

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Question from Adam Walton

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Question – (21-103)

'Future Chippenham' development of 7,500 homes to the South and East of Chippenham.

The Future Chippenham development is unanimously opposed by Chippenham Town Council, by the Chippenham MP and by large numbers of local people. It was no doubt a factor in the May local election results for Chippenham and surrounding areas which saw a significant swing away from the Conservatives in affected wards. Will Cabinet now consider postponing any future decisions on the development until the Wiltshire Local Plan update (which currently includes the development) is fully consulted on and published? The updated Local Plan will review housing need and supply across the whole of Wiltshire in the context of updated central government targets and policies, so it surely makes sense to delay any further consideration of the Chippenham development until the Local Plan update is completed.

Response

The Future Chippenham programme was and is being developed in line with the Local plan review timetable. In addition the programme needs to ensure that it develops in line with the terms of the Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England so that funding is available for infrastructure if required. Cabinet is receiving an update report on the FC Programme that will include consideration of the Local Plan Review as reported to Cabinet on 29th June

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Question from Alina Wolfe Murray

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Question – (21-104)

Prior to the Wiltshire Council Cabinet meeting on 29 June, I am writing to you about the controversial plans for a housing development of 7,500 houses in Chippenham and a new road to serve it.

The plans have raised many concerns in the community, and were expressed at various levels. These included Chippenham Town Council, who rejected the proposals several times. More recently, Chippenham's MP Michelle Donelan voiced criticism, saying that "It is important that the interests of Chippenham's current residents are prioritised - yes we do need more affordable homes for families and young people to stay in the town but we certainly do not need 7500." (Link to article: <https://www.gazetteandherald.co.uk/news/19372607.michelle-donelan-fight-housing-numbers-chippenham/>)

Is the Cabinet aware of these objections? What is the Cabinet's view about this? Surely the concerns raised by the residents of Chippenham should count when Wiltshire Council takes decisions that will affect them?

I'd appreciate it if the Council can announce the new timetable to publish the results of the consultation on the proposed road. It will also be helpful to understand why the publication has been delayed.

Response

Cabinet is aware of the recent statements made by the local MP and others made previously in connection with the Future Chippenham Programme. The leadership of

Wiltshire Council maintains a regular dialogue with its MPs.

Concerns raised by the local community about the growth of Chippenham are being taken into consideration through the Local Plan Review process. This is why, as local planning authority, the Council invited views on the scale of growth at Chippenham, priorities for the town's future, as well as potential sites for development. The response to the consultation was reported to the Cabinet on 29 June 2021 and are being very carefully considered.

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Question from Brian Walker

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

I would like to highlight to Wiltshire Council Chippenham Town Council's continued unanimous rejection of the HIF road scheme and 7500 houses.

The newly elected town council confirmed its opposition at its Annual Council meeting on 19th May. Further, at Full council on the 17th June it resolved to send a letter to Wiltshire Council, Homes England and Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government, wholly opposing the construction of such a road and the use of HIF funding with the proposal for 7500 houses in the Avon and Marden Valley area defined by the proposed road routes.

I personally oppose the HIF bid for many reasons including...

1. Carbon Budget

The UK government has pledged to meet net zero carbon by 2050. Wiltshire County council and Chippenham Town council have both declared a Climate Emergency and aim for Chippenham to reach net zero by 2030.

I have calculated the fair carbon budget for Chippenham to be 1.69 megatonnes of CO₂ to achieve our portion of staying within the safe 1.5 degrees C global temperature rise. Chippenham's current carbon baseline is 440,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year. At that rate we have less than five years to get to net zero!

Current housing construction standards emit typical 50-80** tonnes of CO₂ per house build so the build of 7500 attached to the HIF bid alone will generate 375,000 tonnes of CO₂ using approximately 22% of the total remaining budget. This is before disturbed carbon in the soil and road building is accounted for plus additional car usage.

So It remains impossible for Chippenham to meet its 1.5 degree climate goal. We are planning to fail at the start of the most important decade to tackle climate change.

It is the first responsibility of a Council to safeguard the welfare of their citizens, including by taking reasonable measures to mitigate substantial threats.

Climate change is a grave threat to people around the world, jeopardising health, security and prosperity.

2. Climate Adaption

The land being built on is shown by Cranfield University as excellent farmland. Under adaption pathways published by the UK Climate Committee last week by 2080 we will likely reach summer temperatures over 40 degrees C in Wiltshire as regularly as we currently exceed 32 degrees C. In this scenario global food supplies are likely to be disrupted and it will become too hot to grow food in some countries.

Thus having local farmland available for future generations of Chippenham residents to grow food on is vital.

It is the first responsibility of the local government in a democratic society to protect and safeguard the lives of its citizens. Where there is a foreseeable risk of substantial harm, a local government will be under a duty of care to take reasonable steps to safeguard its citizens against that harm, and failing to take such steps will constitute a breach of that duty.

I argue that the risk of Climate change is known by Wiltshire Council given their own declared Climate emergency. The building on local historic farmland fails to take an adequate risk assessment of the future need for this land to grow food for future generations.

Question 1 (21-106)

Why has Wiltshire council continued during the consultation process to seek a Joint Venture (JV) partner offering county owned farm land to development partners? It is even prepared to offer land outside of Chippenham to seal the deal!

Response

Wiltshire Council has engaged consultants to undertake soft market testing to understand the market interest in forming a joint venture partnership. A paper is being taken to Cabinet in July where this matter will be discussed and a further report is planned later in the year.

Question 2 (21-107)

What steps are being taken to avoid corrupt practice in engaging a joint developer given potential for insider dealing and trading with land that we the people own?

Response

The appointment of a joint venture partner will be governed by an open and transparent procurement process compliant within public procurement requirements. If a JV partner is sought the Council will employ legal and property consultants to provide advice to ensure that the Council's interest are protected and maximised.

Question 3 (21-108)

Why does the Joint Development agreement look for only financial gain and take no account of sustainable development?

Response

The criteria for the appointment of a Joint Venture development partner have not yet been set and will be informed by the on-going work being undertaken. These criteria will include a need for the JV partner to meet the Council's current and future planning policy objectives for development that include the requirement for new development to be sustainable. A joint venture development would be required to comply with the Council's planning policies.

Question 4 (21-109)

Why have the Future Chippenham team broken its promise to report the results of the HIF bid (Road) consultation within 12 weeks of consultation closure?

Response

The Future Chippenham Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy states: 4.4.4 The Future Chippenham team's response to the consultation will be published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing or an explanation provided as to why this timescale is not possible. The following explanation has been placed onto the Future Chippenham web site.

The Future Chippenham team apologise for the slight delay in the publication of its response to the consultation. The number of responses received has been very significant and it has been necessary to ensure that all responses are appropriately fed back in a timely way into the Options Assessment Report update (OAR) process.

This has meant that unfortunately we have not been able to meet the 12-week period for publishing the consultation feedback report. We are currently finalising the report which will be published for Cabinet in 21st July meeting

Question 5 (21-110)

Prior to the election Cllr Clewer and other Conservative councillors said that the additional 5,000 houses Wiltshire had voluntarily taken on, would be removed from Wiltshire housing target and the Local Plan would be adapted in line with the significant consultation response. If the 5,000 houses are removed the target for Chippenham is significantly reduced and there is no need for the HIF bid.

Will Cllr Clewer now confirm 5000 houses have been removed from the housing target?

Response

Cabinet considered a report about the Wiltshire Local Plan Review at its meeting on 29 June 2021. No decisions were made at that meeting on policies for the draft Plan including the housing requirement. At the meeting it was resolved to undertake further work in response to the recent consultation on key parts of the evidence base including testing the upper and lower levels of housing need and spatial distribution of growth for the plan period.

As also set out in that report (paragraph 5), once the draft Plan has been prepared it will be brought back to Cabinet and onto Council for approval before a further stage of consultation is undertaken.

Question 6 (21-111)

Is the Cabinet aware of Chippenham's MP withdraw of her support for the HIF road bid?

Response

Recent correspondence with Michelle Donelan MP is available on our website [Wiltshire Council responds to a letter from Michelle Donelan MP regarding Future Chippenham - Wiltshire Council](#) The MP's support of the Future Chippenham programme has not been withdrawn and is dependent on the council delivering specific outcomes for Chippenham and its residents. The Council's leadership is continuing dialogue with the MP on these outcomes.

Question 7 (21-112)

Will Cllr Clewer now publish the agreement with Homes England, as promised by Cllr Whitehead. If not, why won't the document be published? How can the public of Chippenham engage if these agreements are hidden and apparently created behind closed doors?

Response

Following questions about the publication of the GDA HIF Agreement advice was sought from Homes England. Their advice is that the GDA should not be published.

Question 8 (21-113)

Why can't the council based in Trowbridge use a system that will allow the people of Chippenham to genuinely engage in the consultation process and ask questions?

Response

The Chippenham HIF road options consultation process aligns with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Many comments and questions were raised during the consultation – responses to these have been provided in the Consultation report.

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Question from Bryant Vincent

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Question 1 – (21-114)

In view of Wiltshire Council's so called improvements recently completed in Chippenham being seen as a complete waste of money will Wiltshire Council have the professional expertise to plan and implement a much more costly project in the building of a distributor road around the town should their HIF bid be successful ?

Government may refuse this bid when considering how Wiltshire Council has failed to consider objections to their plans, refused to engage with those who would be most affected and did not carry out proper surveys to decide the best way to improve traffic and other problems in Chippenham.

Wiltshire Council now needs to concentrate on regaining the respect / support of ratepayers and others in Chippenham before embarking on any more grandiose schemes .

Response

These comments are noted.

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Question from Cllr David Poole – Chippenham Town Council

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

As a member of the Chippenham Town Council May I take this opportunity to put forward my deep concerns regarding the support given by Wiltshire Council for the Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) for the so called Eastern and Southern relief road around Chippenham, and the proposed plan by Wiltshire Council to grant permission for up to 7500 new houses in the Local Plan for Chippenham.

Question 1 – (21-115)

Is Cabinet aware that at a meeting of Chippenham Town Council on the 16th of June 2021 a 100% support by Town Councillors to send a letter to Wiltshire Council requesting, It as the local Planning authority to reject and decline its support for HIF funding for the proposed new Eastern and Southern relief road , and a copy of this letter to the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG) also the MP for Chippenham ?

Response

The proceedings of Chippenham Town Council are a matter of public record.

Question 2 – (21-116)

Is Cabinet aware that public opinion regarding HIF funding for the relief road and any large scale housing development on the Eastern and Southern side of Chippenham is rejected by the majority of local people including the Member of Parliament for Chippenham ?

Response

The responses to the road option consultation will be summarised in the report presented to Cabinet.

Recent correspondence with Michelle Donelan MP is available on our website [Wiltshire Council responds to a letter from Michelle Donelan MP regarding Future Chippenham - Wiltshire Council](#) The MP's support of the Future Chippenham programme has not been withdrawn and is dependent on the council delivering specific outcomes for Chippenham and its residents. We are continuing our dialogue with the MP on these outcomes.

Question 3 – (21-117)

Is Cabinet aware that if any of the three road options put forward by Wiltshire Council gets approved and built it will have a huge detrimental impact on the local environment, also create pressure on local infrastructure throughout the area ?

Response

The proposals for a new road will be subject to a planning application in due course. The potential impacts of the road will be addressed as part of this process alongside the implications for local infrastructure. The principle of the HIF is to deliver infrastructure upfront, in a way that would not be possible via piecemeal development .

Question 4 – (21-118)

Is Cabinet aware that if up to 7500 new houses are built as a result of this new road proposal there will be a large shortfall of local employment for the new residents of Chippenham, and as a result turn Chippenham into a huge commuter town, resulting in thousands of fresh car movements every day which will have a negative impact on the environment ?

Response

No Longer relevant to the current proposals

Question 5 – (21-119)

Wiltshire Council put all three road options for the Eastern and Southern relief road out for public consultation earlier this year , when will the results of this consultation be made public ? And will Cabinet take notice of the findings of this public consultation ?

