



# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PREPARED BY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP



## How the Neighbourhood Plan operates

Question	Answer
What is a Neighbourhood Plan?	A Neighbourhood Plan sets out the vision and planning policies which guide future development at the local level. It allows local residents to shape the places in which they live and work by influencing where future development will go and what it will look like. The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will be used by planning officers at Wiltshire Council when assessing planning applications within Royal Wootton Bassett.
What are the benefits of having a Neighbourhood Plan?	As well as local residents being able to shape the place in which they live and work, the Town Council will receive a higher rate of 25% (instead of 15%) of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts to fund infrastructure to support the growth in the town. The first plan resulted in £168,680 that has supported community projects.
Why does the current Neighbourhood Plan need to be updated?	The current plan was adopted in April 2018 and is due to expire in 2026. Now is therefore an appropriate time to review the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure it remains up-to-date and effective. We want to make sure it continues to meet the needs of our town and is a useful tool for the local planning authority when they are making decisions on planning applications in our local area.
How has the Neighbourhood Plan review been prepared?	To date the Plan has been through various stages beginning with initial stages of consultation. Here this stage included the issues consultation and a call for sites which informed the site allocations included within the draft Plan. To date there have been opportunities for the public to input into the Plan prior to this Regulation 14 consultation.
What area will the Neighbourhood Plan cover?	The Neighbourhood Plan will cover the Royal Wootton Bassett Parish area, which is shown on Page 8 of the existing plan.

Question	Answer
<p>What is the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan and what issues will it cover?</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan will set out the vision and objectives for what type of town we want Royal Wootton Bassett to become over the next 10 years or so. It will also contain 27 policies that the local authority will use when making decisions on planning applications. The Draft Neighbourhood Plan contains policies relating to the key themes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre</li> <li>• Design and Sustainability</li> <li>• Natural Environment and Blue-Green Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Environment</li> <li>• Housing Development</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Employment and Tourism-related Development</li> <li>• Development on Brownfield Infill and Redevelopment Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Beyond the Settlement Boundary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure and Facilities</li> <li>• Site Allocations</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>What are site allocations?</p>	<p>The plan also identifies four specific sites which it considers suitable for future residential development, known as site allocations policies. Planning applications would still need to be submitted on these sites before development could take place. These planning applications would need to meet the criteria set out in the site allocations policies, as well as other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>What is the difference between a Local Plan and a Neighbourhood Plan?</p>	<p>A Local Plan is prepared by a local planning authority and sets out the strategic framework for development across a whole district or borough, including housing targets, major site allocations and strategic policies. In contrast, a Neighbourhood Plan is produced by a town or parish council for a much smaller, designated area. While Local Plans provide the overarching policies and requirements, Neighbourhood Plans are shaped by local priorities and considerations. They include non-strategic policies, and can also allocate smaller sites for development, set design standards and protect valued green spaces, for example. It is key that Neighbourhood Plans conform with the Local Plan's strategic policies, meaning they cannot block the overall levels of growth set out by the Local Plan, but they can influence how it is implemented locally.</p>
<p>How does the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the Wiltshire Council Local Plan?</p>	<p>The Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan will sit alongside the Wiltshire Local Plan to form part of the development plan for the area. These will set out the policies that are used when determining planning applications. It is not necessary that Wiltshire Council has an approved up-to-date Local Plan in place before the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted. However, we have ensured that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan as far as possible aligns with the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan which is currently undergoing examination.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>When, how and where will residents be able to view the Neighbourhood Plan?</p>	<p>Residents will be able to view the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and other supporting documents online at the following link: <a href="#">Neighbourhood Planning – Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council</a></p> <p>Hard copies of the Plan are also available to view at the Wootton Bassett Library, Borough Fields, and Manor House, Lime Kiln.</p> <p>You are also welcome to attend the consultation events which will be held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorial Hall – 11<sup>th</sup> October 10am – 2pm</li> <li>• Manor House – 4<sup>th</sup> October 10am – 2pm</li> <li>• Library – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 3:30pm – 6:30pm</li> </ul> <p>These consultation events are an opportunity to ask any questions about the Plan.</p> <p>The consultation runs from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2025, and so the Plan will be available to view within this period.</p>
<p>How can I respond to the consultation?</p>	<p>Alongside the opportunities to attend various consultation events, we invite you to provide your comments on the consultation by completing our questionnaire.</p> <p>The questionnaire can be found here: <a href="https://forms.gle/gNPydLaWBxr21wBK6">https://forms.gle/gNPydLaWBxr21wBK6</a></p> <p>You can also collect a hard copy of the questionnaire at the Town Council Office, Manor House.</p>

