



Steering Group Discussion Document
Salisbury Neighbourhood Development Plan
2020 – 2036, Regulation 14 Consultation
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Let's talk about housing

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Introduction

I have written this paper for the community of Salisbury to help inform a wider debate about housing.

In mid-2019 the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Group (SG) ran a public consultation about what the Salisbury NDP might consider, research, and make recommendations on for future land use. Housing was chosen by the SG as an important topic. Those taking part in our consultation also thought that.

The Steering Group is a sub-committee of Salisbury City Council and includes community representatives.

What our consultation told us

There were many specific Salisbury concerns about housing being of the wrong type, in the wrong place, at the wrong price (buying or renting). People worried about the number of actual/planned developments in prime, central, sites reserved for older adults who need or want a home within a communal setting but for which younger people are ineligible. Equally importantly, people worried that these developments do not cater for older people who are unable to afford to buy/rent them AND manage the costs of running them, e.g., service charges.

Linked to this were concerns about the area, especially the City, becoming a place that younger people are “priced out of” currently and probably permanently.

People were particularly worried that Salisbury’s community is becoming unbalanced in terms of age and that our housing mix is a major contributing factor. Furthermore, that new or future developments of whatever size may aggravate the problem.

What we did as a result: the NDP Initial Vision

We included People and Housing in the NDP Initial Vision prepared to help focus our thoughts. This proposed that Salisbury in 2036 should be a place “where all age groups are represented... (with) a range of affordable social and market housing... (that) will have been created in accessible locations to meet the diverse needs of the entire community”.

We thought that a key objective should be to aim for policies (and housing proposals) that will help Salisbury have “a balanced demographic profile”. In other words, not too old and not too young!

You can find out more about the Initial Vision on the SSC Website.

There are limits to what Salisbury City and Wiltshire Councils (Wiltshire being our Planning Authority) can do about existing homes such as their cost. We, the SG, decided to see whether our approach to new housing might help. We looked at our existing housing and dug out information on what is being planned and built to

consider WHAT that means. We are not allowed to guess what is happening. We knew our information and claims need to stand up to external analysis in the Plan process. We also expected and hoped Salisbury people would take a hard look!

Information from the Central Area Framework

Wiltshire Council's Central Area Framework (CAF) Report of January 2020 was developed by a government-led and financed planning group assisted by an established town planning organisation. This was part of the Salisbury recovery programme after the Novichok incident. from other planning research and consultations.

The CAF received popular and public endorsement and we have treated it as an integral part of the NDP as requested by Wiltshire Council in 2020.

The CAF identified similar housing concerns (to those we found independently) - specifically about the Salisbury's Central Area. It identifies Salisbury as a place that needs to be sustainable: enabling people to live locally so they can work locally, spend money in the local economy, invest perhaps, and certainly enjoy facilities/cultural offerings. All of which will help Salisbury to survive and thrive. The CAF recognises that without active inhabitants of all interests and skills Salisbury will become less attractive to visitors. Tourism has been an employment and income generator for 800 years. We think that's a good thing!

The CAF encourages constructive reuse of buildings and parts of buildings for housing including using brownfield sites such as the Maltings and Central Car Park for which Wiltshire Council has responsibility. The CAF also helped secure national funding (High Streets Fund) for some potential small-scale housing in historic and/or characterful housing - and Wiltshire Council manages that money. However, there is more to be done and our aim is that the Neighbourhood Development Plan should help within its limited powers.

What we had found by Christmas 2020

We commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment study on what our housing need is, for the whole NDP area, from AECOM who have specialist housing expertise. This produced Salisbury specific "evidence" to inform the NDP, and inform Wiltshire Council as our Planning Authority and also a major local Housing Provider.

The approved AECOM Housing Needs Assessment 2020 study is available on the Salisbury City Council Website. It will be an Appendix in Part 2 of the forthcoming NDP consultation and is also discussed in the main text of Part 2. It will be checked for relevance and quality as part of the approval process for the NDP.

The AECOM Study confirmed that concerns about housing need identified by residents are justified.

We encourage you to read all that you can of these documents.

More information about Part 2 and who approves it

“Part 2” of the NDP sets out information on what is being planned and built and the implications. It sets out what Wiltshire Council would like the Neighbourhood Development Plan to do - to focus on brownfield site developments and also meet its own need for new housing. Wiltshire Council has suggested a possible housing target for us to plan to - this is a standard feature of such plans and helpful. The scale of recent development means that we do not HAVE TO propose anything, but the Steering Group considered that it should facilitate the use of brownfield sites and focus on unmet housing need. Wiltshire Council also put forward sites that it owns for us to consider in the Plan and we have done this.

YOU, the Salisbury community, have the final say because after lengthy scrutiny the Neighbourhood Development Plan is subject to a community Referendum.

Does the Initial Vision “work” and what should we do?

We believe that steps must be taken to provide good quality, varied, well located and affordable homes either to buy or to rent. We think that the cost of running and maintaining homes matters now and to future occupants. Finally, we consider that ALL policies should encourage younger people to stay here, return (e.g., after University or Army service) or move here.

The alternative has been described as a city – especially in the most accessible and central parts – which will “only” have rich elderly residents. That may be an exaggeration, but it is a real risk over time based on current trends.

Look at it from the point of older residents: even if they can afford to buy or initially rent, there is no guarantee that they will always be able to run and maintain their homes, nor cherish Salisbury and what they like about it – on their own. Many will want to live in a more balanced neighbourhood and closer to younger family members and friends. Nor do we have extensive, serviced, cheap, acceptable housing land/sites within accessible and affordable reach for those younger people and families. Which poses a problem for Salisbury.

Finally, we wanted to support older and/or more disadvantaged people when considering policies, site allocations and brownfield development.

Our Approach

We have aimed to focus on making the best of brownfield sites that could be pursued – and with real potential to “deliver” (planning law requires this). We have also tried to consider other ways to deliver our objectives by setting out aspirations and offering policies residents might want to support.

We tried to be flexible and open to innovation NOT settling for poor quality design and build. We looked for opportunities to respect the character of different sites and

neighbourhoods within the Neighbourhood Development Plan area and to enhance our existing good and best housing and developments.

Why not have 21st Century development that 22nd Century Salisbury will be glad to have inherited!"

