlined in the Plan, and provides a guide as to where sustainable development, infrastructure and facilities should be located.

The current Local Plan 2026 has a very simple settlement hierarchy. Policy SD2 of the Local Plan seeks to direct development to within Swindon's urban area, as the focal point for the economy, services and facilities, as well as the strategic allocations. Outside of Swindon, the Local Plan goes on to identify that rural development should be focussed primarily at Highworth and Wroughton, as the largest and most accessible of the rural settlements with the largest range of facilities. Of the remaining villages in the Borough, due to the lack of core services and facilities, the Plan permits limited development proportional to their size and function.

¹ Para 2.16 of the Local Plan 2026:

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20113/local_plan_and_planning_policy/635/swindon_borough_local_plan_2026

Question 5.

- a) Should the settlement hierarchy for the Borough as defined above be carried forward into the Local Plan Review?**
- b) Please provide any further comments.**

Question 6.

Are there any settlements that you think should be moved further up/down in the hierarchy?

Please indicate which settlements and give reasons.

3.4 Spatial Principles for Planning Development

- 3.4.1 National planning policy requires that the Local Plan Review must achieve sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities. There are three dimensions to sustainable development - economic, social and environmental – which are mutually dependent. To ensure sustainable development it will be necessary to achieve the right balance between promoting economic growth, fostering social well-being and protecting and enhancing the environment. This will involve making important choices about the location and character of new development.
- 3.4.2 In addition, development in the Local Plan Review will need to be deliverable within the Plan period. The sites that are eventually allocated for development must come forward in timely way that coordinates with the planning and delivery of infrastructure and local facilities. New development can also help to fund and deliver essential new infrastructure.

Question 7.

Are there any other important spatial principles that should guide the development strategy in the Local Plan Review?

Please provide details.

3.5 Possible Strategy Options

Distribution of existing and planned housing

- 3.5.3 The Local Plan Review will need to identify locations for housing and other development to meet identified needs up to 2036. The required level of new housing, employment and other development has not yet been determined, but will be identified through the background evidence that the Council is currently collecting.
- 3.5.4 The Council will shortly be publishing a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which will provide a detailed analysis of all potential development sites across the Plan area. This includes sites promoted in response to the Council's 'Call for Sites', as well as other identified opportunities. The SHELAA will identify which sites and locations have potential in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability for housing and economic development. This information on land availability will be used along with other evidence on constraints and infrastructure requirements to identify the most sustainable and deliverable strategy for development in the Local Plan Review.

Call for Development Sites

If you wish to promote a site for development that was not put forward to the Council in response to the 'Call for Sites' in Spring 2017.

OR

If you wish to change any details for a site that you have previously promoted through the SHELAA

Please email forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk

- 3.5.5 National government policy, which is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) prioritises the identification of land for housing that can be built on in the short term.
- 3.5.6 Councils are required by the NPPF to keep an up to date list of sites that are available for housing development now and on which there is a realistic prospect that housing will be built within the next five years. This is referred to as a five year housing land supply.
- 3.5.7 Not being able to identify enough sites to show a five year housing land supply can result in development taking place that is not in line with the Local Plan. In such circumstances, national policy favours the grant of planning permission for housing development which is not in accordance with the Local Plan.

- 3.5.8 As part of the Local Plan reviews, it is likely that we will have to prioritise some short-term sites so that we can maintain a five year housing land supply. This means that some of the additional homes that we plan for through the Local Plan reviews will be phased to be built in the short term, rather than in the extended plan period between 2026 to 2036.

Question 8

How should the Plan balance the short-term need for additional housing with the longer term development strategy for the area?

- 3.5.9 In addition to large scale developments, there will be a need to provide smaller scale housing developments to meet future needs, to support local facilities and enable local communities to grow and develop. Across the Local Plan area, there are a number of settlements and locations that may have potential to accommodate some level of additional housing. The Council would be interested in views on where and how much housing should be planned for.

