

Wiltshire Local Plan Review Statement of Common Ground

As agreed between:

Wiltshire Council

and

Dorset Council

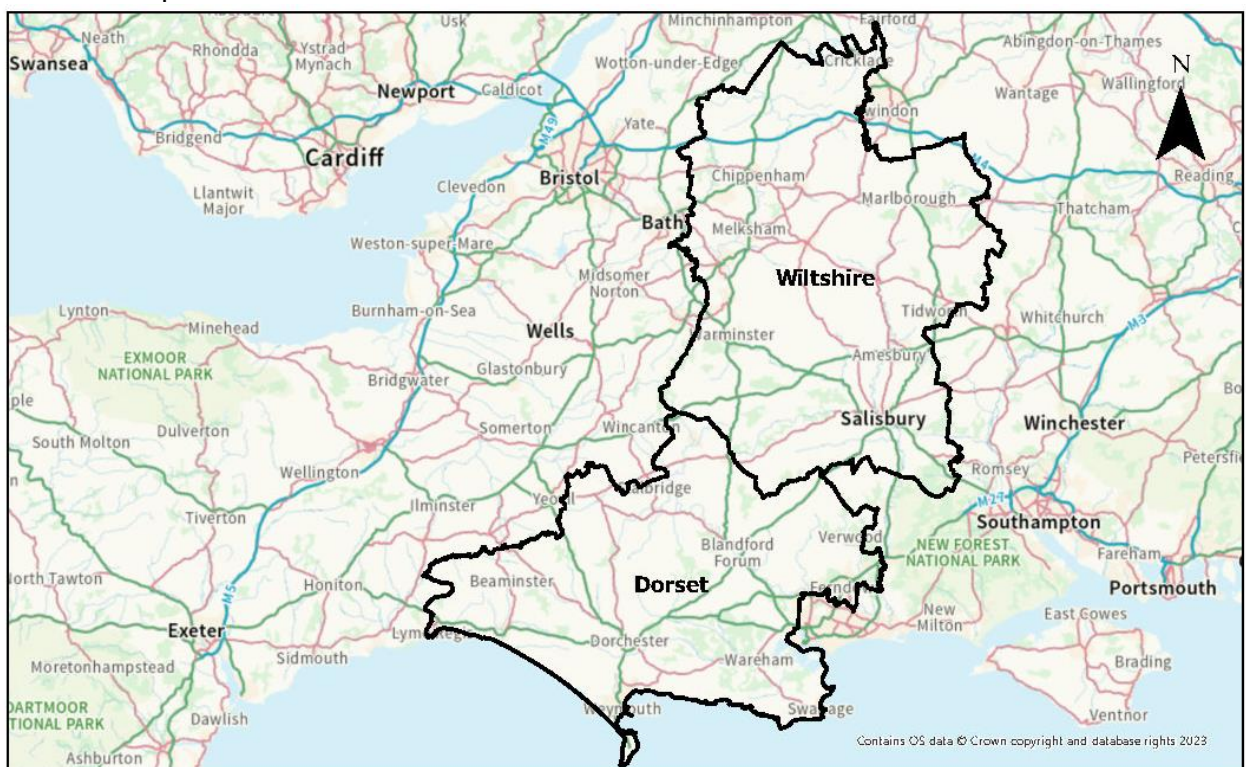
concerning

Wiltshire Local Plan Review

November 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is to set out areas of common agreement between Wiltshire Council and Dorset Council and any areas of disagreement relating to the preparation of the Wiltshire Local Plan review.
- 1.2. Wiltshire Council and Dorset Council are the Local Planning Authorities for their respective administrative area and are obliged under the Duty to Cooperate to engage and work together on relevant strategic matters of a cross boundary nature in a proportionate and meaningful manner.
- 1.3. Wiltshire Council and Dorset Council have worked constructively, actively and on an on-going basis throughout the production of the draft Wiltshire Local Plan review. This has been through ongoing and regular dialogue and formal consultations.
- 1.4. Local government reorganisation saw Dorset Council become a unitary council on 1 April 2019, encompassing the former districts of Purbeck, East Dorset, North Dorset, West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland, and Dorset County Council. Prior to this reorganisation, Wiltshire Council engaged in regular dialogue with these councils on matters of a strategic nature – such as highways and infrastructure, ecology and education. The boundary between Wiltshire Council and Dorset Council is shown on the map below.