Response

The results of the consultation are reported to the Council's Cabinet on 21st July. The consultation report has been published with the papers to that Committee.

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Question from Colin Lynes

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

Would Cllr Clewer please explain how the opposition of Chippenham Town Council and many people living in, and near, to the affected area has influenced the Cabinet's position on the proposed developments to the East and South of Chippenham. In particular, has the proposed housing number been reduced to a level in line with that predicted to be needed by the town.

There is much, and a growing level of, evidence of our reliance on nature and the planet's eco systems for our well-being on both an individual level and collectively. The evidence is that we cannot continue to take actions which cause unnecessary pollution and the destruction of the natural environment without risking our future. The climate is becoming much less stable, and no one can predict the point at which catastrophic breakdown of the system will inevitably occur if we continue 'Canute like' to believe that we are in total control of our destiny. Each development not driven by, and not considered on the basis of local need, may have a small effect individually, but the ecological load is cumulative and will add to the risk.

I wish to make it clear that I remain opposed to this development which bears no relationship to local needs.

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Statement from David Roberts

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

I understand that new houses and infrastructure needs to be built and in doing so compromises need to be made and Chippenham should shoulder its fair share of doing so but 7500 houses and the environmental destruction it and the road would cause to the town and the surrounding area is wholly disproportionate. I am certain all the attendees of the meeting are aware that our Local MP and Town Council (unanimously) have objected to the plan. I have been patiently waiting for the outcome of the consultation which was due after 12 weeks but nothing has come forward. It feels very much like Chippenham and its residents are being 'done to' and that local democracy counts for nothing. This is being compounded by the set up of a JV which appears to be very secretive as the council is refusing to share information about it.

Just because time has passed since the Council voted against the plan does not mean that people have lost interest or moved on from this topic, it is very clear that the town is against the proposals and Wiltshire Council have an absolute accountability to take on board and act on the views of the vast majority of the town.

The environmental impact has been called out loud and clear and I cannot see how the Council's stance on climate change and the proposals can co-exist, if the Council chooses to go ahead with their plans they cannot authentically claim to be doing the right thing in the ongoing climate emergency. Over and above the carbon impact from this scheme the destruction of the surrounding countryside and wildlife would be catastrophic.

The council need to be aware that plans that don't have community support will have consequences if pushed through. As has been seen recently in the Amersham by-election people do care about the destruction of their local environment, I would certainly ensure that in future elections I would not support any party or councillors that did not listen to its electorate and appears to operate in a way that keeps the local people and council in the dark.

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Statement from Declan Baseley – Chippenham Town Council

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

My names is Declan Baseley and I am the Green Party councillor for Chippenham Town Council. I wish to make a statement for the upcoming extraordinary cabinet meeting that I am categorically against any new expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure during this time of climate and ecological emergency, and that the proposed HIF bid and developments are not wholly supported by residents of my ward, the town, or the county.

The newly proposed alternative to the original designs, only comprising of the southern section of the disaster – sorry, distributor road, will still destroy vast swathes of our towns scant remaining green belt as soil is churned up and the new estates built, the proposed number of houses is exceptionally high and unwarranted. Additionally, the newly proposed road design will still cut across and spoil the cycle path between Chippenham and Lacock, reducing the wellbeing of residents as an idyllic and treasured local spot is tarnished forever.

We live in a time of peril for the natural world, and we risk spoiling the few remaining green spaces around Chippenham for our descendants - not to mention that having resolved to declare a climate emergency, the council should be acting like it, and refuse to expand fossil fuel infrastructure when they have pledged to protect our planet from further damage.

You are losing the trust of the people by constantly brushing aside their views, pretending you are doing it in their interest. You only have to look at HS2 to see how unanimously unpopular developments of this nature are, and how they cause widespread unhappiness to locals as they watch habitats and ecosystems get destroyed for the sake of more cars on the road and more cookie-cutter houses their children can't afford to own.

I urge the council to reject the HIF bid proposal entirely and ask for the money to be withdrawn, and in doing so, send a shockwave message to resonate across our nation, that local communities will not be bullied into accepting ecocide and pollution at the hands of climate criminals. I urge you to take into consideration that Chippenham Town

Council unanimously voted to reject the HIF bid, and as we vote on behalf of the residents of our wards, that means that Chippenham unanimously resolved to reject the HIF bid.

Think upon the world your grandchildren will inherit.

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Statement from Graham Lacey

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

I wish to record my opposition to the Future Chippenham and HIF plans and my support of Chippenham Town Council who also oppose these plans.

I think the plans are completely out of proportion to the needs of Chippenham and will have serious and irreversible effects.

The planned building will destroy the beautiful countryside around Chippenham, where I regularly walk and watch wildlife. The environmental effects will be considerable.

Local people do not need this level of housebuilding and the new road. It will just bring in people from other parts of the country and encourage even more expansion

The plans promise all sorts of benefits that I doubt will be delivered. It would be good to see better provision of things such as safer cycling and better public transport for the town now. If that can't be delivered for the present population, massive expansion will just make things worse.

Please abandon these plans and work to make the area more environmentally friendly.

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Question from Ian James

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement and Questions

Firstly may I congratulate you on your appointment as Leader of Wiltshire Council.

Will you make a commitment whilst as leader of the Council that trust and honesty which are part of the underpinning morals of a Councillor will be up held during your term as leader?

Will you as leader ensure your cabinet members answer questions put by the public in an open and transparent manner and not be misleading or just fail to answer the question made to them?

Question 1 – (21-120)

The HIF bid made to Homes England was made by Wiltshire Council using support from Michelle Donelan, which by all accounts amounted to promises to the MP that could not be delivered by this Council which at best looks unprofessional and at worst deceitful. In recent meetings with Michelle Donelan “What has the Council now promised the MP for her continued support for the HIF bid? And are there minutes available of this meeting for the public to view?

Response

Meetings held between the leadership of the Council and its MPs are confidential. However, correspondence between the former leader of the Council and Michele Donelan MP regarding Chippenham HIF is a matter of public record and can be found on the Council's website. [Wiltshire Council responds to a letter from Michelle Donelan MP regarding Future Chippenham - Wiltshire Council](#)

Question 2 – (21-121)

Trust in how Wiltshire Council conducts its business has been shattered in the past 12 months. The consultation process was undertaken with two consultations running together the Local Plan and the HIF road route for Chippenham. Was this done purposely to confuse the public? It certainly achieved that aim.

Response:

The Future Chippenham road consultation was entirely separate from the Local Plan Review consultation. Every effort was made during the consultation process on the Future Chippenham road options to explain this fact and signpost those with comments on issues relevant to the Local Plan Process to that consultation.

Question 3 – (21-122)

The Consultation process for the Local Plan and the HIF was conducted on line and excluded many who did not have access to the internet, this was both undemocratic and disappointing for many of the public who could not respond. This was challenged by Bremhill Parish Council, but the previous leader brushed the matter under the carpet. Many in the County consider that this action was driven by the urgency to keep the HIF bid on track. Why did the Council not delay the Consultation until the public could attend Council offices to see paper copies of the Local Plan and the Future Chippenham Consultation?

Response

The HIF consultation timetable was informed by the council's obligations under its agreement with Homes England. The limitations placed upon the process by the impact of the pandemic were for public safety reasons and all reasonable steps were taken to ensure the community were aware of the consultation, had access to the consultation material and opportunity to comment including provision of hard copies of consultation material when requested.

In relation to the Local Plan consultation, see Cabinet report of 29 June 2021.

Question 4 – (21-123)

The Council promised the results of the Future Chippenham consultation within 12 weeks this has not been achieved. Has the delay been engineered so that the public cannot ask questions today on this Consultation?

Response

The Future Chippenham Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy states: 4.4.4 The Future Chippenham team's response to the consultation will be published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing or an explanation provided as to why this timescale is not possible. The following explanation has been placed onto the Future Chippenham web site.

The Future Chippenham team apologise for the slight delay in the publication of its

response to the consultation. The number of responses received has been very significant and it has been necessary to ensure that all responses are appropriately fed back in a timely way into the Options Assessment Report update (OAR) process.

This has meant that unfortunately we have not been able to meet the 12-week period for publishing the consultation feedback report. We are currently finalising the report and anticipate it will be published in time for it to be considered by Cabinet in July.

Question 5 – (21-124)

As there is a delay will the council delay the next cabinet meeting so that due democratic process can be undertaken to allow the public to scrutinise the results and ask questions prior to any decision being made on the direction of Future Chippenham?

Response

The delay in the publication of the consultation report onto the road options is explained above. This along with other matters relating to the Future Chippenham Programm will be considered by Cabinet at an extra ordinary meeting on 21st July .

Question 6 – (21-125)

Chippenham Town Council has now sent a letter to Homes England stating that at no time was the Town Council consulted on the letter sent by the then leader of the Town council supporting the HIF bid. Did Wiltshire council bring pressure to bear on the Leader of Chippenham Town Council and the Chief Executive to send this letter in secrecy supporting the HIF bid? If the answer is “No” why would the Leader send such a letter in secrecy and behind closed doors?

Response

Questions concerning the internal communication between the leadership, executive and members of Chippenham Town Council around this correspondence are matters that should be addressed to the Town Council.

Question 7 – (21-126)

Cabinet members some of whom are still in post today bear some responsibility for this dark time of Wiltshire Council, this is why honesty, openness, and transparency must be at the forefront of your term in office and those of your colleagues.

Response:

No question raised

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Statement from Ged Doyle

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
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Statement

I am opposed to the idea of 3 new roads bypassing Pewsham. Why build on green lush landscape? There are plenty of sites than should be redeveloped first: the old wiltshire college is one, the old bus station is another.

What was the point of permitting St Modwin to go ahead when there was no incumbent and remains empty to this day?

Fix and maintain the existing infrastructure first before building anything new and you will find you will have the solution for eternity.

Response:

Noted. The consultation is on three principal route options, only one will be delivered. All proposals are subject to the outcome of the Local Plan Review, Masterplan and planning application(s) and will be subject to appropriate consultation and due process.

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Statement from Jessica Auld

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

I am very concerned about the future Chippenham road plans and 7500 houses. I am most worried about the location of the housing which is clearly not optimum and ruins the green belt, causing untold issues for wildlife and habitats. The traffic congestion in Chippenham is already awful, and there are many pinch points and roads which are an accident waiting to happen, which will certainly be made worse due to the proposed housing development. For example, Malmesbury road is really struggling - I have twice been nearly hit by lorries that were speeding and nearly mounted the curb and the road to the new Birds Marsh housing estate is insufficient for the amount of traffic it is now facing. Whilst I can see that new housing may be required, the location of this needs to consider the needs of all existing residents and the impact on the environment too and the current plans are not doing this effectively. Therefore, I do not think the development or road should go ahead.

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Questions from Lisa Harrison

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Question 1 – (21-134)

Foresight Report makes clear, it is widely accepted that we must produce more food to feed a growing population in a sustainable way. The UK is committed to playing its part in this global challenge" Please explain how Wiltshire Council's decision to build on green belt and farmland furthers this objective?

Response:

The land in question is not designated as Green Belt and no decision has been made on the content of the draft Local Plan (see Cabinet report of 29 June 2021 on the Local Plan Review). Land owned by the Council is being promoted by the Future Chippenham programme through the Local Plan process for sustainable infrastructure-led housing development to meet the need for new housing in Chippenham as are other land owners. It is acknowledged that agricultural land will be lost as a consequence of this development, that is subject to a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment that will inform and form part of the planning process.

Question 2 – (21-135)

Has the council adequately considered regeneration of brownfield sites in and around chippenham where residents would be more likely to walk/cycle or otherwise use public transport thereby reducing carbon emissions and increasing public health.

