

COMMITTEE REPORT

Subject:	<i>Wiltshire Local Plan Scoping Consultation: Salisbury City Council Response</i>
Committee:	<i>Planning Committee</i>
Item Number:	<i>12</i>
Date:	<i>21 September 2026</i>
Author:	<i>Andrew Hunt, Corporate Manager</i>
Report status:	<i>Decision</i>
Confidential / Exempt:	<i>No</i>

1. Report Summary

This report seeks the Committee's authority to finalise and submit Salisbury City Council's response to Wiltshire Council's Local Plan Scoping Consultation, which closes at 11.59pm on 30 September 2026.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Committee to delegate authority for the final approval and submission of the response to the Corporate Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee.
- 1.2 This report provides the background, the approach being taken, the matters identified so far, the options, the legal and governance considerations and the risks, to support informed decision-making.
- 1.3 Wiltshire Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the period to 2045. The scoping consultation is the first of three statutory consultation stages and asks two things: what the Plan should contain, and how Wiltshire should engage with consultees while preparing it. No sites have been identified and no housing figure has been set for Salisbury. What is said at this stage influences what evidence Wiltshire gathers and which growth options it tests.
- 1.4 The report is brought forward now because the consultation closes on 30 September 2026 and this is the last scheduled meeting of the Committee before that date.
- 1.5 Councillors identified two matters as priorities at the member workshop on 8 September 2026: the cumulative effect of traffic across Salisbury and the surrounding area, and the future of the Churchfields industrial area.

- 1.6 The response is not yet complete. Officers are continuing to work through Wiltshire's evidence base, to identify gaps in it, and to develop the sections discussed at the workshop. Drafts of each section will be circulated to members as they are prepared, so that councillors can comment before the response is submitted.
- 1.7 It is therefore recommended that the Committee delegates final approval and submission, subject to the conditions set out at recommendation 2.1, rather than approving a document that is still being developed.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Delegates authority to the Corporate Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee, to finalise, approve and submit Salisbury City Council's response to the Wiltshire Local Plan Scoping Consultation before the deadline of 11.59pm on 30 September 2026, subject to the response (a) addressing the matters set out at section 4 of this report and the matters raised at the member workshop of 8 September 2026; and (b) having been circulated in draft to members of the Committee, who will be given the opportunity to comment before submission.
- 2.2 Notes that officers are continuing to review Wiltshire Council's evidence base and to identify gaps within it, and that drafts of each section of the response will be circulated to members as they are prepared.

3. Background

- 3.1 Wiltshire Council submitted its previous Local Plan Review for examination in November 2024. Following Inspectors' findings on the soundness of the plan, Wiltshire Council resolved at Full Council on 19 May 2026 to withdraw it from examination. The Inspectors had identified concerns including the currency of the housing need calculation, the distribution of housing between Housing Market Areas, and the evidence supporting a proposed new community near Salisbury. They also identified heritage, transport, infrastructure, flood risk and viability as evidence requiring updating.
- 3.2 Wiltshire Council is now preparing a replacement Local Plan under the plan-making system introduced in March 2026. The scoping consultation opened on 2 September 2026 and closes on 30 September 2026. Gateway 1 follows on 30 October 2026, which begins a 30-month statutory timetable leading to adoption in April 2029.
- 3.3 A member workshop was held on 8 September 2026 to identify the issues the Council should raise and to take councillors' input before the response was drafted. The matters raised are summarised at section 8 of this report.
- 3.4 The consultation comprises four published documents: the Scoping Document, the Baseline Survey of Area 2026 to 2045, the Draft Engagement Strategy, and the formal notice. Six questions are asked, covering the Plan's vision, spatial strategy, locally specific policies, evidence requirements, any further matters, and engagement arrangements.

- 3.5 Salisbury's Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 to 2038 was made following referendum on 27 February 2025 and forms part of the statutory development plan. The Local Plan will sit alongside it.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council submits a response addressing all six consultation questions, finalised under delegated authority before the deadline.
- 4.2 The response is being prepared in sections, following the structure of the six consultation questions. Officers are continuing to work through Wiltshire's published evidence base, in particular the Baseline Survey of Area, to identify where the evidence supporting decisions about Salisbury is absent or out of date.
- 4.3 Each section will be circulated to members of the Committee as it is drafted, so that councillors can comment on the substance before the response is submitted rather than only on a finished document.
- 4.4 The scoping stage determines what evidence Wiltshire commissions. Once Gateway 1 is passed on 30 October 2026, the evidence programme is largely settled, and the next opportunity to comment is the consultation on proposed Plan content and evidence in spring 2027.
- 4.5 The response is being developed around the following themes. These are set out in outline at this stage and will be developed as the sections are drafted.

