

# 1 | Background

# Beginnings

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Salisbury's beginnings are well documented and no discussion on the city's future would be complete without a brief look into its past. By the start of the 13th century the settlement of Old Sarum had outgrown its location within the Iron Age hill fort east of the river Avon; the water supply was failing, the cathedral was in disrepair and the time had come for big decisions to be made.

And so, in 1220 Bishop Poore oversaw the laying of foundation stones for a new cathedral on the river Avon water meadows 1 ½ miles to the south. Thirty eight years later the cathedral was consecrated and the future of the city of New Sarum, later to become Salisbury, was firmly established. Bishop Poore was also responsible for designing the chequer pattern street system, which like the cathedral, remains today as a reminder of 13th century vision and industry.

Salisbury's early growth and prosperity was built on the wool and cloth trade and by the middle of the 15th century it was thought to be the fifth or sixth largest city in England. Subsequent periods of decline interspersed with low growth meant that by 1801 the city's population was not much greater than it had been 350 years earlier.

The industrial revolution of the 19th century had little impact on Salisbury and many of the city's medieval buildings remained standing next to modern Georgian houses. It was during this time that the city's beauty and in particular that of the cathedral was captured by artists such as Constable and Turner.

The city of Salisbury has grown and changed over the years but the views painted by Constable are still much as they were nearly 200 years ago. And the city's streets, though wider in places, still follow the original medieval chequer pattern. The past is very much alive in Salisbury today and it is this wealth of heritage that is one of its great strengths.

# Salisbury today

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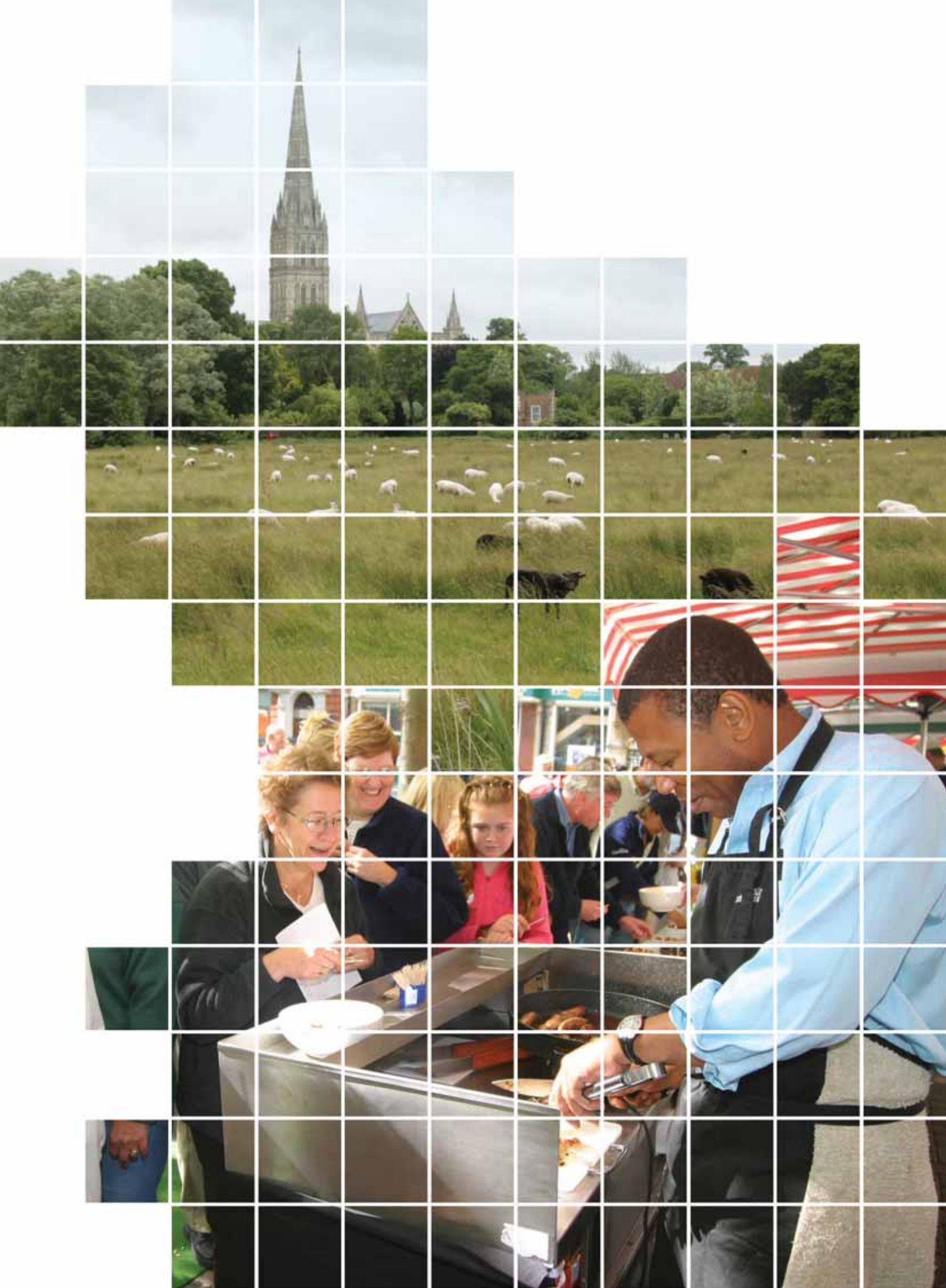
Today, Salisbury's population is around 45,000 and it is the largest shopping and employment centre in Wiltshire, serving the residents of the city and the surrounding towns and villages. The city is also an important tourism destination.