Response:

Yes. Future Chippenham has given consideration to the redevelopment of brownfield sites which are sequentially preferable to greenfield ones for development. There are

insufficient available brownfield sites within Chippenham to meet the housing needs which means that other previously undeveloped sites also need to be considered through the Local Plan process for future development.

Question 3 – (21-136)

Why has the council decided to locate so many houses in and around Chippenham rather than disperse them around Wiltshire?

Response

The Council, as local planning authority, is considering the responses it has received to the recent consultation on the Local Plan Review.

This consultation was based on alternative development strategies for the distribution of growth, which involved a sustainability appraisal to compare them. A focus for growth on Chippenham performed much better than the alternative strategies. The analysis and assessment of these were published earlier this year.

Question 4 – (21-137)

Is Wiltshire council adopting a regressive strategy intended to increase revenues rather than emissions? It does so by buying up and then selling greenfield sites to developers but also making any available land in the centre of the town into a car park thereby encouraging more car use.

Response:

No.

Wiltshire Council

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Statement and Question from Marilyn Mackay

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

As a local resident, in Calne Rural, I have been following the recent political Amersham bi-election objections to those being proposed by this government regarding Planning. Essentially I object strongly to the proposals stemming from the Chippenham HIF funding for a new road and subsequent over-development of housing on valuable greenfield agricultural land. It is government policy for new development to be on brownfield land. This is a plan which challenges biodiversity and essential farming land needed for environmental and economic purposes for UK to be more food sufficient, rather than importing in an unsustainable way from long distance global sites. It is valued community green space.

I support Chippenham Town Council's rejection of the Local Plan for Chippenham and the HIF bid proposals linked to excessive housing numbers. This was unanimously confirmed at its Annual Council meeting on 19th May, 2021. This is supported also by the local Chippenham MP, Michelle Donevan in her statement of 17th June, objecting to the need for 7,500 new houses. It is also strongly opposed by the north Wiltshire MP for the Calne Rural area, James Gray, arguing against environmental damage to a valued local rural agricultural landscape.

This damaging commuter planning proposal risks failing the Climate Change Committee carbon reduction targets.

The Future Chippenham team have been working undemocratically on consultation responses to the HIF bid and failed to prepare a transparent report. The entire process of the HIF bid has been conducted in this undemocratic manner.

There is no community need for additional 7,500 houses on greenfield land in the Chippenham and Calne Rural area. The HIF bid proposals are not sustainable.

Question 1 – (21-138)

Can Councillor Clewer confirm 5,000 houses have been taken from Wiltshire housing target? Lack of transparency is being repeated here.

Response:

Cabinet considered a report about the Wiltshire Local Plan Review at its meeting on 29 June 2021. No decisions were made at that meeting on policies for the draft Plan including the housing requirement. At the meeting it was resolved to undertake further work in response to the recent consultation on key parts of the evidence base including testing the upper and lower levels of housing need and spatial distribution of growth for the plan period.

As also set out in that report (paragraph 5), once the draft Plan has been prepared it will be brought back to Cabinet and onto Council for approval before a further stage of consultation is undertaken.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Statement and Questions from Cllr Matthew Short – Chippenham Town Council

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

As a newly elected Chippenham Town Councillor for Hardens and Central ward I would like to highlight to Wiltshire Council Chippenham Town Council's continued unanimous rejection of the HIF road scheme and 7500 houses.

The newly elected town council confirmed its opposition at its Annual Council meeting on 19th May. Further, at Full council on the 17th June it resolved to send a letter to Wiltshire Council, Homes England and Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government, wholly opposing the construction of such a road and the use of HIF funding with the proposal for 7500 houses in the Avon and Marden Valley area defined by the proposed road routes.

Firstly, thank you for taking some notice of Chippenham's residents concerns and reducing the quantity of proposed housing and removing the Northern housing distributor road. It was also good to hear your comments on Climate change and environmental concerns.

However for very valid reasons I would like to highlight that as a Town Councillor I rejected the whole of the HIF bid, not half of it. Those reasons still apply because as Scotty would say 'You cannae change the laws of physics'

The quantity of housing in the pipeline and already with planning permission is extremely high. It appears there is no current information on number of houses that have been

built? So where is the baseline. One of my residents Melanie Boyle has made detailed calculations of housing numbers with the various developments, and it is impossible to understand why we are deemed to need 3800-4200 houses, and how that can be achieved and stay within our Climate strategy. The Draft Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan includes an evidence based figure of 2500.

I personally oppose the HIF bid for many reasons including...

1. Carbon Budget

The UK government has pledged to meet net zero carbon by 2050. Wiltshire County council and Chippenham Town council have both declared a Climate Emergency and aim for Chippenham to reach net zero by 2030.

I have calculated the fair carbon budget for Chippenham to be 1.69 megatonnes of CO₂ to achieve our portion of staying within the safe 1.5 degrees C global temperature rise. Chippenham's current carbon baseline is 440,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year. At that rate we have less than five years to get to net zero!

Current housing construction standards emit typical 50-80** tonnes of CO₂ per house build so the build of 7500 attached to the HIF bid alone will generate 375,000 tonnes of CO₂ using approximately 22% of the total remaining budget. This is before disturbed carbon in the soil and road building is accounted for plus additional car usage.

So It remains impossible for Chippenham to meet its 1.5 degree climate goal. We are planning to fail at the start of the most important decade to tackle climate change.
It is the first responsibility of a Council to safeguard the welfare of their citizens, including by taking reasonable measures to mitigate substantial threats.

Climate change is a grave threat to people around the world, jeopardising health, security and prosperity. By continuing down this route you are knowingly putting Chippenham residents at risk in a year and decade where leadership is required.

2. Climate Adaption

Much of the land being built upon is farm land, some county farms.

Under specific Climate pathways we could regularly reach summer temperatures of over 40 degrees C in Wiltshire. In this scenario global food supplies are likely to be disrupted and it will become too hot to grow food in some countries.

Thus having local farmland available for future generations of Chippenham residents to grow food on is vital.

It is the first responsibility of the local government in a democratic society to protect and safeguard the lives of its citizens. Where there is a foreseeable risk of substantial harm, a local government will be under a duty of care to take reasonable steps to safeguard its citizens against that harm, and failing to take such steps will constitute a breach of that duty.

I argue that the risk of Climate change is known by Wiltshire Council given their own

declared Climate emergency. The building on local historic farmland fails to take an adequate risk assessment of the future need for this land to grow food for future generations.

3 Ecological Emergency

Chippenham has declared an ecological emergency.

The environmental considerations in this report seem to take no account of the damage done by pouring irreversible mega-tonnes of concrete onto farmland. This is an emergency requiring immediate action, Climate change is a time bound problem! We must act now.

I therefore call on Wiltshire cabinet to reject this plan for the sake of future generations.

Question 1 – (21-139)

Why has Wiltshire council continued during the consultation process to seek a Joint Venture (JV) partner offering county owned farm land to development partners? It is even prepared to offer land outside of Chippenham to seal the deal!

Response

Wiltshire Council has engaged consultants to undertake soft market testing to understand the market interest in forming a joint venture partnership. A paper is being taken to Cabinet in July where this matter will be discussed and a further report is planned later in the year.

Question 2 – (21-140)

What steps are being taken to avoid corrupt practice in engaging a joint developer given potential for insider dealing and trading with land that we the people own?

Response

The appointment of a joint venture partner will be governed by an open and transparent procurement process compliant within public procurement requirements. If a JV partner is sought the Council will employ legal and property consultants to provide advice to ensure that the Council's interest are protected and maximised.

Question 3 – (21-141)

Why does the Joint Development agreement look for only financial gain and take no account of sustainable development?

Response

The criteria for the appointment of a Joint Venture development partner have not yet been set and will be informed by the on-going work being undertaken. These criteria will include a need for the JV partner to meet the Council's current and future planning policy objectives for development that include the requirement for new development to be

sustainable. A joint venture development would be required to comply with the Council's planning policies.

Question 4 – (21-142)

Why have the Future Chippenham team broken its promise to report the results of the HIF bid (Road) consultation within 12 weeks of consultation closure?

Response

The Future Chippenham Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy states:
4.4.4 The Future Chippenham team's response to the consultation will be published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing or an explanation provided as to why this timescale is not possible. The following explanation has been placed onto the Future Chippenham web site.

The Future Chippenham team apologise for the slight delay in the publication of its response to the consultation. The number of responses received has been very significant and it has been necessary to ensure that all responses are appropriately fed back in a timely way into the Options Assessment Report update (OAR) process.

This has meant that unfortunately we have not been able to meet the 12-week period for publishing the consultation feedback report. We are currently finalising the report and anticipate it will be published in time for it to be considered by Cabinet in July.

Question 5 – (21-143)

Prior to the election Cllr Clewer and other Conservative councillors said that the additional 5,000 houses Wiltshire had voluntarily taken on, would be removed from Wiltshire housing target and the Local Plan would be adapted in line with the significant consultation response. If the 5,000 houses are removed the target for Chippenham is significantly reduced and there is no need for the HIF bid. Will Cllr Clewer now confirm 5000 houses have been removed from the housing target?

Response

Cabinet considered a report about the Wiltshire Local Plan Review at its meeting on 29 June 2021. No decisions were made at that meeting on policies for the draft Plan including the housing requirement. At the meeting it was resolved to undertake further work in response to the recent consultation on key parts of the evidence base including testing the upper and lower levels of housing need and spatial distribution of growth for the plan period.

As also set out in that report (paragraph 5), once the draft Plan has been prepared it will be brought back to Cabinet and onto Council for approval before a further stage of consultation is undertaken.

Question 6 – (21-144)

Is the Cabinet aware of Chippenham's MP withdraw of her support for the HIF road bid?

Response

Recent correspondence with Michelle Donelan MP is available on our website [Wiltshire Council responds to a letter from Michelle Donelan MP regarding Future Chippenham - Wiltshire Council](#) The MP's support of the Future Chippenham programme has not been withdrawn and is dependent on the council delivering specific outcomes for Chippenham and its residents. We are continuing our dialogue with the MP on these outcomes.

Question 7 – (21-145)

Will Cllr Clewer now publish the agreement with Homes England, as promised by Cllr Whitehead. If not, why won't the document be published? How can the public of Chippenham engage if these agreements are hidden and apparently created behind closed doors?

Response

Following questions about the publication of the GDA HIF Agreement advice was sought from Homes England. Their advice is that the GDA should not be published.

Question 8 – (21-146)

Why can't the council based in Trowbridge use a system that will allow the people of Chippenham to genuinely engage in the consultation process and ask questions?

Response

In July 2020, the council adopted a Temporary Arrangements supplement to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which presents an interim approach to carrying out public consultation considering the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and following Government advice at the time.

The programme for public engagement on the Future Chippenham road route options consultation adhered to the provisions set out in the Temporary Arrangements supplement to the SCI. For example, the Future Chippenham team undertook a series of live online webinar events to engage with interested parties rather than organising face-to-face events or exhibitions

Wiltshire Council

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21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Statement and Questions from Melanie Boyle

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement 1

If you are planning to vote in the Cabinet Meeting on 13th July 2021 on the road consultation for Chippenham, please can I ask you to consider this as if it is your town which has been allocated 7,500 houses and a 30mph distributor road with cars parked on it paid by the tax payer/cuts in services? Is this sustainable for a historic market town? How would you feel if Atkins said they hadn't been to the site as it wasn't their job to do so but they were planning to destroy a safe 7 mile off road cycle route with open farmland and a friendly community asset used by walkers, runners, cyclists, families and friends to enjoy the Countryside within walking distance of the town centre for lunch and shopping, the one remaining untouched place which hasn't been destroyed in your town? This area provides the 6 habitat areas described by the Wiltshire Council Tool Kit for the environment but will be bulldozed over destroying the irreplaceable bio-diversity of plants and wildlife and the valuable asset of a County Farm owned by Wiltshire Council/the residents of Wiltshire which could be used for the community and reducing food poverty.