Question 9

Locations for housing development

- a) Are there any specific or broad locations that you think may be suitable to accommodate housing development?**
- b) Please provide details explaining your reasons.**

3.6 The Economy

Current Local Plan policy aims

- 3.6.1 The current Local Plan seeks to develop a strong and thriving economy, improving employment opportunities for all skills and diversifying the economy.
- 3.6.2 The current Local Plan policy aims for the economy, including the Town Centre, are set out in Policy SD2 and policies EC1-EC5.
- Provide for new employment land and floorspace to support planned growth in the Plan area

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- Protect and enhance existing suitably located employment sites and premises to meet needs of modern businesses.
- Support key employment sectors and the aspiration for a University
- Protect and enhance the role of the town centre and local centres, and support town centre regeneration

3.6.3 The Local Plan Review will need to provide for new jobs to meet the changes in the economy and growing population. To achieve this, the Plan will need to allocate and identify some new land for employment uses, and support town centre regeneration, and a range of other key employment

Question 10

Local Plan Policies

- a) Do you consider that the current Local Plan policies are working to support the aims listed above?
- b) Please provide any further comments.

Question 11

Do you have any views or suggestions for how planning policies should be used to promote economic growth and/or provide for a wider range of employment opportunities?

sectors.

Employment Land Allocations

3.6.4 To meet future employment land, nearly 80 hectares of employment land is already allocated in the current Local Plan (in addition to allocations taken forward from the Local Plan 2011 and unimplemented permissions). These sites are listed below (some of which are already under development).

Table 2 Current Local Plan employment allocations

Location	Site Area (hectares)
Wichelstowe	12.5ha
Commonhead	15ha
New Eastern Villages	40ha

Tadpole Farm

5ha

- 3.6.5 The published Employment Land Review 2017 provides more detailed evidence of demand for employment land. It produces a range of scenario-based estimates for the need for office and industrial land up to 2036.
- 3.6.6 In terms of office land, the Employment Land Review shows that there is a significant amount of office development land allocated in the Wichelstowe and Commonhead urban extensions to Swindon and the Kimmerfields development in Swindon town centre. If all of this land is developed by 2036, office supply would exceed estimated requirements. However, there is evidence of a short term office land supply shortfall before those sites are developed. The Employment Land Review suggests there is an opportunity for the potential allocation of a Grade A office/business park at Swindon.
- 3.6.7 In terms of industrial land, there is a shortfall of land in the Borough to meet the upper end of the identified range identified in the Employment Land Review. There are also, potentially, some delivery challenges in meeting the lower end of the range. The Employment Land Review suggests that there is a thus potentially a need for an allocation of industrial land with good access to the M4.
- 3.6.8 The Local Plan Review will need to identify some additional employment land to support new housing development and enable the local economy and businesses to grow. The Council would be interested in any potential sites that could be developed for business, retail and leisure uses.

Question 12

Employment sites

a) Are there any other sites you think may be suitable to accommodate business (office and industrial) uses?

b) Please provide details

Retail Policies

- 3.6.9 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. However, the role of Swindon's town centre is changing, with non-retail uses also likely to play an important role.
- 3.6.10 The Local Plan review provides an opportunity for the Council to update its policies for town centres, including those for Swindon town centre, some of which are contained in the Swindon Central Area Action Plan 2009.

- 3.6.11 The current Local Plan defines Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages within Swindon Town Centre. Within the areas defined as Primary Shopping Frontages, the current policy seeks to retain a high proportion of retail uses which may exclude restaurants and cafes, whereas within Secondary Shopping Frontages a greater diversity of uses such as restaurants is allowed for.

Question 13

Do you consider that the current Local Plan policies for shopping frontages leads to a vibrant city centre or should the policy approach be altered?

Question 14

Are there any town centre or edge of centre sites available that would be suitable for retail, leisure or town centre development?

Please provide details

- 3.6.12 National planning policy requires proposals which are outside of town centres and not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan to be subject to an impact assessment to ensure they will not have a detrimental impact on the town centre. The size of development proposals which are subject to this test can be determined at a local level in Local Plans. If no local threshold is set the national threshold is 2,500sqm.

Question 15

Should we require a lower threshold for impact assessments on retail proposals or rely on the national threshold?