The city and the immediate surrounding area is home to a number of leading companies; hi-tech ventures, financial institutions and manufacturers who achieve excellence in their field, together with world class research facilities. The area is also a key base for the British Army.

Salisbury has excellent schools and the Wiltshire College Salisbury Campus which provides a range of higher and further education courses. And on the outskirts of the city, Salisbury District Hospital has an international reputation in a number of specialist areas.

The city boasts over 200 independent and specialist shops and a mix of high street names. It has a cosmopolitan café culture, particularly around the Market Place, and a host of restaurants, pubs and traditional inns, some dating from the 13th century. Salisbury provides great opportunities for cultural and general leisure activities. Music, theatre, dance, art, literature, sport and exhibitions all play an important role in the life of the city and the annual Salisbury International Arts Festival is widely acknowledged as being one of the best events of its kind in the UK.

The city of Salisbury is an important tourist destination and attracts millions of people from the UK and overseas each year. Nearly three quarters of these visitors come just for the day, primarily to see the cathedral but also to visit nearby Stonehenge. In Salisbury we also have an award winning Tourist Information Centre that provides information and a range of services to visitors from all over the world.



# Salisbury is a great place, why do we need a vision?

There is no doubt that Salisbury provides a social and physical environment and a quality of life that is much envied and sought after.

Built around the meeting place of five rivers, Salisbury is a beautiful medieval city set amongst outstanding countryside. Salisbury has an unemployment rate that is amongst the lowest in the country and it is popular as a place to both live and work. The city has good connections to the national road and motorway network, and excellent rail links to London.

Salisbury is an important centre in the south west of England. It is:

- a tourism destination of international significance;
- a business centre of regional importance;
- a sub-regional centre for retail, culture, housing and further education; and
- the centre of the Salisbury Diocese which covers most of Wiltshire and Dorset.

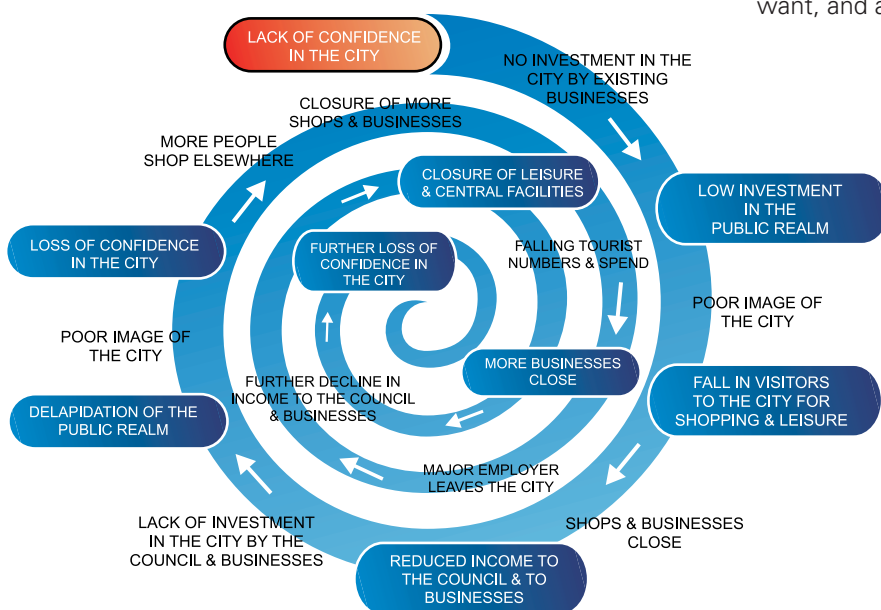
Nothing stands still, however.