Then consider you had attended an Area Board Meeting where SWLEP said they do not take into consideration the fact that 67% of workers commute out of the town for work and that allocating land for business use doesn't bring business wasn't their problem (even though they advice Wiltshire Council on these topics) Town and County Councillors raised the issue but didn't get a constructive answer.

Then consider that Chippenham Town Council has rejected the Local Plan for Chippenham and rejected the HIF bid proposals and housing numbers several times. It unanimously confirmed its opposition at its Annual Council meeting on 19th May. It resolved to send a letter opposing the HIF and asking the money be withdrawn, to Wiltshire Council, Homes England and MHCLG at its meeting on 17th June.

Then consider Chippenham's MP Michelle Donelan stated in the press on 15th June that "I have not been given the assurances I sought regarding infrastructure and investment in the town" and "It is important that the interests of Chippenham's

current residents are prioritised” and “we certainly do not need 7500 (houses)” and “Now more than ever we all appreciate the beautiful countryside around our town and we must preserve it for future generations.

Then consider the developers even say in the local plan consultation that the housing numbers for Chippenham may not be viable.

How angry and frustrated would you be if on the above evidence the very assets your town needs to thrive were destroyed by Wiltshire Council as land owner, Developers and Estate Agents?

Question 1 – (21-147)

Do you want to be remembered as the Councillor that destroyed Chippenham/your town or played your part in giving it a chance for sustainable growth for future generations?

Response:

Future growth proposals at Chippenham, their scale and location will be determined as part of the Local Plan Review. As set out in the report to Cabinet on 29 June 2021, the Review will involve further consultation on a draft Plan and will be subject to an independent examination in public into the soundness of the plan led by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Subject to that process the Future Chippenham programme will be in a position to employ the funding secured via the HIF bid to enable infrastructure led development so as to achieve sustainable growth.

Statement 2

Please vote to reject the HIF bid and let Chippenham thrive as it has never been allowed to do previously due to the consistent excessive growth over the last 40 years, but with the community spirit coming out of the pandemic we have such a good basis to grow on, we have all the elements, we just need to market and share them.

We have further opportunities if Corsham Train station is reopened, Go-op new train services are introduced through Chippenham, our roundabouts are returned rather than SWLEP/Atkins traffic lights at Station Hill and Hathaway Retail Park, Bus Back Better and an initiative to cut car journeys by combining tasks, working from home leading to less cars required by households and many other initiatives.

In the agenda pack Historic England advises that the form and character of a town, within its wider landscape and historic setting, and the availability of suitable sites should inform the proposed scale of growth. To this end, it is suggested that the Council prepares a Heritage Topic Paper for each settlement and ensures that Conservation Area

appraisals and management plans are kept up to date. I hope residents get the opportunity to get involved in this as many of us have researched our towns and can provide valuable input.

I have included photos of the wonderful Hardens County Farm owned by Wiltshire

Council/the residents of Wiltshire and the quality of the milk supplied to Cadburys, look how healthy and cared for the cattle are. Look at the views, the farmhouse from 1781, the cycle path enjoyed by all ages, it is the openness of the landscape that makes it a safe place. How can you vote to destroy this for housing over Government figures? Sustainable food local to many housing estates that should be part of every town. It is as valuable as village land. Please do not vote to destroy this. I have heard comments like everywhere was once farmland which is now housing estates, but with the climate emergency the time has come to stop destroying farmland close to housing for excessive building.

My final photos are of the signs, no mention of the houses required to fund the road so people thought it was a bypass, is this ethical?

Question 2 – (21-148)

Please can we have a system where public questions are able to be verbally given online, especially due to the timing of the meetings when many people are working, these points are so important to us and it needs to be an inclusive meeting?

Response:

The Future Chippenham programme has a dedicated email address any questions / queries can be sent to. FutureChippenham@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Statement and Questions from Cllr Myla Watts – Deputy Leader Chippenham Town Council

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement 1

Wiltshire Council Cabinet members should be under no illusion that the issue of the HIF Bid plus 7500 houses has slipped from the minds of Chippenham residents. Those who live in the town overwhelmingly oppose this hugely damaging development. With no public support, the Town Council, again, unanimously rejected the HiF Bid and Full Council resolved to send a letter to Wiltshire Council, Homes England and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government opposing the HIF and asking that the money be withdrawn.

Chippenham's MP, Michelle Donelan, stated that "*I have not been given the assurances I sought regarding infrastructure and investment in the town.....It is important that the interests of Chippenham's current residents are prioritised.....*" "we certainly do not need 7500 (houses).....*Now more than ever we all appreciate the beautiful countryside around our town and we must preserve it for future generations.*"

Prior to the election, Cllr Clewer and other Conservative councillors stated that the additional 5000 houses (which Wiltshire had inexplicably taken on voluntarily), would be removed from Wiltshire's housing target, and the Local Plan would be adapted in line with the significant consultation response. It should be noted that taking 5000 houses off the target means a significant reduction for Chippenham and completely removes the need for the HIF bid.

Question 1 – (21-149)

Will Cllr Clewer confirm that the 5000 additional houses have been formally removed from Wiltshire's housing target?

Response:

Cabinet considered a report about the Wiltshire Local Plan Review at its meeting on 29 June 2021. No decisions were made at that meeting on policies for the draft Plan including the housing requirement. At the meeting it was resolved to undertake further work in response to the recent consultation on key parts of the evidence base including testing the upper and lower levels of housing need and spatial distribution of growth for the plan period.

As also set out in that report (paragraph 5), once the draft Plan has been prepared it will be brought back to Cabinet and onto Council for approval before a further stage of consultation is undertaken.

Question 2 – (21-150)

Is the Cabinet aware of Chippenham Town Council's unanimous rejection of the HIF bid and proposed housing numbers for Chippenham?

Response:

Cabinet is aware of the representations that Chippenham Town Council has made in this respect in June of this year.

Question 3 – (21-151)

Is the Cabinet aware of Chippenham Michelle Donelan MP's withdrawal of her support for the HIF bid?

Response:

Recent correspondence with Michelle Donelan MP is available on our website [Wiltshire Council responds to a letter from Michelle Donelan MP regarding Future Chippenham - Wiltshire Council](#) The MP's support of the Future Chippenham programme has not been withdrawn and is dependent on the council delivering specific outcomes for Chippenham and its residents. We are continuing our dialogue with the MP on these outcomes

Question 4 – (21-152)

Will Cllr Clewer publish the agreement with Homes England, as originally promised by Cllr Whitehead?

Response:

Following questions about the publication of the GDA HIF Agreement advice was sought from Homes England. Their advice is that the GDA should not be published.

Question 5 – (21-153)

Why has the Council broken its promise to publish results of the HIF Bid Road

Consultation within 12 weeks?

Response:

The Future Chippenham Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy states:
4.4.4 The Future Chippenham team's response to the consultation will be published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing or an explanation provided as to why this timescale is not possible. The following explanation has been placed onto the Future Chippenham web site.

The Future Chippenham team apologise for the slight delay in the publication of its response to the consultation. The number of responses received has been very significant and it has been necessary to ensure that all responses are appropriately fed back in a timely way into the Options Assessment Report update (OAR) process.

This has meant that unfortunately we have not been able to meet the 12-week period for publishing the consultation feedback report. We are currently finalising the report and anticipate it will be published in time for it to be considered by Cabinet in July

Question 6 – (21-154)

Has the Future Chippenham team now been dissolved?

Response:

No

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Statement from Nicola Austin

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

I am wholly against the "Future Chippenham" proposals. As a member of Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club I am very familiar with the beautiful and peaceful stretch of the river that will be destroyed by the scheme. It is totally unacceptable to me.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Statement from Rev David Gray

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

I understand that Wiltshire Council's cabinet is due to consider the HIF Road scheme and 7500 houses very soon. Therefore please can you bring this to their attention.

Selling off prime agricultural land for development is disastrous. Not only do we put even more pressure on food production but there is also an ecological impact.

A new road will also have an ecological impact of creating more pollution. And how does building more roads help reduce CO2 and meet CO2 reduction targets.

I have yet to meet anyone in Chippenham who is in favour of this.

There is a recognition that ,pre affordable housing is needed. But I doubt that many if any of the 7500 new homes will be affordable and help young people.

I am hoping Wiltshire Council will reject this.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Statement and Questions from Robert MacNaughton – Friends of the Marden Valley

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

The Friends of The Marden Valley object to the HIF bid proposals.

Calne Town Council, Chippenham Town Council and Bremhill Parish Council have all said they don't want the HIF bid with its houses and new road.

Local people do not want it.

Why does Wiltshire Council think it has the right to destroy the Lower Marden Valley, with its resplendent worlds of animals, fish, insects, birds and butterflies?

Where does this arrogance come from when there is no public support for these proposals?

Question 1 – (21-155)

Will Cllr Clewer confirm that the 5000 additional houses have been formally removed from Wiltshire's housing target?

Response:

Cabinet considered a report about the Wiltshire Local Plan Review at its meeting on 29 June 2021. No decisions were made at that meeting on policies for the draft Plan including the housing requirement. At the meeting it was resolved to undertake further work in response to the recent consultation on key parts of the evidence base including testing the upper and lower levels of housing need and spatial distribution of growth for the plan period.

As also set out in that report (paragraph 5), once the draft Plan has been prepared it will be brought back to Cabinet and onto Council for approval before a further stage of consultation is undertaken.

Question 2 – (21-156)

Is the Cabinet aware of Chippenham Town Council's unanimous rejection of the HIF bid and proposed housing numbers for Chippenham?

Response:

Cabinet is aware of the representations that Chippenham Town Council has made in this respect in June of this year.

Question 3 – (21-157)

Is the Cabinet aware of Chippenham Michelle Donelan MP's withdrawal of her support for the HIF bid?

Response:

Recent correspondence with Michelle Donelan MP is available on our website Wiltshire Council responds to a letter from Michelle Donelan MP regarding Future Chippenham - Wiltshire Council The MP's support of the Future Chippenham programme has not been withdrawn and is dependent on the council delivering specific outcomes for Chippenham and its residents. We are continuing our dialogue with the MP on these outcomes

Question 4 – (21-158)

Will Cllr Clewer publish the agreement with Homes England, as originally promised by Cllr Whitehead?

Response

Following questions about the publication of the GDA HIF Agreement advice was sought from Homes England. Their advice is that the GDA should not be published.

Question 5 – (21-159)

Why has the Council broken its promise to publish results of the HIF Bid Road Consultation within 12 weeks?

Response:

The Future Chippenham Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy states:
4.4.4 The Future Chippenham team's response to the consultation will be published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing or an explanation provided as to why this timescale is not possible. The following explanation has been placed onto the Future Chippenham web site.

The Future Chippenham team apologise for the slight delay in the publication of its response to the consultation. The number of responses received has been very significant and it has been necessary to ensure that all responses are appropriately fed back in a timely way into the Options Assessment Report update (OAR) process.

This has meant that unfortunately we have not been able to meet the 12-week period for publishing the consultation feedback report. We are currently finalising the report and anticipate it will be published in time for it to be considered by Cabinet in July

Question 6 – (21-160)

Has the Future Chippenham team now been dissolved?

Response:

No

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Statement from Sally Lynes

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

Has the Cabinet in its approach to the future of Chippenham ('Future Chippenham' and the HIF) taken into account the opposition of Chippenham Town Council, many local residents and its MPs Michelle Donelan and James Gray.

Looking over recent local election leaflets I don't see anywhere Conservative candidates saying that they intended to inflict major developments on communities, ignoring the views of their locally elected representatives.

What the Council has adopted is a totally undemocratic system of running its business. It has adopted a process of attrition, whereby local residents are worn down by having to respond at every stage of the process, thereby leaving Wiltshire Council to do exactly what it wants to do. Totally undemocratic!