Wiltshire Council

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- 1.5. This statement is structured to provide a summary of the areas of agreement between Wiltshire Council and Dorset Council, how that agreement was reached, and any areas of disagreement, in relation to the draft Wiltshire Local Plan review. This SoCG is a written record of the key matters addressed.

2. Wiltshire Local Plan 'Regulation 18' Consultation (January – March 2021)

- 2.1. Wiltshire Council consulted on key components of the emerging Local Plan, along with accompanying evidence through a 'Regulation 18' consultation from 13th January to 9th March 2021.
- 2.2. Dorset Council responded to the Regulation 18 consultation raising two matters, both of which are considered to be resolved:
 - A potential for the housing needs of Shaftesbury, on the edge of the Wiltshire/Dorset border, to be met on the Wiltshire side of the border. Although this is not considered a short to medium term issue that needs to be resolved as part of this review of the Wiltshire Local Plan, the growth needs of Shaftesbury is something that Dorset and Wiltshire Councils are committed to continued discussions and for the situation to be kept under review.
 - Confirmation of a commitment to reserve a corridor for an eastern bypass to Shaftesbury. Following the Regulation 18 consultation, Wiltshire Council carried out a policy review of all of the policies that had been 'saved' from the former district authority areas (Salisbury District Council, Kennet District Council, North Wiltshire District Council and West Wiltshire District Council). This identified that there was no longer a need to save Salisbury District Council policy TR20, and that this could be superseded by a new Local Plan policy. It was subsequently agreed with Dorset Council that saved policy TR20 could be deleted, and that draft Local Plan Policy 74 (Strategic Transport Network) would provide an appropriate policy hook by outlining that work will be undertaken in conjunction with National Highways, Network Rail, transport operators, neighbouring authorities and other agencies, that will seek to develop and improve the strategic transport network.

3. Wiltshire Local Plan 'Regulation 19' Pre-Submission Consultation (September – November 2023)

- 3.1. Wiltshire Council published the draft Wiltshire Local Plan, along with accompanying evidence, for a formal pre-submission 'Regulation 19' consultation from 27th September to 22nd November 2023.
- 3.2. In response to the consultation, representations were received from Dorset Council, a summary of which can be found – alongside an overview of areas of agreement/disagreement and proposed changes as a result – at Appendix A.

4. Areas of agreement

- 4.1. All matters considered of strategic relevance between the two authorities have been agreed.

Scale of growth:

- 4.2. The Councils confirm that planned levels of growth in the northern parts of Dorset and southwestern Wiltshire have been discussed, and no significant issues associated with

the scale of growth have been identified during these discussions. The scale and distribution of growth is therefore an area of agreement between the Councils.

Transport:

- 4.3. Dorset Council support the recognition of the A350 as part of the Strategic Transport Network within draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policy 75 (Strategic Transport Network), and the reference to the importance of the National Highways Strategic M4 to South Coast Study. Dorset Council also support the removal of the reserved bypass corridor for the A350 at Shaftesbury (as included in the Wiltshire Core Strategy) and the inclusion of the wording of draft Policy 75 related to this. Matters relating to transport in parts of Wiltshire that may affect Dorset are therefore agreed between the parties.
- 4.4. At more strategic level, Wiltshire Council have developed a post Regulation 19 evidence base to address gaps in its transport evidence supporting the draft Wiltshire Local Plan, and this is supported by revised strategic modelling which has been presented to Dorset Council highways officers as a visualisation tool. Dorset Council highways officers have confirmed agreement with the scenarios that have been modelled but have requested further information in relation to potential impacts on road networks within Dorset (specifically the A350, A303, A354 and A338). Wiltshire officers are now in the process of working through these queries/the transport model and will provide a note to Dorset Council address the queries raised in due course.

Open Space:

- 4.5. Dorset Council have raised that a strategic education site to the east of Shaftesbury (Coombe House School) is owned by Dorset Council and has been incorrectly designated under Policy 84 of the draft Wiltshire Local Plan as an Open Space and Play Facility. Wiltshire Council concur with this matter and agree that this is an error which requires correction through the removal of this designation.