Theme	Outline position
Heritage capacity	Wiltshire identifies heritage as constraining growth at Salisbury but has not measured it. A heritage capacity study is needed before a preferred strategy is selected.
River Avon, nutrients and water	Nutrient and water quality constraints affect whether, where and on what terms development can be accommodated. Water supply as well as water quality.
Flood risk	Salisbury is affected by river, surface water and groundwater flooding. The detailed Salisbury evidence dates from 2008 and should be updated and assessed across the catchment.
Cumulative traffic effects	Traffic assessments are prepared development by development, and nothing establishes what they add up to. The assessment should cover Salisbury and the surrounding parishes together, since growth outside the boundary uses the same roads and junctions.
Infrastructure-led growth	The scale, location and phasing of growth should follow evidence of infrastructure capacity, funding and delivery, rather than mitigation being sought after locations are chosen.
Transport and air quality	There is no current Salisbury transport baseline in the published evidence. Three Air Quality Management Areas are traffic related.
Strategic connectivity and the economy	Salisbury's strategic road and rail connections constrain the city's economy. The Plan should support employment, productivity and city centre vitality, not only population growth.
Brownfield and regeneration	Wiltshire should assess Salisbury's brownfield and urban capacity, including town centre intensification

	and vacant units.
Churchfields	A strategic review is needed covering employment role, regeneration potential, access and HGV movements, and where displaced businesses could relocate. Not readily available housing land.
Access to services and inequality	Three neighbourhoods rank within the most deprived 20 per cent nationally on environmental deprivation. Local access mapping has not been carried out.
Community infrastructure	Allotments, burial space, community space and sports provision are unevenly addressed in Wiltshire's evidence. Burial provision is not addressed.
Developer-managed infrastructure	Construction standards, adoption arrangements and long-term responsibility for estate roads, drainage and open space.
Salisbury and its surrounding area	Growth pressures outside the city boundary affect the same networks. The evidence base should reflect the wider functional area.

- 4.6 Action is needed now because the consultation closes on 30 September 2026 and this is the last scheduled meeting of the Committee before that date.

5. Options Considered

5.1 Option 1 – Preferred Option

- 5.1.1 The Committee delegates authority to the Corporate Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to finalise and submit the response, subject to the conditions at recommendation 2.1. This allows the response to continue to develop between this meeting and the deadline, and allows members to comment on drafts of each section as they are prepared.

5.2 Option 2 – Alternative Option(s)

- 5.2.1 The Committee approves a completed response at this meeting. This is not achievable. The evidence base runs to several hundred pages across four documents, work on the employment and economic sections is not complete, advice on cumulative transport assessment is outstanding, and follow-up is expected from Wiltshire Council's workshop for the south of Wiltshire. Approving a response now would mean submitting one that does not reflect that work.

5.3 Option 3 – Do Nothing

- 5.3.1 The Council does not respond. Salisbury's local issues would not be before Wiltshire when the evidence programme is settled at Gateway 1 on 30 October 2026, and the next opportunity to comment would be spring 2027, by which point the evidence base and initial spatial options will be substantially formed. The Council would also forgo the opportunity to request notification of subsequent stages.

- 5.4 The preferred option is recommended because it enables the fullest possible response to be submitted within the statutory deadline, while retaining member oversight through the circulation of drafts and through the requirement to consult the Chair and Vice-Chair.

6. Financial Position

- 6.1 There is no direct cost arising from the submission of a consultation response. Officer time has been met from existing resources.
- 6.2 No additional funding is required and no budget provision is sought.
- 6.3 There are no ongoing revenue implications arising directly from this decision. Should the Council subsequently wish to commission independent transport or other technical advice to support its position at later stages of plan-making, that would be the subject of a separate report identifying the cost and funding source.
- 6.4 The proposal represents value for money. Influencing the evidence base at this stage is the least costly point at which the Council can affect the outcome.