I remain totally opposed to the excessive development of the area and its affect on the local environment.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham / HIF

Statement and Questions from Vanda McCann

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

With regards to the Future Chippenham road plans and it's associated 7500 houses are Wiltshire Council aware that the newly elected town council confirmed its opposition at its Annual Council meeting on 19th May and at Full council on the 17th June it resolved to send a letter to Wiltshire Council, Homes England and Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government, wholly opposing the construction of such a road and the use of HIF funding with the proposal for 7500 houses in the Avon and Marden Valley area defined by the proposed road routes.

The UK government has pledged to meet net zero carbon by 2050. Wiltshire County council and Chippenham Town council have both declared a Climate Emergency and aim for Chippenham to reach net zero by 2030.

We are planning to fail at the start of the most important decade to tackle climate change.

It is the first responsibility of a Council to safeguard the welfare of their citizens, including by taking reasonable measures to mitigate substantial threats.

Climate change is a grave threat to people around the world, jeopardising health, security and prosperity.

The land being built on is shown by Cranfield University as excellent farmland.

It is the first responsibility of the local government in a democratic society to protect and safeguard the lives of its citizens. Where there is a foreseeable risk of substantial harm, a local government will be under a duty of care to take reasonable steps to safeguard its citizens against that harm, and that includes caring for their mental and physical health . In the aftermath of COVID it is more important than ever to ensure there is sufficient facilities and open land for exercise and mental well being , which the government are at pains to address and are giving incentives to encourage.

In addition, building on local historic farmland fails to take an adequate risk assessment of the future need for this land to grow food for future generations.

Question 1 – (21-161)

Why has Wiltshire council continued during the consultation process to seek a Joint Venture (JV) partner offering county owned farm land to development partners? Is it because the main priority is to make up for the inability of Wiltshire Councils inability to control their financial obligations at the expense of Chippenham ? (See attachment below, ref:Andrew Rait)

Response:

Wiltshire Council has engaged consultants to undertake soft market testing to understand the market interest in forming a joint venture partnership. A paper is being taken to Cabinet in July where this matter will be discussed and a further report is planned later in the year.

Question 2 – (21-162)

Why have the Future Chippenham team broken its promise to report the results of the HIF bid (Road) consultation within 12 weeks of consultation closure?

Response:

The Future Chippenham Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy states: 4.4.4 The Future Chippenham team's response to the consultation will be published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing or an explanation provided as to why this timescale is not possible. The following explanation has been placed onto the Future Chippenham web site.

The Future Chippenham team apologise for the slight delay in the publication of its response to the consultation. The number of responses received has been very significant and it has been necessary to ensure that all responses are appropriately fed back in a timely way into the Options Assessment Report update (OAR) process.

This has meant that unfortunately we have not been able to meet the 12-week period for publishing the consultation feedback report. We are currently finalising the report and anticipate it will be published in time for it to be considered by Cabinet in July

Question 3 – (21-163)

Prior to the election Cllr Clewer and other Conservative councillors said that the additional 5,000 houses Wiltshire had voluntarily taken on, would be removed from their target, so why is Chippenham still going ahead with a target of 7500 houses?

Response:

Cabinet considered a report about the Wiltshire Local Plan Review at its meeting on 29 June 2021. No decisions were made at that meeting on policies for the draft Plan including the housing requirement. At the meeting it was resolved to undertake further work in response to the recent consultation on key parts of the evidence base including testing the upper and lower levels of housing need and spatial distribution of growth for the plan period.

As also set out in that report (paragraph 5), once the draft Plan has been prepared it will be brought back to Cabinet and onto Council for approval before a further stage of consultation is undertaken.

Question 4 – (21-164)

Will Cllr Clewer now publish the agreement with Homes England, as promised by Cllr Whitehead. If not, why won't the document be published? How can the public of Chippenham engage if these agreements are hidden and apparently created behind closed doors?

Response:

Following questions about the publication of the GDA HIF Agreement advice was sought from Homes England. Their advice is that the GDA should not be published.

Question 5 – (21-165)

Why can't the council based in Trowbridge use a system that will allow the people of Chippenham to genuinely engage in the consultation process and ask questions? You might also be interested to know Wiltshire Council were in Private Eye under the title 'Rotten Boroughs' (ref: Andrew Rait, North Wilts and Chippenham for the EU, FB)

Response:

The Chippenham HIF road options consultation process aligns with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Many comments and questions were raised during the consultation – responses to these have been provided in the Consultation report.

■ WILTSHIRE council has won £75m from the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and plans to go on a building spree which could put 7,500 new homes on fields around a new Chippenham "relief road". Objectors say it makes a mockery of the neighbourhood plan, will do "immense damage" to the Avon and Marden valleys and could increase Chippenham's 45,000 population by 50 percent. But Wiltshire, like most councils, is skint, and open to money-making deals with developers. Maybe that's why it has already offered to accommodate 45,360 new houses in the period 2016-36 – almost 5,000 more than the 40,835 government target.

One cabinet member who is right behind the scheme is Cllr Simon Jacobs, who happens to run Winkworth estate agents in Devizes and Marlborough. No conflict of interest there!

I am vehemently against these proposed plans.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from James Bradbury

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

The UK's Climate Change Committee has stated that road building plans are incompatible with our commitments to address climate change and we should instead invest in improvements to broadband [1]. These roads are ostensibly to "reduce congestion", but could only ever provide temporary relief at huge cost. Building or widening roads to relieve congestion is likely loosening your belt to solve obesity.

The surface transport sector is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gasses, both nationally and within Wiltshire. It is therefore not appropriate to allow it to expand further. Justifying such expansion with dubious offsets or some future carbon capture technology is akin to magical thinking.

You may have heard that Wales recently took the decision to freeze all road-building projects pending a review. [3]

[1] Climate change: Switch road cash to broadband, adviser says

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-52371140>

[2] UK road-building scheme breaches climate commitments, high court told

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/29/uk-roadbuilding-scheme-breaches-climate-commitments-high-court-told>

[3] Wales transport: Freeze on all new road building projects

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-politics-57552390>

Question – (21-256)

Will Wiltshire Council agree to freeze all road building projects and conduct a review into their impact on the climate?

Response

The Council has a number of road schemes at the design stage. The effects of the schemes are being assessed and will include consideration of the impacts regarding climate change and carbon.. The impact of the schemes will be reviewed in the light of emerging policies and strategies at Government and local level.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

**Agenda Item 8 – Update on the Council’s Response to the Climate
Emergency**

Statement from Margaret Green

**To Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development
Management, Strategic Planning and Climate Change**

Statement

Please advise the cabinet of my ongoing objection to approval for projects that are hugely damaging to the climate emergency (new roads, tunnels, incinerators, green field housing).

It is pointless to declare an emergency then make it worse. A moratorium on carbon intensive projects would be wise. There are better alternatives.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Anne Henshaw - CPRE

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Question 1 – (21-264)

Will the work on a Master Plan for the proposed road option include new assessments on traffic flows, modelled on post Covid19, Climate Change requirements and revised economic forecasts?

Response:

There will be further modelling done at the masterplanning stage and this will include the latest up to date modelling data.

Question 2 – (21-265)

Will the ability to deliver the community infrastructure investment and town regeneration for Chippenham, as set out by Atkins in their report on the Future Chippenham road options, be met? The proposed figures now at 3,800-4,200 not 7,500.

Response:

The Community Infrastructure Levy generated from development would naturally be reduced in line with the reduction in housing numbers delivered and this will therefore reduce the overall funds available for investment. However, development will still be required to deliver the community infrastructure required by the Council's planning policies if development is to proceed.

Question 3 – (21-266)

Will there be a full consultation on the details of framework Master Plan proposals before any decision is made for inclusion of the area as an allocation in the Local Plan Review? It is stated:

works to progress the identified route to the planning application stage continue in parallel with the development of the framework masterplan for the site.

Until a revision of the housing numbers, their distribution and the economic/employment growth figures are made public, through the publication of the review of the Local Plan at Reg 19 stage, a planning application made, and decided by the Local Authority, would be seen as a pre-emptive, undemocratic manipulation of the planning system.

Response:

Bringing forward the outcome of masterplanning consultation and road route design will comply with review of the Local plan timetable.

Question 4 – (21-267)

Please clarify what is meant in Appendix A 2.1 when it is stated:

It is currently assumed that the rail bridge will be delivered by the Rawlings Green developer; current planning consent indicates that construction must progress before 13th November 2022.

The distributor and road through Rawlings Green will be delivered as part of the planning permission for the Future Chippenham distributor road. In the event that the rail bridge is not delivered by the Rawlings Green developer, Future Chippenham will submit their own planning permission for this rail bridge and deliver as part of the Future Chippenham distributor road. Cost recovery for delivery of the distributor road and associated bridge infrastructure will be subject to Wiltshire Council's planning policy. Rawlings Green has full planning permission; the development and associated distributor road are subject to an outline planning permission with decision pending as of 23rd June 2021.

Response:

This is no longer part of the Future Chippenham proposals, as set out in the report. Previously, if the rail bridge was not delivered in line with the timescales for the construction of the distributor road the Council intended to develop a mechanism whereby the bridge would be constructed and the costs reclaimed from the Rawlings farm developer.

The Council as local planning authority will continue to progress proposals at Rawlings Green in accordance with the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan. There is a resolution to grant planning permission subject to the agreement of the Section 106 legal obligation (planning application reference 15/12351/OUT).

Question 5 – (21-268)

What distributor road is referred to? How will cost recovery for the delivery and the rail bridge be subject to Wiltshire Council's planning policy or planning decision?

Response

See response to question 4. The southern section and associated road is being

recommended at this time. The cost of the road is intended to be recovered from sites that come forward for development.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Helen Stride

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and
Health & Wellbeing**

Question 1 – (21-269)

Section 1.7 acknowledges that there was some confusion relating to the consultation process. Can I assume therefore that WC will not, in future, run two important consultations simultaneously as it did on this occasion? Your report currently fails to answer questions from the public relating to this concern.

Response:

Both the Local Plan Consultation and Future Chippenham Road Route Consultation made very clear the separation of each and provided information on this at every consultation event, within consultation material and via its responses to questions asked.

However, the feedback from the public identified that some still felt confused. The timing of the Future Chippenham consultation was to comply with the requirements of the GDA with Homes England. It was not the intention that both consultations should run at the same time and the Council will ensure that this does not occur where possible in the future.

Question 2 – (21-270)

The revised proposal still includes a figure for housing over and above the 2,500 additional houses needed. Therefore, questions relating to the 'promise' to remove the additional 5,000 unnecessary houses from the plan have still not been addressed.

Response:

The amount of development at Chippenham is subject to the Local Plan Review and not the Future Chippenham programme.

Statement

Given that there were, according to your figures, over 3000 questions and statements relating to the environment in one way or another, I believe that you have fundamentally failed to address in any meaningful way questions relating to climate change and biodiversity.

You state that addressing the climate emergency underpins Future Chippenham Plans. There is no evidence to support this statement. In fact, it is evident throughout your report that there is a fundamental misunderstanding of what the issues of sustainability are. The issue is not how you make the proposed road and housing development sustainable; the issue is that building on agricultural land is detrimental to protecting the planet. It will increase carbon dioxide emissions in a range of different ways at a time when WC has made a commitment to reduce them, it destroys biodiversity, thus making an already fragile eco system less resilient, it destroys land that may be needed in the not-too-distant future for food production, and it reduces the lands' ability to sequester carbon from the atmosphere.

Therefore, against this background, it is incumbent upon WC to provide evidence to everyone's satisfaction that the Future Chippenham site is the most sustainable for meeting Chippenham's housing needs. If this cannot be proved, then it removes the need for the distributor road. Your response on page 33 under the heading Climate Change shows a fundamental lack of understanding of the key principles of the climate crisis and is a wholly inadequate response to the questions put to you from the public.

I draw your attention the questions posed by Brian Walker, Colin Lynes and Declan Baseley. These questions are indicative of the questions concerning the environment, put by so many members of the public.

I put to the Cabinet that none of their questions have been adequately answered and need to be answered as a matter of urgency.