Question	Answer
What happens next?	<p>Once the public consultation period has ended, your responses will be used to inform the final version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The final version will be submitted to the local planning authority. After submission there is a final 'Regulation 16' stage of consultation which is coordinated by Wiltshire Council.</p> <p>Following this the plan is examined by an independent examiner and then subject to any modifications required will then go forward to a referendum. At the referendum local residents can vote on whether the Neighbourhood Plan should be adopted.</p>

## Common Community Questions

Question	Answer
<p>Where does the Community Infrastructure Levy Funds (CIL) come from and how is it calculated? Will the latest David Wilson development be included in this levy?</p>	<p>The Community Infrastructure Levy allows local authorities to raise funds from new developments to support the delivery of infrastructure required to mitigate the growth. The charge is calculated by multiplying the CIL rate (per m<sup>2</sup>) by the net increase in floorspace. Wiltshire Council sets a charging schedule, with payment usually due at the start of development. In areas with a Neighbourhood Plan, 25% of the CIL is passed down to Town Councils, which drops to 15% for areas without a Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>The latest David Wilson development will be included in this levy. As long as there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place, the Town Council will receive 25% of the CIL. The currently adopted Royal Wootton Bassett runs until 2026, so if development on the site starts after this period, the Town Council will only receive 15% of the CIL funds unless the draft Neighbourhood Plan is adopted.</p>
<p>How much has the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan cost to date?</p>	<p>Since the adoption of present Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2026 in 2018, the Town Council has received just under £170,000 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds (25%). If Wootton Bassett did not have a Neighbourhood Plan in place, the Town Council would have received £102,000 (15%) in CIL funds, which is a £68,000 difference. The present Neighbourhood Plan cost around £30,000 to produce. With the current review of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council has sought and received just under £18,000 in grant funding from Locality to cover consultancy fees and other expenses, plus 3 free of charge technical support packages; a Housing Needs Assessment, Design Guidance and Codes, and a Viability Testing of Proposed Allocations Report. Costs so far to cover the production of the new plan has been £40,000 from the Council budget and £10,000 from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds allocation. Currently there is around £5,000 of the Council budget remaining to cover costs for its adoption, noting that the referendum costs are covered by Wiltshire Council. Consultancy fees have been around £54,000 with £17,500 covered by the Locality grant, the Council budget and CIL funding.</p>

Question	Answer
Who is the Independent Examiner?	The Independent Examiner for a Neighbourhood Plan is appointed by the local planning authority with the agreement of the Neighbourhood Planning Group. The Independent Examiner is, usually, a planning inspector or experienced planning lawyer/planner who will provide recommended modifications to a Neighbourhood Plan that are necessary for the plan to meet the legal tests required if the plan is to proceed to referendum.
To what extent does Wiltshire Council need to comply with the Neighbourhood Plan?	Once 'made' the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and its policies are a material consideration which must be taken into account when planning applications are assessed by Wiltshire Council Planning Officers and Councillors.
<p>Does the plan take into account recent government changes to planning policy and legislation?</p> <p>With regard to government relaxation of planning constraints, will we be affected?</p>	<p>Yes, the Neighbourhood Plan takes into account recent government changes to planning policy, including the December 2024 update to the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>It is likely too early to predict the potential impacts of the government's relaxation of planning constraints on Royal Wootton Bassett; however, it may support the development of the site allocations.</p>
Did WC adhere to the 2018 Plan policies when making RWB planning decisions in the following years?	Between December 2017 and January 2020, 26 planning applications and three appeals cited Neighbourhood Plan policies as material considerations in their determination. Out of these 29 decisions, 26 adhered to the 2018 Plan policies. In just 3 of the decisions, Wiltshire Council believed that the applications did comply with the Neighbourhood Plan and approved these, despite the Town Council objecting to the fact that the proposals adhered to the Plan.
How are the business opportunities being followed up? Is there consultation with local commerce & industry?	The Bassett "OPEN FOR BUSINESS" Forum has recently been launched by the Town Council – at our second session on 29 <sup>th</sup> September we will be consulting with businesses about the draft plan. Businesses can also register for a business account on our My Bassett Portal to receive updates.