7. Legal and Governance Considerations

- 7.1 The consultation is undertaken by Wiltshire Council under regulation 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. The Council is a consultee and not the plan-making authority. The response is a representation and does not bind Wiltshire Council.
- 7.2 The Planning Committee has delegated authority to determine the Council's response to planning consultations.
- 7.3 The principal governance consideration is the delegation sought at recommendation 2.1. It identifies the post to which authority is given, the scope of that authority, the consultation required before it is exercised, and the conditions and time limit that apply.
- 7.4 The delegation is limited in three ways. It applies only to this consultation and expires on 30 September 2026.

8. Consultation and Engagement

- 8.1 A member workshop was held on 8 September 2026, attended by councillors and officers, at which the draft issues were presented and councillors' input sought on each of the six consultation questions. Members were also invited to send further comments after the workshop.
- 8.2 Further engagement is planned. Wiltshire Council held a workshop for the south of Wiltshire on 16 September 2026. Officers have requested a Salisbury-specific session and have met the clerks of neighbouring parish councils. A further meeting on cumulative transport assessment will be arranged.

9. Strategic and Policy Alignment

- 9.1 The response supports the Council's role as the qualifying body for the Salisbury Neighbourhood Development Plan and seeks to ensure that the Local Plan works alongside it rather than around it.
- 9.2 The matters raised align with the Neighbourhood Plan's chapters on climate change and air pollution, the built environment, green and blue infrastructure, living, transport and movement, and working. The response is also consistent with the Council's responsibilities for allotments, burial provision, open space and community facilities.

10. Implementation and Next Steps

10.1 Subject to the Committee's decision, the next steps will be as follows:

- 10.1.1 Sections drafted and circulated to members of the Committee for comment.
- 10.1.2 Response finalised and approved in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, having regard to members' comments.
- 10.1.3 Response lodged with Wiltshire Council.
- 10.1.4 Request made for notification at all subsequent stages of plan preparation, including Planning Inspectorate gateway advice.

10.2 The anticipated timetable is:

Milestone	Date
Committee decision	21 September 2026
Drafts circulated to members	18 to 25 September 2026
Response lodged with Wiltshire Council	By 30 September 2026

10.3 Responsibility for implementation will sit with the Corporate Manager.

11. Additional Relevant Information

- 11.1 The consultation documents are available on Wiltshire Council's website and are listed at section 13 as background papers. Page references in the response are to those published documents.
- 11.2 The response distinguishes throughout between evidence published by Wiltshire Council, evidence published by other bodies, and calculations or observations made by Salisbury City Council. Where the Council has made its own calculation, the response says so and invites Wiltshire Council to verify or correct it.

12. Implications

Implication Area	Impact	Comments / Mitigation
Financial	None	No cost arises from submitting a consultation response. Officer time met from existing resources.
Legal	Low	The Council responds as a consultee, not as the plan-making authority. The response does not bind Wiltshire Council and creates no legal obligation. The delegation sought identifies post, scope, consultation and conditions.
Risk	Medium	The response will be finalised under delegated authority rather than approved in full by the

		Committee. This is mitigated by the conditions at recommendation 2.1, by the circulation of drafts to members for comment and by the requirement to consult the Chair and Vice-Chair. If the Council does not respond, Salisbury's issues will not be before Wiltshire when the evidence programme is settled at Gateway 1, and the next opportunity is spring 2027.
Personnel	Low	Preparation has been met from existing officer capacity. Continuing engagement through to adoption in 2029 will require ongoing officer time.
Environmental Impact	Low	The response seeks updated flood risk evidence, nutrient mitigation for the River Avon catchment, cumulative assessment of environmental effects, and green and blue infrastructure provision. No adverse environmental effect arises from the decision itself.
Equalities Impact Statement	None	No equalities impact arises from responding to a consultation. Equalities considerations will arise when the Local Plan makes choices about the location and type of development, and will be addressed at those stages. The response itself asks Wiltshire Council to assess the effect of growth on access to services in the least well served neighbourhoods.
Community / Public Impact	High	The Local Plan will determine the scale, location and phasing of development in and around Salisbury to 2045, affecting housing supply, infrastructure, open space, transport and the historic environment. This response seeks to ensure those decisions are informed by current local evidence.
Procurement / Contractual	None	No procurement arises from this decision.
Property / Asset	None	No decision relating to Council-owned land or buildings is sought by this report.
Data Protection	None	The response contains no personal data. Consultation responses are published by Wiltshire Council; officer contact details will be provided in accordance with the Council's normal practice.