3.7 Housing and Accommodation

Current Local Plan policy aims

- 3.7.1 The Local Plan Review will need to deliver new housing to meet the full range of local needs, including affordable housing and specialist housing. It

is also critical that new housing development is designed to a high standard and provides an attractive living environment.

3.7.2 The current Local Plan policy aims for housing and neighbourhoods are reflected in Policies HA1 to HA8 and are summarised below.

- Deliver planned housing growth
- Ensure that new housing is designed to high quality and in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- Ensure that the size and mix of housing needs meets the identified housing need and demand.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Provide for specialist needs (e.g accommodation for older persons, gypsies and travellers and wheelchair accessible housing)

Question 16

Local Plan policies

- a) Do you consider that the current Local Plan policies are working to support the aims listed above?**
- b) Please provide further comments.**

Question 17

Housing and Accommodation

- a) Do you agree with the above planning policy aims for housing and neighbourhoods?**
- b) Please provide any further comments.**

Question 18

Do you have any views or suggestions for how planning policies could be better used to ensure that planned housing meets local needs?

Question 19

Do you have any views or suggestions for how planning policies could be better used to achieve attractive, sustainable neighbourhoods?

Question 20

Please provide any views on how recent and proposed changes in national policy for housing (e.g. to promote starter homes, self-build homes and community-led housing) should be reflected in the Local Plan Review.

3.8 Transport and Access

- 3.8.1 The Local Plan Review will need to promote a more integrated and sustainable local transport network and where possible improve access to local services and facilities. In particular, it will need to support the level of planned development whilst mitigating its impact on local roads and other transport services.
- 3.8.2 The current Local Plan policy aims for transport and access are set out in Policies TR1 and TR2, and summarised below:
- Improve key transport gateways and corridors
 - Provide good access to Swindon Central Area and key destinations, including facilitating the ease of movement into, out of and around the Town Centre to support regeneration
 - Minimise severance caused by transport corridors and the dominance of the car on the streetscene
 - Minimise the environmental impact from transport (for example vehicle emissions)
 - Minimise congestion and therefore journey time, noise and air quality
 - Promote healthy lifestyles and travel choices and maximise opportunities to walk and cycle
 - Support good public transport provision and innovative transport initiatives for rural areas
 - Plan to achieve timely delivery of transport infrastructure needed to support new housing, employment and other development.

Question 21

Transport and Access

a) Do you agree with the above planning policy aims and strategy for transport and access?

b) Please provide any further comments.

3.9 Infrastructure Needs

Current Local Plan policy aims

- 3.9.1 New housing and other development proposed through the Local Plan Review will need to be accompanied by a range of new infrastructure,

Question 22

Local Plan policies

- a) Do you consider that current Local Plan policies are working to support the aims listed above?
- b) Please provide any further comments.

Question 23

Do you have any views or suggestions for how planning policies could be better used to improve access to services and facilities, reduce traffic and promote sustainable transport?

road and transport improvements, schools, health facilities, open space, shops and community facilities. Planning for new development will need be coordinated with the infrastructure it requires and take into account the capacity of existing infrastructure. Delivery of infrastructure will be dependent upon maximising the contribution from the development process whilst recognising that a contribution from both the public and private sector will be necessary. The Council will prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to accompany the Local Plan Review, which will specify what infrastructure is needed to support the planned new development, and identify how the identified infrastructure will be funded and phased.

- 3.9.2 The current Local Plan policy aims for infrastructure planning are reflected in Policies IN1 to IN4 and are summarised below:

- Require strategic, local and site specific infrastructure to be provided as a result of needs generated by new development
- To seek to maximise the contribution from the development process through the use of planning (Section 106) agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), whilst recognising that other funding from both the public and private sector will be necessary
- Ensure that particular issues related to wastewater and water supply resulting from new development are addressed
- Support and require ICT infrastructure to be in place to support Swindon Borough's residents and businesses

- Encourage the development of low carbon and renewable forms of energy regeneration

Question 24

Infrastructure Provision

- a) Do you agree with the above planning policy aims for planning infrastructure?
- b) Please provide further comments.