Question	Answer
<p>Renewable energy generation - are there any projects locally e.g. solar panel farms, in the pipeline? Where would they be located?</p>	<p><a href="#">PL/2025/05830</a>: planning application is currently under consultation for a 49.9MW solar farm at Flaxlands Farm to the north of Royal Wootton Bassett.</p> <p>A proposal by Conrad Energy for a solar farm project to generate energy co-located within their existing operational flexible generation asset is also being prepared for Wootton Fields Farm, Marlborough Road, SN4 7SA.</p>
<p>Active travel - cycle routes talked about for years, including into Swindon, why the delay? Is it likely to happen anytime soon?</p>	<p>Policy 4 of the draft Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision of cycle paths within new developments. Policy 8 emphasises the need for the provision of cycle paths and outlines how new developments should integrate these into existing routes throughout the Town. Wiltshire Council is working with Highways England and Sustrans to develop a cycle path from the A3102 near Sally Pussey's Inn across the M4 to Swindon. The route has been designed, land ownership is being resolved and a planning application is to be submitted. Funding for the design phase is secured from Highways England and further funding should be made available for construction.</p> <p><a href="https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/7163/Royal-Wootton-Bassett-to-Swindon-cycleway">https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/7163/Royal-Wootton-Bassett-to-Swindon-cycleway</a></p>
<p>Sustainable Transport. Where are existing cycle routes? What defines a cycle route?</p>	<p>Cycle routes are designated networks specifically planned and marked for use by cyclists. They are designated to provide safer, more convenient and often more direct travel options for cyclist and usually link key destinations.</p> <p>The existing surfaced cycle routes extend along the High Street from Coped Hall to Rylands Way. Additionally, a surfaced cycle route extends along Station Road.</p> <p>The Council recently launched a consultation on priority cycles routes across the Town and the order in which to deliver these. The priority routes were identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre to Rugby Club (via Academy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longleaze to Academy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Question	Answer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A3102 - High Street to Swindon Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parallel to A3102</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Royal Wootton Bassett to Swindon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downs View to Bincknoll Lane</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>How are developers policed to ensure they comply once planning is approved as this doesn't seem to happen. Are there examples of biodiversity net gain with local developments?</p>	<p>Provision of a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on developments is mandatory in England. Developers are required to identify land, either on-site or off-site, for BNG and will not usually obtain planning consent without this. As a last resort, if developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government.</p> <p>This "policing" is a function for Wiltshire Council but RWBTC and members of the public are able to monitor and report to WC if they believe that the conditions are not being met.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>PL/2024/08724: Land West of Marlborough Road</u></a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>PL/2023/02129: Land to the South of A3102 and East of Royal Wootton Bassett</u></a></p>
<p>What are examples of allowable developments resulting in the loss of green space? Are any local green spaces under threat of development?</p>	<p>Policy 12 sets out how the loss of Local Green Spaces will not be permitted except in 'very special circumstances' (in accordance with national policy) which may include a significant housing supply shortfall. Development would require strong justification, showing that the benefits to the community outweigh the adverse impacts. However, there are no existing green spaces under threat of development.</p>
<p>Sparrow Lane Green Space – recently cleared, what's happening to it?</p>	<p>Sparrow Lane Green Space is to become a green, calm space off of the high street and is the subject of a current Town Council project. This space is proposed as a Local Green Space in Policy 12 of the draft Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
<p>Has a new cemetery site been identified for when the Downs View Cemetery &amp;</p>	<p>No site has been identified, but it is recognised that the cemetery is nearing capacity. Cemetery Officer has confirmed approximately 5 to 10 years of burial space remaining.</p>