Retail competition is increasing with new developments in Southampton, Bournemouth, Basingstoke, Andover and Winchester. Neighbouring towns and cities are also providing improved leisure and cultural opportunities whilst a lack of employment land close to the city threatens to restrict the growth and expansion of our local businesses. And our tourism industry continues to be challenged by low-cost airlines and newly developing domestic markets.

House prices are higher than the regional and national average whilst salaries are lower. People find it hard to get on the housing ladder and employers have difficulty in recruiting across a wide range of jobs and skills.

If we don't tackle these issues now there is a real danger that Salisbury will go into a spiral of decline that will be much harder to get out of in the future.

So we find ourselves, today, in a similar situation to that of Bishop Poore all those years ago. Clearly something needs to be done and big decisions need to be made once more if Salisbury is to maintain its position as one of the south west's premier centres for business, tourism and retail. We need to make plans now if we want Salisbury to remain a pleasant and prosperous place where our children's children want, and are able, to live and work.



SPIRAL of DECLINE

# What exactly is the Vision?

The Salisbury Vision is simply a plan that outlines a long-term programme of change and gradual development aimed at improving the lives of everyone that lives in, works in or visits Salisbury. The Vision comes in two parts.

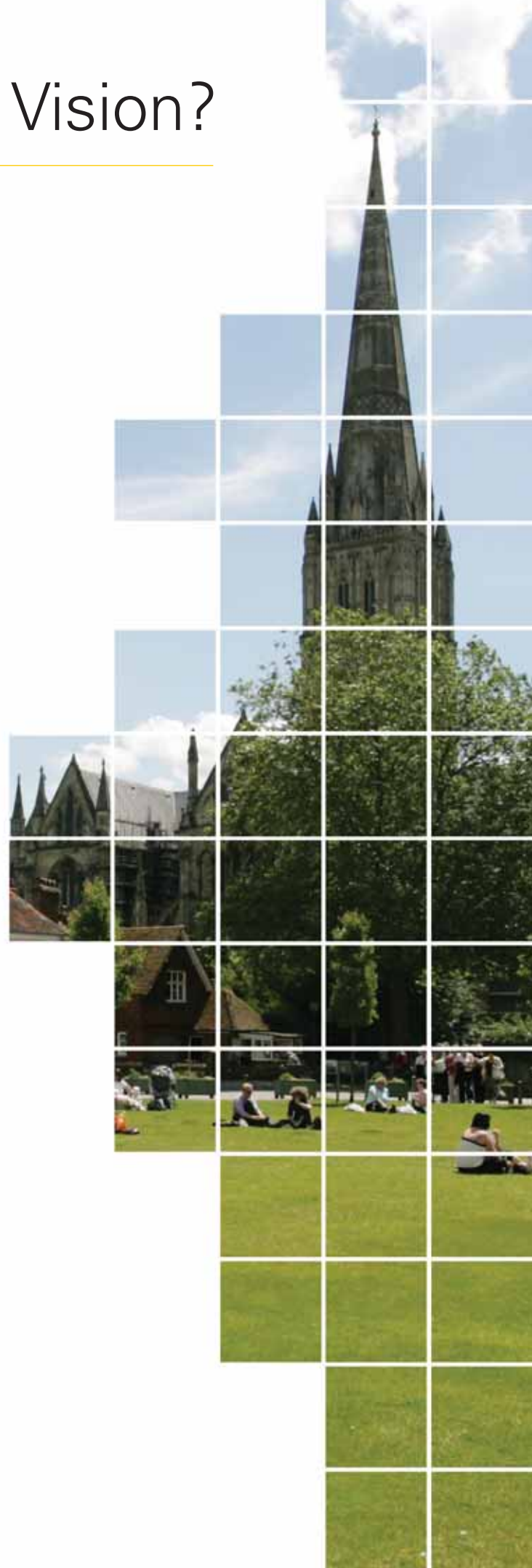
Firstly there is the Vision statement. This is a short sentence that describes how we want Salisbury to be over the next 20 years. And by 'we', we mean our understanding of what the residents of Salisbury and south Wiltshire have told us. Closely linked to this are the eight components that make up a sustainable community, the key principles upon which the Vision is founded.

