**Guidance on responding to the Wiltshire Local Plan Consultation**

Responses to the consultation on the Local Plan need to be in by 5pm on Monday 8th March. You can respond by going to the consultation website at: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review-consultation>

Or you can send an email to: spatialplanningpolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk

We suggest some general points you may like to make on the overall consultation below. Feel free to amend as you like, to make your own particular points. If you would like to respond in more detail to individual aspects of the Plan, you will find further guidance at: <https://www.wiltshireclimatealliance.org.uk/>

**Suggested content for general email response**

My comments cover all aspects of the Local Plan consultation. The Plan covers the period up to 2036, a period in which the world needs to take decisive action to reduce carbon emissions if we are to avert the devastating consequences of uncontrollable climate change. While this is a global issue, every part of society needs to act, and Wiltshire Council has significant powers to influence carbon emissions in Wiltshire. The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Plans to ‘take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change in line with the Climate Change Act’, which requires the UK to achieve zero carbon by 2050 and (in the 6th Carbon Budget) to reduce emissions by 68% by 2030. The Council voted in 2019 to seek to reduce Wiltshire’s carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

Despite this democratic mandate and the legislative and planning framework, the proposed Local Plan fails to include any meaningful measures to achieve material reductions in carbon emissions, and indeed the proposed approach to development, particularly housing and roads, will significantly increase the county’s emissions. The Plan fails even to include a baseline calculation of the county’s carbon footprint or any assessment of how the proposed developments will affect this.

The Spatial Strategy section is driven by Government housing targets using an out-dated formula from 2014 and includes an additional 5,000 houses on top of the 41,000 required by this formula. The structure and location of the proposed major housing developments will inevitably increase dependency on private cars, requiring further road developments and associated transport emissions. The Spatial Strategy does not quantify any of these emission impacts, nor does the supporting Sustainability Assessment. The Local Transport Plan section admits that its projections of future traffic volumes are based on out-dated assumptions, and fails even to mention how climate change policies could affect future traffic patterns. The Climate Change and Biodiversity Net Gain section makes some relevant points but these are not reflected in the Spatial Strategy or in specific policies elsewhere in the Plan.

We believe the Plan needs to include a calculation of the County’s carbon footprint and contain year-on-year targets for how this will be reduced. All proposed developments must have their emissions impact quantified and the cumulative impact compared to these targets.

The Plan must include specific measures to reduce emissions, including:

* Planning for new housing developments where there is genuine need, rather than being driven by out-dated, top-down targets;
* Avoiding building houses where this creates car dependency and people will need to commute long distances to their places of employment;
* Introducing planning policies that require housing and commercial development to be built to zero carbon standards in settlement designs that are genuinely sustainable, avoiding building on greenfield sites wherever possible;
* Reassessing major road schemes based on realistic projections of future traffic volumes taking into account local and national climate change policies and longer- term changes in work patterns as a consequence of COVID-19;
* Creating a planning framework that promotes renewable energy generation, including making specific provision for onshore wind generation (the lowest cost form of electricity generation), which is not currently mentioned anywhere in the Plan;
* Encouraging a significant shift away from private cars to public and active transport, investing in cycling and walking infrastructure and improving infrastructure for electric vehicles;
* Protecting and enhancing the carbon absorption properties of the natural environment (that of our natural capital and carbon sinks), including significant increases in tree planting, also helping to improve biodiversity;
* Protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land, which helps sequester carbon and ensure local food production and future food security, including the Council’s own County farms;
* Introducing planning policies that require climate change impact assessment of all proposed developments, in advance, against the Council’s carbon reduction targets.

This Local Plan is the best, and last, chance for Wiltshire Council to introduce a policy framework that comprehensively addresses the urgent need for material, year on year reductions in carbon emissions, in line with the Council’s democratic and legislative obligations. I believe that the current proposals for the Local Plan must be completely rewritten on this basis.