As WC will no doubt be aware, following a Judicial Review, the Government's roadbuilding strategy will now have to be withdrawn and take account of its environmental commitment.

Wiltshire Council

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21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Helen Stuckey

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

I very much support the proposal to drop the eastern road route sections from the Future Chippenham project. However, I would like to ask the following questions regarding item 6 - Future Chippenham

Question 1 – (21-271)

*“Cabinet is asked to,
1. Note the consultation response to the Future Chippenham road route options at Appendix B and to agree the preferred road route as set out in Appendix A subject to”*

Since Appendix A includes the preferred road route in all zones: 1,2,3,4 and 5; does the above mean the Council is being asked to approve the road route in the zones 3, 4 and 5 even though those are not part of the Southern development?

Response:

The report is clear and seeks approval to the road route identified in diagram 1 of the report, representing the southern route section, identified through the consultation process.

Question 2 – (21-272)

At the start of the Future Chippenham public consultation, the preferred road route in zone 4 was Option C, which avoids the land north of New Leaze farm which is protected under the Bremhill Neighbourhood plan policy 3. Option C is the route favoured by the majority of respondents who commented on the road route options, including Bremhill Parish Council. But in Appendix A attached to this agenda item it states:

"Zone 4

Following strong objection from the landowner in Zone 4, to ensure deliverability of the scheme, Option C was discounted in favour of Option B. Whilst Option B has a lower environmental case score it is considered that the landscape and visual impact could be mitigated."

- a. Why does the opinion of the landowner outweigh all the rest of the public consultation feedback?

Response:

There is no weighting on feedback received but when assessed in-line with other feedback received, the evaluation identified the middle route in this section was more deliverable. The report merely highlighted a considerable risk to delivery that informed the final route in that zone as a summary of all feedback received.

- b. why does the Council now think the visual impact could be mitigated when the Planning Inspector at the last Chippenham Site Allocations Plan stated this would be difficult to mitigate?

Response:

Visual impacts will be the subject of further detailed landscape and visual impact assessment. This will assess what mitigation may be necessary and what it can achieve.

Question 3 – (21-273)

On page 96 of the Future Chippenham Consultation Feedback Report it states:

"We note that landowners have informed Future Chippenham that Option C in zone 4 is not deliverable for legal reasons."

Could the Council please explain what these "legal reasons" are so that the public can better understand why this road route option was dismissed?

Response:

The Council is not at liberty to disclose the position of third party landowners without their consent.

Question 4 – (21-274)

Appendix E to the Future Chippenham Consultation Feedback report contains a suggestion for an alternative route to Option C in Zone 4 vis

"It is not clear why the option C route crosses under the line of the pylons twice - would make more sense to stay on the outside of the pylons passing between the pylons and New Leaze Farm."

I cannot find the "Officers response" to this suggestion. Please could this be provided.

Response:

No officer's response was provided to this statement.

Question 5 – (21-275)

Given that 75% of responses were against any road, and over 6,000 people have signed the online petition to prevent development in the Avon and Marden vales, and Chippenham TC, Calne TC and Bremhill PC all voted against the road and associated housing development, why is the council still proposing circa 4,000 new homes in this Southern development? Surely the maximum number should be no more than 2,000 to align with the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan?

Response:

Future growth proposals at Chippenham, their scale and location will be determined as part of the Local Plan Review. As set out in the report to Cabinet on 29 June 2021 about the Local Plan, the Review will involve further consultation and will be subject to an independent examination in public into the soundness of the plan led by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Question 6 – (21-276)

What will be the signposted route for traffic travelling along the A4 between Calne and Corsham:

- a. along the proposed new 30mph spine road between the A4 and the A350 Lackham roundabout; or

Response:

This is too early in the scheme design process to identify such detail but recommendations will be informed by detailed design.

- b. along the 50mph Pewsham Way and the 30mph Pewsham link road with the A350 Lackham roundabout; or

Response:

As above

- c. the existing route via the Bridge Centre and Rowden Hill?

Response:

As above

Question 7 – (21-277)

And if either A or B, has the pollution and noise from all the A4 traffic passing through the middle of the proposed new housing community been properly evaluated? By

comparison, neighbouring Calne suffers from high traffic pollution and has been trying to divert the A4 traffic away from the town centre.

Response:

Traffic modelling was conducted and did not show any adverse effects on the site or existing development. This modelling will now be updated together with detailed design as the framework master planning evolves.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement from Ian James

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

The decision not to construct the eastern link road has shown that the Council has considered many of the facts that were raised at the 2015 Examination in Public.

The Planning Inspector Mr Patrick Whitehead raised the threat of flooding to the east, and the risk to flooding in Chippenham Town. The proposal to build 3,000 plus houses across the land to the east of Chippenham would have put lives at risk, and serious damage to Chippenham Town centre. Climate change is increasing river levels, increasing rainfall in larger quantities in shorter times.

Secondly the Bremhill parish council neighbourhood plan passed in 2018 recommended that development should not take places north of the Chippenham to Calne cycle track. Ann Skippers the Planning Inspector who adjudicated the Neighbourhood Plan recommended that there should be no development to the north of the cycle track to prevent coalescence between Chippenham Town and the village of Tytherton Lucas.

The prospect of carving road adjacent to the River Marden, and crossing the river Avon, and the Great Western railway is just a bridge too far, and the risk to the project which is severely time constrained has meant a less riskier construction project.

A pragmatic approach has reduced the risk, but still leaves the southern route to be negotiated.

Wiltshire Council

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21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Isabel McCord

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

I welcome that there will no longer be a road and associated housing built in the Avon and Marden valleys to the east of Chippenham causing the destruction of county farms, natural habitat and a valuable green space for residents of Chippenham, Bremhill parish and from further afield in Wiltshire and beyond to enjoy and improve their health and wellbeing. However, I still have concerns over the quantity of houses being proposed to the south of Chippenham particularly as this is being done ahead of the review of the evidence base supporting the local plan in terms of housing numbers and employment. The numbers quoted (3,800 – 4,200) are still more than Chippenham needs. Decisions which have a major impact on residents are being made in advance of the local plan being adopted which is seen as pre-determining the outcome of the local plan process.

Question 1 – (21-278)

Will the planning application for the road to the south of Chippenham proposed in the Future Chippenham paper be submitted before the local plan is adopted. If so what are the timelines for doing so ?

Response:

Any planning applications will be made subject to the Local plan review timetable.

Wiltshire Council

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21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Jim Hardy

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

The Wiltshire Council website does not state that the Cabinet Meeting is an Extra ordinary meeting where one of the Subjects is Future Chippenham.

The Information that is provided to be read and be debated does not appear to include the results of the Consultation report with the Public between 21 January 2021 and 12 March 2021? The Cratus report only covers period November and December 2019 with very few comments- public awareness limited.

The maps are outdated as are statistics- some of which date back to the last Census 10 years ago.

Some paths are not annotated correctly by not showing as shared pathways with cycle ways.

No estimates are given as to likely land purchase costs (whichever route may be approved) despite costings being made for Infrastructure.

Wiltshire Council

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21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Julie Wheeler

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Question 1 – (21-279)

Paragraph 7 of the first paper states ‘ the alternative approach supports the delivery of a significant housing requirement but with a reduction in the quantum that aligns with the local plan period and leaves the decision on growth beyond that to a future date’

Simon Hendry’s report Paragraph 4:20 states ‘ Heads of Terms agreements have been agreed in principle with landowners in the north’

Can I then ask the question whether the plan to continue the road (and associated housing in the east of Chippenham) round to join the A350 in the north is now cancelled or merely postponed?

Is the Council merely ‘moving the milestones’(a phrase I also came across) and making this a Phase 1 proposal here, with Phase 2 to follow?

Response:

The Future Chippenham programme recommendation is subject to the Local plan review.

Question 2 – (21-280)

In the second paper Paragraph 1:8 it says

‘ the master plan will include a requirement to conduct a consultation with stakeholders and members of the public later this year’

Given how ridiculously little time we have been given for intelligent consideration and response to the papers for this meeting, can I ask what your consultation with the public will consist of later in the year, and how much time we will be given to respond?

Response:

As stated in the report the consultation is anticipated to take place from autumn 2021 and it is intended to include face to face events , on line consultation running over at least an eight week period. Subject to the decision of cabinet the programme will be designed and published in advance of it taking place.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Kim Stuckey

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

It is good news that the Council has listened to public feedback concerning the potential destruction of the Marden Valley by a distributor road and associated housing. Associated with this could I ask the following:

Question 1 – (21-281)

Based on the fact the Marden Valley and the cycle track has provided a vital amenity and a source of tranquillity for residents during lockdown,

- a) Will the Council commit to work with parish and town councils, landowners and the public in developing a long term strategy for the Chippenham to Calne cycle and walking track? This strategy should ensure the future of this green link between the two towns, improve the surface for walkers and cyclists and ensure other footpaths linked to the track are maintained and enhanced.

Response:

The council is already undertaking this work. The cycle route (North Wilts Rivers Route) between Chippenham and Calne consists of land owned by Wiltshire Council and individual private landowners.

In June this year, Sustainable Calne, in collaboration with Wiltshire Council, undertook a survey of cycle route users (both on the cycle route and via an online questionnaire) to obtain opinions about, and suggestions for the route, to input into work on how the route may be continued sustainably in the future.

Over 1500 responses to the survey were received - these are still being analysed, and will help inform future plans and decisions for the cycle route.

- b) Will the Council commit to work with parish and town councils, landowners and the public in developing a plan for protecting and enhancing the Marden Valley from its source to the confluence with the River Avon? This would involve working with groups such as Friends of the Marden Valley, Avon Needs Trees and other groups who have worked hard on preserving this beautiful unspoilt valley, an asset to North Wiltshire.

Response:

The Council is preparing a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, which will be consulted on later this year and involve partnership working to deliver appropriate projects.

Question 2 – (21-282)

Appendix A of the Report Cabinet is being asked to approve has a section on "Zone 5" Rawlings Green.

- a) Why is still included in the report?

Response:

Cabinet is being asked to approve the route identified as Diagram 1 in Appendix A. The information you are referring to is the update of the Options Assessment report following consultation on the route across all zones.

- b) Why would the distributor road through Rawlings Green be part of the planning permission for the Future Chippenham distributor road (bullet 2 and final paragraph)?

Response:

The northern scheme would require the distributor road to connect to the proposed Rawlings Green development. This is what this refers to. This is not part of the Southern scheme seeking authority.

- c) The final paragraph of Zone 5 states "In the event that the rail bridge is not delivered by the Rawlings Green developer..." Why has planning permission been granted for this development with the developer apparently able to walk away and not provide this infrastructure?

Response:

The Council, as local planning authority, is still progressing implementation of the requirements contained within the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan through the planning application process. There is a resolution to grant planning permission subject to the agreement of the Section 106 legal obligation (planning application reference 15/12351/OUT).

- d) Can the Cabinet confirm that the Rawlings Green developer will have to pay for the railway bridge and road through Rawlings Green either directly or by cost recovery, and this will not be funded by the taxpayer in any way?

Response:

Yes See response to question 2c.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Mel Boyle

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement 1

Thank you for reducing the housing numbers but the rushed through updated plan is still not acceptable, please decline the HIF funding to stop spiraling costs to tax payers for a rushed scheme, we have until 2036, if it wasn't for the rushed road changes which have not been consulted on we wouldn't be having a debate about unnecessary houses before the local plan is finalised.

Do Cabinet members want to be remembered for future generations as part of the Cabinet that committed Ecocide - destruction of the natural environment by deliberate or negligent human action, two years into a Climate Emergency.

Chippenham has been neglected by Wiltshire Council over previous years, this changed on 5 July 2021 when Richard Clewer and Nick Botterill came to Chippenham and saw the initial area they were destroying, due to time constraints they didn't get to see the rest of Chippenham. If they had or can make time in the future I could show them their next site of unnecessary destruction, a site used for a circular walk from Chippenham to Lacock (a top tourist destination) across the fields that will be destroyed for unrequired housing, enjoy the village and then walk back along the canal with some wonderful wildlife and landscapes all along the route. There is also an existing off road cycle route from the town centre out along the canal, Atkins said they could improve it without seeing it and wouldn't believe residents.