Almost without exception the residents of Salisbury and south Wiltshire have also told us that Salisbury is a one-off and they don't want it spoilt. So whatever we do to try and make the Vision happen, we will only succeed if we make sure that we don't destroy the city's unique and special character.

The second part of the Vision contains a set of initial proposals that we think will help us achieve the Vision for Salisbury. These are grouped into three categories – Traffic and Transport, Development, and something we are calling Public Realm. This means the spaces between and around buildings that are freely available for public use. They can be publicly or privately owned and include areas such as the Market Place, pavements and streets.

The Vision is, in many ways, a set of aspirations and as such it sets out the principle of what we believe needs to happen. It does not necessarily provide the detail of how we intend to achieve it. In project 13, for example, we set out our proposals for a hierarchy of routes that restrict traffic movements in the city's core streets. What we don't say is which streets will be pedestrian only, which may be for public transport only and which could be used by all vehicles. This detail will be determined as part of the Transport and Movement strategy which we will be developing during 2009.

It should also be noted that the Vision does not set out the council's planning policy. This will be established in the Local Development Framework which replaces the Salisbury District Local Plan from 2011.



# How has the Vision been produced?

In February 2006 a team of consultants was appointed to develop the Salisbury Vision. This work was funded by Salisbury District Council in partnership with the South West Regional Development Agency and Wiltshire County Council. We discussed with the consultants what we thought the issues were and our initial thoughts on how they could be resolved. We also identified four key areas that we considered to be a priority.

## The Maltings and central car park

The redevelopment of the Maltings and central car park to provide Salisbury with much needed additional retail space is crucial to the viability and vitality of the city centre. The existing Maltings shopping centre, with the exception of the Sainsbury's supermarket, has performed very poorly. Although in a prime city centre location it feels cut off from the core of the city and it provides shoppers with a disappointing visit. It is thought that a new development would include apartments, bars, restaurants and a high quality public space together with parking.

## Southampton Road A36

This is a main approach road to the city and the through route from the south to Bristol and Bath. There is frequent severe traffic congestion at peak times and weekends and it creates a bad first impression of the city with a mixture of unattractive industrial and large retail units either side of the road. It is essential that both traffic flow and its visual appearance is significantly improved.

## The Market Place and Guildhall Square

This is the city's most important public space outside of The Cathedral Close. It is the centre of the city and for centuries it has acted as a focus of trade and a meeting place. For two days a week it is a hive of activity as people from near and far come into Salisbury to visit the city's popular and thriving Charter Market. For the majority of the time, however, it is little more than a tarmac car park. The quality of the seats, signs and lighting is poor and overall the Market Place is a huge disappointment. The 18th century Guildhall is one of Salisbury's most important and most popular buildings. It is the venue for a variety of uses and functions, with part of the building being used as Magistrates Courts. It is important that an alternative and appropriate use is found for the building when the Magistrates relocate to the Wilton Road in 2009.



## The Churchfields Industrial Estate

This site has grown over the past 30 or so years to become the district's most important employment centre. It covers 33 hectares and is home to approximately 165 companies that together employ around 4,500 people and have a combined annual turnover of around £600 million. The site is bounded by the River Nadder on three sides and the railway line on the fourth making access to the estate difficult, particularly for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV). The only HGV-accessible route to the estate runs through part of the city centre. Relocating the businesses that generate the HGV traffic to alternative locations near to the city centre and redeveloping the estate for alternative use is a priority.