5. Areas of disagreement

Dark Skies:



- 5.1. With regard to draft Local Plan Policy 92 (Conserving and Enhancing Dark Skies) Dorset Council noted that consideration needs to be given to areas where lighting is required to enable the proper functioning of a site, such as at the Coombe House School which may require external lighting to enable the sports facilities to be used year-round. Dorset Council have requested an amendment to the policy to allow for appropriate lighting to be installed at sports facilities that need to be used year round.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

- 5.2. Dorset Council have highlighted that there may be implications of the proposed threshold of 20% BNG under draft Policy 89 (Biodiversity Net Gain) on the potential for development of enhanced facilities at Coombe House School, and it has been requested that safeguards be built into the policy to ensure delivery of essential infrastructure, including education facilities, is not put at risk by the policy requirement.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. Wiltshire Council and Dorset Council welcome the opportunity to continue engagement under the duty to cooperate considering matters of strategic cross boundary interest. Both councils are committed to ongoing communication and collaboration to ensure effective plan-making that delivers positive outcomes for our respective residents and the wider region. This statement serves as a foundation for continued cooperation and will be reviewed as the draft Wiltshire Local Plan progresses.


Signed:
Name: Georgina Clampitt-Dix, Head of Strategic Planning
For and on behalf of Wiltshire Council
Date: 27 th November 2024

Signed:
Name: Mike Garrity
For and on behalf of Dorset Council
Date: 27 th November 2024

Appendix A: Dorset Council comments on the Pre-Submission draft of the Wiltshire Local Plan review

Theme/ policy/ site	Soundness	Dorset Council comment	Dorset Council proposed change	Further work?	Agreed position?
General	Comment	Confirmation that there has been, and will continue to be, a close working relationship with Wiltshire Council on strategic planning matters that have implications that cross the boundary between the two authority areas.	No change proposed.	No.	Yes – No changes to the draft Wiltshire Local Plan proposed.
Scale of growth	Comment	Confirmation that planned levels of growth in the northern parts of Dorset and southwestern Wiltshire have been discussed between the two councils with no significant issues identified. Although there is no short to medium term need, the councils agree to continue discussions about future development in the Shaftesbury area and to keep this issue under review.	No change proposed.	No.	Yes – No changes to the draft Wiltshire Local Plan proposed.
Policy 75 (Strategic Transport Network)	Comment	Dorset Council welcome recognition of the A350 as part of the Strategic Transport Network, and the reference to the importance of the National Highways Strategic M4 to South Coast Study. Dorset Council consider that the policy wording is sufficiently flexible to allow any improvements to the A350 corridor within Wiltshire as a result of this study or any other mechanism.	No change proposed.	No.	Yes – No changes to the draft Wiltshire Local Plan proposed.
Policy 75 (Strategic Transport Network)	Comment	Dorset Council confirm support of the removed Wiltshire Core Strategy reserved bypass corridor for the A350 at Shaftesbury and inclusion of the wording of Policy 75 related to this.	No change proposed.	No.	Yes – No changes to the draft Wiltshire Local Plan proposed.
Transport	Comment	Continuing dialogue between the two councils will address coordination of bus routes linked with planned levels of growth in northern parts of Dorset and south western Wiltshire.	No change proposed.	No.	Yes – No changes to the draft Wiltshire Local Plan proposed.
Policy 84 (Public Open	No	A strategic education site to the east of Shaftesbury (Coombe House School) is owned	As there is currently no public access to the	No.	Yes – Wiltshire Council agree that the land should be removed from

Theme/ policy/ site	Soundness	Dorset Council comment	Dorset Council proposed change	Further work?	Agreed position?
Space and Play Facilities) / Open Space Assessment		by Dorset Council and has been incorrectly designated as an Open Space and Play Facility.	site. This is raised as an error which requires correction through the removal of this designation.		classification as open space under draft Policy 84.
Policy 89 (Biodiversity Net Gain)	No	The requirement for 20% Biodiversity Net Gain goes beyond the legal minimum of 10%, and concern is raised that there may be implications for development of facilities at the Dorset Council owned Coombe House School.	Request for safeguards to be built into the policy to ensure delivery of essential infrastructure, including education facilities, is not put at risk by the policy requirement.	No.	No – issue classed as a matter of disagreement.
Policy 92 (Conserving and Enhancing Dark Skies)	No	It is noted that the policy approach is similar to the approach that Dorset Council is considering through its own local plan. Consideration is needed for areas where lighting is required to enable the functioning of a site. For the Dorset Council owned Coombe House School, external lighting may be necessary to enable the sports facilities to be used year-round.	Dorset Council request recognition in the policy to allow for appropriate lighting to be installed at sports facilities that need to be used year round.	No.	No – issue classed as a matter of disagreement.