- Freedom of Information and Future Chippenham say there are no available housing numbers for Wiltshire since April 2019, if you don't know what has been built, how can you know what you need.
- The emerging spatial strategy said we/Chippenham needed 9225 house for 2016-2036 (an unsustainably high number in Chippenham, 20% of the allocation for the whole of Wiltshire)
- The residual at 1 April 2019 was 5100

- Wiltshire Council has implied they will remove the 5,000 they added onto Government figures the proportion for Chippenham would be 1,250 reduced leaving 3,750
- 1,000 Rowden Park - first of the first 144 gone on sale this week - leaving 2,750
- 650 Rawlings Green - not started yet - leaving 2,150
- 750 Birds Marsh - building just started on the next 250 - 1,400
- 370 Wiltshire Council figures April 2021 - vacant properties 1,030
- Derelict Houses numbers not kept by Wiltshire Council but very visible on the approaches to Chippenham
- Brownfield sites emerging spatial strategy - 2021-2031 target 240 existing 159 = 359 - leaving 671
- Hill Top View, the old Police Station, the old Vauxhall garage, the old Ambulance Station, land allocated for business and not used and various smaller developments numbers not available so will need to be confirmed by Wiltshire Council.

So over 15 years even without the figure to be deducted when supplied by Wiltshire Council it would be 45 houses per year for Chippenham.

Question 1 – (21-283)

How does Wiltshire Council get 3,800 – 4,200 required houses from the above calculations to justify the high risks associated with the HIF Funding using tax payers money, we saw at the Cabinet meeting on 13 July construction material costs are extremely volatile, Silverwood is 15% increased in cost and the fixed price contract wont be signed until the autumn so could go up further, the Council's own house building scheme has also had an increase in costs due to the construction industry supply price rises, the developers have even said they don't support the glut of houses in the settlement locations, see above the commercial viability for the developers of wanting to build when so many houses are already planned and available is questionable. During a Climate Emergency destroying Farmland and biodiversity, when allocating land for business does not bring businesses as seen all over Chippenham already, SWLEP have been advising Wiltshire Council incorrectly not including out commuting, of 67% when the houses are not needed?

Response:

Future Chippenham have identified the overall potential number of houses that the site could deliver which would be over more than one plan period

Statement 2:

Carrying on at risk with a joint venture, spending CIL money you haven't received, compulsory purchase schemes, continually increasing the cost on a route which hasn't been consulted on just because funding maybe available, the Sadlers Mead car park shows why taking money just because of a grant is not the way to develop a town, it was put in the wrong place due to the timescales wasting £8.9m .

The only jobs in Chippenham are low wages and unsociable hours meaning many depend on the 9 food banks in Chippenham, not something to be proud of but with all the executive homes being built the divide is getting bigger between rich and poor in

Chippenham. Leisure and tourism is what could bring meaningful jobs to Chippenham for existing residents if it was advertised by the Council and Visit Wiltshire. Chippenham has never been given the opportunity to shine with its history, heritage and hidden gems. Chippenham has been neglected by its MP who is out of touch with the people, suggesting a multi-storey from the CIL money when a disastrous one had just opened and mentioning entertainment facilities as if she didn't know about the Climbing walls/skate park and nature trails being delivered by Boroughlands Charity early Spring 2022. <https://www.theclimbingacademy.com/tca-life/announcing-the-arc/> or the refurbished cinema with great seat prices, the sailing club with paddle boarding and kayaking lessons, the golf and footgolf course in the park, the sea cadets and many other groups providing activities for all ages.

Chippenham has not had a member of Wiltshire Council Cabinet supporting them through the Future Chippenham consultation until Nick Botterill was elected, there is so much work the Town Council and positive all round residents like myself could do to get Chippenham the marketing and respect required for such a fantastic place. Not just dumping unnecessary houses causing traffic congestion and misery for all residents, the delicate situation of the traffic in our historic market town has been proved by the thoughtless waste of money Station Hill traffic lights.

Question 2 – (21-284)

Due to the financial risks for Wiltshire Council of the HIF funding will Pauline Church reject the proposal and suggest an amendment to reject the HIF Funding as Rutland Council and Leicestershire with the support of the Community Planning Alliance experts in stopping HIF Funding due to the risks associated with it and then will Nick Botterill second this as the Cabinet member on the Chippenham Area Board and in a position to assist in a much more viable and sustainable future for Chippenham without wasting tax payers money, then will all Cabinet members vote to support the amendment?

Response:

The question is aimed at specific Cabinet members to consider in relation to the recommendations contained in the report on the 21st July and as such it is not appropriate to answer on their behalf.

Wiltshire Council

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21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Question from Myla Watts – Deputy Leader, Chippenham Town Council

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

You cannot say "That the proposed option identified.....should be taken forward as the preferred route" because this new route poses different issues, not necessarily considered within the remit of the first consultation. A new, full, public consultation must be held before any decisions are made.

I would also like to add that Wiltshire Council has no right to apply Compulsory Purchase Orders on any County Farms - these farms are owned by the residents of the county, not by Wiltshire Council to do so as they see fit to make a quick profit. At a time when food security is an increasing risk factor, selling our farms is utter madness.

Finally, Cllr Clewer, you say this new plan has "the aim of delivering sustainable new communities", but I think your definition of sustainable, given that we are facing the existential threats of climate and ecological breakdown, is very different to mine!

I am utterly appalled by Wiltshire Council's last century thinking. Building roads will never ease the problems with traffic - this is well documented. You need to increase active travel and public transport networks to such a level that it is easy, timely and safe to cycle, walk, bus or travel by train through our county.

Wiltshire Council

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Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement and Questions from Steve Perry – Chair of CAUSE

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

CAUSE welcomes the lifting of the threat of damaging road building across the environmentally and socially precious open spaces and farmland of Avon and Marden Valley to the east of Chippenham. The Avon and Marden Valley has been a lifeline to Chippenham residents during the Covid pandemic and the Cabinet and Council should now consider how to protect and enhance this amenity and reinvigorate County Farms to be an exemplar of local farming and food production. CAUSE would welcome assisting in this project with other interested groups. This provides an opportunity for Wiltshire Council and the local councils neighbouring the area to plan positively for the land in terms of its social and agricultural benefits, and CAUSE will work to encourage that fresh thinking.

However, many of the concerns which we have expressed in relation to the previous Avon and Marden Valley plans apply equally to the current proposals for a road and housing to the South of Chippenham.

CAUSE has analyzed the responses to the Future Chippenham consultation. We remind the Council of the following facts:

- 1) **75%** of respondents objected to having a road at all – including the one the council is now proposing from Lackham to Pewsham.
- 2) It appears that every effort was made by Wiltshire Council to prevent easy objection to any road. There was no simple box to tick to say “no road at all”; instead, convoluted guidance was issued very late in the consultation to use a free form text entry (in an area of the consultation not related to a no-road option) to express an opinion.
- 3) The CAUSE analysis leans heavily to placing responses into the “Support” category; all submissions where a route was chosen but no other comment was made was counted as “support” for the road. However, the vast majority of those responses also chose “Protecting and enhancing biodiversity e.g., animal and plant habitats”, “Protecting

and enhancing landscape and visual amenity” and “Preserving and protecting heritage assets”, as key issues to consider in choosing a road. They were, therefore, hardly ringing endorsements for bulldozing through hectares of Wiltshire countryside and County Farms.

4) CAUSE notes that responses were received from Chippenham Town Council, Calne Town Council and parish councils such as Bremhill, who all came out in total opposition to the road, and that the Parish councillors are underrepresented in the Consultation, as they overwhelmingly voted against to the road but did not also submit individual objections (e.g. most of the Chippenham Town Councillors submitted their objections to the Town Council, which were simply amalgamated into the Town Council’s single response).

5) The results of analysis of nearly 1200 responses were:

“SUPPORT” a Route Option 246 Total 246 - **21% Support** (see Note 3 above)

Choose a Route Option but comment they want no road	311
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No choice of route and state at all	574	Total 885 - 75% Object	(see Note 4 above) no road
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Don’t Know 44 Total 44 **4% Don’t Know**

‘Don’t knows’ include organisations where a comment was made, but no preference stated. It also includes various Wiltshire Council departmental responses. There were also a few members of the public who submitted a response without a route option or with no indications of support or objection.

The responses in support include developers, who have vested pecuniary interests in any development the Council proposes - which would never be allowed in other circumstances, such as a councillor on a planning committee, or a householder whose property value is threatened by a planning application.

Additionally the overwhelming feedback against development to the east in the Future Chippenham consultation has been matched by over 6,100 people who have already signed a petition on 38 degrees (<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-urban-sprawl-and-destruction-of-wiltshire-countryside>) that opposed the building of the road , gave cogent reasons for this and whose conclusions included:

Given the declared Global Climate Emergency, it is astonishing that the Council would even consider building on land that is so vital to our future and that would undermine the battle against climate change.

In fact, we believe that in the midst of a global Climate Emergency, unsustainable

development of this kind should not be permitted.'

Moreover, the housing number reduction is, in reality, only around 1,000 homes over the period. The Council hasn't changed its position that the numbers proposed are required to fit the needs of Chippenham. That is false. Chippenham needs affordable homes for young people to help them stay in the area. It does not need a still-massive expansion for incoming wealthy commuters.

It is obvious that Chippenham is attractive to wealthy incomers who want to move out of the cities and commute back to them, but pandering to that market will only fuel the ongoing rise in house prices, thus making the affordability issue even worse for our young people, as well as increasing emissions.

Instead of just accepting the numbers applied by the Government, Wiltshire Council should as other authorities have done, push back, and remind HMG that there isn't really a housing shortage. There are over 1.2 million unbuilt permissions currently, as well as a magnitude of empty houses that speculators are sitting on.

Two years ago, the Council declared a climate emergency. Given the need for carbon emissions reduction, the huge, and possibly permanent, changes in work patterns (working from home, etc.) and the resulting traffic reduction, the proposed road to the south just isn't justified. We remind you that 75% of Future Chippenham consultation respondents were against the entire road plan, not just the eastern section of it. We believe that the Council is keeping the southern section in order to justify the new houses planned, and to keep as much of the HIF funding as possible.

Question 1 (– (21-285)

What agreements does the Council have with developers to the north and east of Chippenham? Specifically, what has been agreed with Chippenham 2020 or SUMMIX or both, and were any agreements made with SUMMIX or Chippenham 2020 (or both) before the Council made the HIF bid?

Response:

The Heads of terms with land owners in relation to the recommended option are included in the exempt part of the agenda due to the commercial nature. This also includes head of terms with Northern and eastern land owners setting out where agreement is outstanding. The Council did not have any agreement with land owners prior to this point.

Question 2 – (21-286)

75% responded AGAINST THE WHOLE PLAN. The Council's revised plan does not in any way reflect that, and still appears to show Wiltshire Council to be predetermining the outcome of the emerging Local Plan. How much more percentage against the plan

would be required to stop it completely, and why is the Council predetermining the Local Plan with a grant application rather than going through a proper positive planning process including options appraisal, and engagement with the public and local councils?

Response:

Future growth proposals at Chippenham, their scale and location will be determined as part of the Local Plan Review. This will be based on evidence on how best to meet social and economic needs whilst protecting the environment. As set out in the report to Cabinet on 29 June 2021 about the Local Plan, the Review will involve further consultation and will be subject to an independent examination in public into the soundness of the plan led by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

The consultation sought feedback on the preferred road route option should development come forward as part of the Local Plan process and sought feedback from members of the public and interested parties to inform the preferred road route decision.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement and Questions from Sue McGill

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

The CEO remarks that the benefits of both the funding and the ability to deliver infrastructure-led development are clear.