**One of the first things that the consultants did was to ask local residents what they thought was good about Salisbury and what they thought was bad. People were also asked what they would like to see changed or improved. From all of this work and from other research that was carried out the consultants then had a very good understanding of what the big issues were and what people's concerns were. As a way of resolving these issues and overcoming the concerns the consultants suggested three different approaches to the way that the city centre could be developed over the next 20-30 years. Within each approach there were a number of different options for each of the four priority areas and for the city centre overall.**

### Approach 1 - **Consolidation:**

This was the least ambitious approach and it concentrated on making minor improvements rather than major changes. It included making general improvements to streets, squares and open spaces through planting and the removal of unnecessary signing.

### Approach 2 - **Enhancement:**

This approach proposed more extensive changes to improve the visual appearance of the city centre. This included removing traffic from core streets and the partial redevelopment of areas such as the Churchfields Industrial Estate.

### Approach 3 - **Step Change:**

This approach focused on major changes aimed at greatly enhancing the city's environment, improving the overall shopping experience, providing additional jobs and housing. Proposals included major mixed use development on key sites such as the Churchfields Industrial Estate and the Maltings and central car park together with public transport improvements.

These approaches were consulted on during September 2006. Approach 3, Step Change, was seen by the majority of people as being the only approach that could bring about the change that was needed to deliver the Vision for Salisbury.

Over the following six months this approach was further developed and in April 2007 the consultants delivered their final report. This contained a masterplan for delivering major change and improvements to specific problems or areas within the city centre. To make sure that we and the consultants had really heard what local residents were saying, a final period of public consultation was held between July and October.

# Consultation

## Development stage

From the outset we have always considered public consultation and community involvement to be essential to the success of the Vision. During the development of the Vision a number of different consultation exercises were carried out using various techniques in an attempt to get as much community involvement as possible.

The first main event was a public 'drop-in' held on 26-27 May 2006. This was attended by just over 200 people. Comments were made that the Vision was particularly strong on environmental issues but that, to be comprehensive, it should also address social and economic issues. Throughout the summer of 2006 further events were held including three workshops, one of which was with the St Edmund's Community Association. Further workshops were also held specifically for local businesses.

In September 2006 a major Options Exhibition was held at which members of the public were asked for their views on three different approaches proposed by the consultants. Between 400 and 450 people turned up over three days. Of those people who made a choice between the approaches, 61% chose Option 3: Step Change.

A summary of the consultation carried out during this period is included in the consultants' final report. Additional details are available in the Summary Report of Community Involvement. Both of these documents are included in the Technical Supplement.

The final piece of consultation carried out during the development stage took place between July and October 2007 as part of the Our Place in the Future consultation. An associated household survey and young people's survey were also carried out. The results of the Our Place survey showed a high level of support for the aims of the Salisbury Vision and for each of the statements relating to specific Vision proposals. There was particularly strong support for the public realm proposals. The results of the household and young people's surveys showed a lower level of support for the specific Salisbury Vision statements.

A summary of the results of all three surveys is included in the Salisbury & South Wiltshire Our Place in the Future: Consultation Methodology & Output Report which is included in the Technical Supplement.

## Summary of public consultation: development stage

- Public drop-in events and exhibitions: May, September 2006
- Forum workshops: May, June, October 2006
- St Edmund's Community Association workshop: July 2006
- Council officers workshops: July, August 2006
- Councillors' workshop: August 2006
- Business workshops: August, September, October, November 2006
- Survey of commuters and park and ride users: July 2006
- Comprehensive public consultation exercise which included a detailed survey as part of the Our Place in the Future consultation, a short household survey and a website survey for young people: July – October 2007



## Delivery stage

Many of the projects in the Vision are complex and will require a significant amount of investment in terms of officer time and financial resources by the local authority and others if they are to be successful. As each Vision project is brought forward for implementation it will, therefore, be essential that we carry out additional detailed consultation. This will provide us with the opportunity to further evidence the need for each project and it will also allow us to compare and validate the results of the consultation carried out in 2007.

The Salisbury Vision has been designed to be as self-financing as possible (see Funding section) with its success, to a certain extent, relying on a particular sequence of project delivery where early projects finance others which may have no commercial value of their own. An example of this would be the re-investment of some of the capital receipts raised through the redevelopment of the Maltings and central car park into the delivery of public realm improvement projects. To deliver those projects most wanted by residents, such as improvements to the public realm, it will, therefore, be necessary to deliver some projects which may have an overall lower level of public support.