Question 25

Local Plan Policies

- a) Do you consider that current Local Plan policies are working to support the aims listed above?
- b) Please provide any further comments.

Question 26

Do you have any views or suggestions for how the planning, phasing and delivery of infrastructure could be improved?

3.10 Healthy and Supported Communities

Current Local Plan Policy aims

3.10.1 The Local Plan Review can assist in enhancing wellbeing and healthy lifestyles through policies to protect, enhance and provide education, community and health facilities, including open space, sport and recreation facilities. The current Local Plan policy aims for healthy and supported communities are reflected in Policies CM1 to CM4 and are summarised below.

- To protect existing community facilities where there is a demonstrable need for their continued presence
- To provide new and/or expanded schools, colleges and higher education provision, including enabling the expansion of Swindon College and New College and a new university/enhanced tertiary facility in Swindon's Central Area

- Increase opportunities to use and access sport, leisure, cultural and community facilities
- Ensure that required health and emergency service facilities are provided, including expansion of the Great Western Hospital as required
- To integrate and co-locate services and facilities in flexible, multi-use buildings which complement each other in terms of the type of provision, requirements and physical space needs

Question 27

Healthy and supported communities.

- a) Do you agree with the above planning policy aims for healthy and supported communities?
- b) Please provide any further comments

Question 28

- a) Do you consider that current Local Plan policies are working to support the aims listed above?
- b) Please provide any further comments.

Question 29

Do you have any views or suggestions for how planning policies could be better used to promote health and wellbeing?

3.11 Natural and Built Environment

Current Local Plan policy aims

- 3.11.1 The quality of the built, historic and natural environment is a major asset for the Local Plan area, which benefits local residents, and attracts visitors and investment. Although a major objective of the Local Plan review is to promote growth, it is equally important to protect and enhance the area's environmental assets, by directing development to areas where potential

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environmental harm is minimal or can be adequately mitigated. It is also critical to give strong protection to areas of recognised national and international importance, including North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), all well as other designated historic and environmental assets.

3.11.2 The current Local Plan policy aims for the environment are reflected in Policies EN1 to EN10 and are summarised below.

- Provide and enhance green infrastructure.
- Protect and enhance the landscape character of the countryside.
- Protect and enhance priority habitats, ecological networks and biodiversity.
- Preserve and enhance designated sites, including the North Wessex Downs AONB, minimising the impact of planned development and providing appropriate mitigation.
- Preserve and enhance the historic environment (including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and other heritage assets).
- Protect water quality and avoid increasing flood risk.
- Minimise waste and pollution.
- Safeguard the remaining non-developed route of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal through Swindon Borough and connect to the network beyond the Borough boundary
- Safeguard the proposed route of the Swindon and Cricklade Railway

Question 30

The Natural and Built Environment

- a) Do you agree with the above planning policy aims for the environment?**
- b) Please provide any further comments.**

Question 31

Local Plan Policies

- a) Do you consider that current Local Plan policies are working to support the aims listed above?**
- b) Please provide any further comments.**

Question 32

Local Plan Policies

Do you have any views or suggestions for how planning policies could be better used to protect and enhance the environment?

3.12 Swindon Central Area

- 3.12.1 The regeneration of Swindon's central area remains a core priority for Swindon Borough Council. Regeneration is coming forward but is still at an early stage. Town centre regeneration will be vital to improving the town's image and realising its economic potential.
- 3.12.2 The current Local Plan identifies the regeneration of the Central Area as a top priority, reflected in Policy SC1 and summarised below:
 - Improve and enhance Swindon's Central Area through high quality design and improved public realm
 - Provide for additional retail floorspace, office floorspace, residential development and improved transport infrastructure including a new bus interchange and improved cycling and pedestrian routes
 - Secure Central Swindon as the focal point for a network of specialist leisure facilities, including redevelopment at the Oasis Leisure Centre to create a regional leisure destination

Question 33

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Do you have any views or suggestions for how planning policies can support the advancement of the regeneration of Swindon's central area and the enhancement of its role, to improve the image of the town?