Question	Answer
Remembrance Garden is full? (see also Policy 22, P125)	
What is meant by 'non-designated heritage assets'? Are any of these 'listed' or protected buildings?	Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet criteria for designated heritage assets. Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and therefore have a higher level of protection.
Affordable Housing & First Homes – On each development, what is the required percentage of affordable housing & First Homes? (as per Wiltshire Local Plan minimum requirement?)	<p>The adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out a requirement for at least 40% affordable homes on developments of five or more dwellings.</p> <p>The emerging Wiltshire Local Plan, which is currently under examination, sets out a similar requirement for at least 40% affordable housing provision on sites of ten or more dwellings or 0.5 ha or more.</p> <p>First Homes have now been removed as a requirement in national policy.</p>
Are there specific sites identified for new old peoples housing, residential or nursing homes?	Yes, there is one site identified as Garabrecan, Brinkworth Road, which can support a residential care home or nursing home with up to 64 beds, or other specialist older persons' accommodation for up to 36 dwellings. This is a proposed site allocation within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
New Employment Floorspace - are new industrial sites already identified? If so, what are potential locations?	There are no sites identified in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan for employment use.
Tourism & Leisure Related Development. What is an example of this type of	Policy 18 seeks to support tourism and leisure-related development in a sustainable way. An example of a leisure development that could come to the town is a new

Question	Answer
<p>development that could come to the town. Are any under discussion?</p>	<p>skate/wheeled park. Policy 22 states that applications for a new skate/wheeled park will be supported.</p> <p>There are other tourism/leisure developments under discussion, these being Sparrow Lane Pocket Park and The Town Centre Park.</p>
<p>Infill Development on Brownfield sites. Where are the brownfield sites in and around RWB?</p>	<p>The largest known site is the Wiltshire Council owned depot on Marlborough Road.</p>
<p>Development beyond the settlement boundary. How does the recent David Wilson Homes development address this? We seem to be moving closer to Swindon with no say over planning applications. The new development does not appear to satisfy any of the Policy 20 conditions.</p>	<p>The David Wilson Homes application for up to 410 houses at Upper Woodshaw was approved in July 2025. As this Neighbourhood Plan is only in draft form and not adopted, the development is not required to address or satisfy any of the draft Neighbourhood Plan policies.</p> <p>The currently adopted Neighbourhood Plan (2017-2026) did not contain policies restricting development to settlement boundaries, as the then Wiltshire Council Core Strategy covered such matters.</p>
<p>Infrastructure to support new development. There have been numerous developments in the last few decades, with more to come. This policy states what is required but developers have always agreed to the bare minimum and delivered less. How can this policy make a difference?</p>	<p>As stated in the policy, developers will be required to demonstrate how these needs are being met. Statutory consultees and Wiltshire Council will also make requests from developers to ensure proposed developments are acceptable in planning terms. These will be secured through S106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.</p> <p>However the main authority for ensuring infrastructure requirements are met is Wiltshire Council, as the “competent planning authority”</p>
<p>Town Park &amp; Row-de-Row states that ‘applications that support the provision of a Town Park will be supported’ suggesting this</p>	<p>This policy means that applications which include the provision of a Town Park in this location will be supported.</p>

Question	Answer
would be linked to development of adjacent land?	
15.1 refers to 'housing requirement is 150 dwellings'. The table on page 129 lists in excess of 250 dwellings. The David Wilson development is 400 homes, not referred to anywhere in the NP. How will this affect the site allocations policy?	The David Wilson development is allocated within the draft Wiltshire Local Plan as Policy 51: Land at Woodshaw, Royal Wootton Bassett. Therefore, it does not count towards the neighbourhood area requirement of 150 homes, which is to be allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan. The neighbourhood area requirement of 150 dwellings is a minimum only, and the Planning Practice Guidance states that neighbourhood planning bodies are encouraged to exceed this, where possible.
Was the previous NP monitored & reviewed in the same way? How closely was it followed? What were the positives & negatives of that review?	It was monitored via the Planning Committee when considering applications submitted.