However,

- “The number of construction firms operating in the construction industry fell sharply in 2019, falling by 10.9% compared with 2018 to 290,374 registered firms operating in Great Britain.
- There were 3,502 insolvencies in the construction sector in Great Britain in 2019, the highest of any sector.
- Construction-related employment in Great Britain fell by 6.0% in 2019, which is the first annual decline since 2014 when it fell by 0.1%.
- Average weekly earnings in the construction industry in Great Britain grew by 1.8% to £648 per week in the year to December 2019, which was below the 2.8% increase for the whole economy.
- The UK trade deficit in construction materials and components fell by £152 million to £10,421 million in 2019, though imports remain more than double the value of exports as all three components of building materials saw a trade deficit.”

(<https://bit.ly/3wAXluA>)

These latest ONS data relate to 2019—before the pandemic, and before Brexit. Elsewhere, it is now reported that an unprecedented decrease in completed homes occurred in 2020 (to 123,000 as opposed to the government target of 300,000 p.a. by 2025) attributable to the pandemic, economic uncertainty and the increase in time needed for developing a traditionally built new home. This year-on-year decrease is predicted to continue until 2024. (<https://bit.ly/3kkNYSx>) (<https://bit.ly/3ej78Ew>)

From my own recent experience of the UK’s trade deficit in construction materials and components, not only are materials such as timber and specialist equipment subject to

months-long order times, but also the pandemic has increased lead-in times for commencement of work, as well as reducing the availability of labour.

The Chief Executive and the Council are ignoring these figures, and related factors. Instead, he and the Council are relying on a promise of government-funded infrastructure to make their own promises of private house-building—promises which are unjustified on the grounds (a) of economic uncertainty (b) of public opposition in Chippenham (c) of evidence that developers bank land rather than begin construction (even with planning permission) if they consider that they will make insufficient profit on their investments.

Indeed, given (a), (b), and (c), these promises look more like those of a gambler hoping to recoup losses via a bet on the possible future revenue from an expanded Chippenham.

Given that three quarters of the respondents to the Future Chippenham consultation objected to the Council's proposed construction of infrastructure on the edges of the town, it is fair to say that the "benefits of infrastructure-led development" are anything but clear to Chippenham residents.

Question 1 – (21-287)

Please describe these benefits, taking account of the evidence that I provide above.

Response:

The points above are noted . Subject to the Local plan review development will come forward that is viable given the prevailing market conditions. HIF funding provides the opportunity to forward fund infrastructure thus mitigating development risk whilst enabling the necessary infrastructure to be planned and in place in advance of individual developments.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement and Questions from Tony Wright

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and
Health & Wellbeing**

Question 1 – (21-288)

As a resident of the historic Rowden Hamlet which is in close proximity to the proposed route of the feeder road, I wish to ask why there has been a complete lack of notice to us about this huge proposed development and its process of approval at every stage.

This development will compromise the historic hamlet and the Avon River Valley Conservation area and yet has been no notification or direct consultation with those who will be most severely affected by plan.

You acknowledge responses were received objecting to the scheme on the grounds of quantum, transport issues, climate change and environmental issues and yet those responses have been totally ignored.

The Chippenham River Valley Conservation Group were instrumental in establishing the conservation area and yet have not been contacted about this proposal. Why is this?

Response:

A full public consultation on the road route options assessment was held between January and March of this year. This was publicised through the local press, Wiltshire council website, Chippenham Town Council, Chippenham Area Board, Parish Councils and site notices. Letters to those directly affected by the road route were also sent. Emails to all stakeholders were also sent. This group will be directly contacted in future consultation.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement and Questions from Maurice Evans

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

I have strong objections to Wiltshire Council's new road proposals for the southern side of Chippenham for a number of important reasons. I am a resident of the Rowden hamlet in the middle of the designated Avon River Conservation Area. My objections in brief are:

Question 1 – (21-289)

There was a public survey carried out for the HIF roads proposals. This was done very quickly and almost secretly with little public notice at the time. There has been no published information from the results and there seems to be no statistical evidence to support your new proposal.

Response:

The public consultation on the road route options was held in between 15th January 2021 – 12th March 2021, a period of 8 weeks. This was publicised through the local press, the Council website, Area Boards and Town and Parish Councils and received over 1100 responses. Due to the large response and in order to consider all feedback appropriately it has taken the team a little longer to produce the report. The report is now available with the published Cabinet papers . [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday 21 July 2021, 10.00 am | Wiltshire Council](#)

Question 2 – (21-290)

The latest proposal to provide a link from the A350 to the A4 was not published before as a stand-alone option for consultation.

Response:

The consultation sought feedback on the road across zones. Zones 1 and 2 were those from the A350 Lackham roundabout to the A4. In addition the consultation confirmed

that the eventual route could be a hybrid of any combination of the routes proposed. This cabinet is considering the southern route option.

Question 3 – (21-291)

I can see no information on the government or other agencies financial input for this specific section of road.

Response:

Subject to the cabinet decision on the 21st July the Council will work with Homes England to revisit the GDA and previous funding agreement.

Question 4 – (21-292)

it is described as a feeder road, but has been previously reported as a relief road for Chippenham. These are two different things and the latter will bring much more traffic, noise and pollution to the existing open countryside.

Response:

The road is a distributor road.

Question 5 – (21-293)

there will be wanton destruction of rural countryside.

Response:

This is a statement

Question 6 – (21-294)

this proposal cannot be compliant with the principles of the Wilts Council climate emergency declaration and its other sustainability policies.

Response:

The proposed development will be policy compliant

Question 7 – (21-295)

this proposal with its raised sections of road across the Avon will create unwanted noise and night-time light pollution for the surrounding area, just as the Pewsham bypass road does now but made worse as the new proposal is not an essential relief road.

Response:

The road is a distributor road. The design of the road will seek to mitigate where possible impacts on the local area. Lighting for the road will take into consideration the ecological and environmental requirements for the site.

Question 8 – (21-296)

ecology in and around the conservation area will suffer on a large scale as there will be nowhere for the wild creatures to freely come and go. Wildlife corridors that have been previously proposed just will not work with the intensification of residential uses that the road will deliver.

Response:

Proposals will be taken through a Masterplan and planning application process where the issues concerning ecology and protection of habitats will be appropriately considered.

Question 9 - (21-297)

If this road is approved without proper consultation there will have been a wilful lack of democratic process shown by Wilts Council and would give rise to appropriate legal challenges.

Response

The consultation process for the road option is set out in detail in the appendices to the Cabinet Report and has followed the appropriate due process.

Question 10 – (21-298)

10. is there an intention to link this new road with the worryingly over-engineered proposal advertised for the Melksham bypass? Together they would destroy the whole nature of the already frail environmental conditions that make up the Wiltshire countryside.

Response:

The proposals are separate.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement and Questions from Andrew Nicolson

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

The new proposals have been published just a week before the meeting. You are proposing to take decisions on a very different scheme, without any or adequate public consultation on it, and you have failed to consult on matters that you should have consulted on back in March, such as broad Concept Framework proposals for Wiltshire Council land.

You are withholding information as "exempt" and proposing to go into private session, even though the law and the Council's constitution both say that "*Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.*" I have asked you about this but at the time of writing I have had no replies.

If the information was published, citizens could react to it and influence your decision. If Item 9 is held in public, as it should be, your session will be held under scrutiny from the public, which could also influence your decision.

Even if you still claim the information is exempt, it "*is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.*" That involves a balancing exercise, weighing up the public interest on both sides. At the time of writing I have seen no published evidence that you have carried out any such exercise. I recognise the case for confidentiality that you have set out, but you have not shown that you have considered or acknowledged the many reasons why there are important public interests in transparency over these proposals, which still stand to be the largest single greenfield or any development site in Wiltshire during the next Local Plan period, and have attracted widespread intense and numerous objections from individuals, organisations and local authorities in their present form including on grounds relating to the climate and ecological emergencies.

If you pass the resolution at Item 8 and take Item 9 in private session, or make decisions with missing consultations on important matters, I believe you will be breaching the Nolan principles, exceeding your powers and breaking the law.

Question 1 – (21-299)

Council land concept framework consultations

- (i) When was a report on "broad Concept Framework proposals for Wiltshire Council land" prepared, and why did formal public consultation on them not take place alongside consultation on the road route options, as per your consultation plan?

Response:

The Concept Framework document was prepared by advisers to the Future Chippenham Programme which is promoting the council's land to provide context to and inform the road route options assessment process. This was therefore not consulted on but was included as representations to the Local Plan Review to be considered alongside those submitted by other site promoters and developers and as such would not be subject to formal public consultation.

If a preferred road route is identified, a framework masterplan for the site will be developed and this which will supersede the Concept Framework and, alongside the road, will be consulted on in full as part of the master planning process. The report states that consultation will take place from Autumn 2021.

When will such a report be prepared and published, and consultation take place, on the basis of the proposed amended scheme, and can you assure us you will not take decisions that should be based on full consultation, including this topic, such as the ones before you today, until this has been done?

Response:

See above response

Question 2 – (21-300)

Traffic modelling and consultation on modified road proposal

- (i) Has traffic modelling been carried out on the fresh road proposals, if so when can we see the report, if not when will it be done and published?

Response:

Initial traffic modelling has been undertaken and further analysis is underway. The analysis will be provided as part of further consultation on the framework masterplan process and at the planning application stage.

- (ii) Can you assure us that you will consult on the fresh road proposals backed by full information on expected traffic and environmental impacts, before

taking decisions or making commitments on land, such as the ones before you today?

Response:

Future growth proposals at Chippenham, their scale and location will be determined as part of the Local Plan Review. As set out in the report to Cabinet on 29 June 2021 about the Local Plan, the Review will involve further consultation and will be subject to an independent examination in public into the soundness of the plan led by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. Strategic infrastructure requirements will be an integral part of the Local Plan.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement and Questions from Chris Caswill

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Statement

The decision not to build an environmentally-damaging road across the much-valued open spaces and farmland of Avon and Marden Valley to the east of Chippenham is very welcome. There is now an opportunity to enhance this public amenity and reinvigorate the two County Farms as exemplars of local farming and food production. This provides an opportunity for Wiltshire Council and the local councils neighbouring the area to plan positively for the land in terms of its social and agricultural benefits.

On the other hand the proposals to continue with road building and large housing developments south of Chippenham are clearly contrary to the Council's commitment to address the climate emergency. They also ignore the 75% of respondents to the Future Chippenham HIF road consultation who opposed building the road – even though the design of the consultation was such that views against the road could not easily be recorded.

The Future Chippenham consultation was in any case compromised by its being held alongside the preliminary consultation on the Local Plan, on which it is dependent and which it should obviously have followed. The reason given for this in para 4.19 of the Cabinet paper is : *“The consultation ran broadly in parallel to that of the Local Plan review (Reg 18). This was unavoidable as this was the latest date the Future Chippenham consultation could take place to achieve the requirements of the GDA.”*

This makes it clear that the Grant Determination Agreement was drawn up without proper consideration of the timetables for the Local Plan and HIF road consultations, leading to public confusion about the two events and no doubt a reduction in the response rates, and validity of responses.

Last but not least, the wording of the paper makes it clear that the Cabinet is being invited to predetermine the outcome of the Local Plan Review in favour of its Future Chippenham proposals. This is contrary to Local Planning guidelines and undermines the validity of the Review.

Question 1 – (21-301)

The Cabinet paper makes the extraordinary claim in para 10 that there is no need for any environmental assessment prior to committing to a large programme of road building. This is in direct contrast to the recent Government announcement that road strategies need to be redrawn to take account of environmental commitments - for example the Council's declaration of a climate emergency. Given Government policy, will you please explain how a decision to build a major road and around 4000 houses on open countryside has no need for environmental assessment?

Response:

The proposals will be subject to a full Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the appropriate regulations.

Development proposals would also need to be consistent with the Local Plan. Future growth proposals at Chippenham, their scale and location will be determined as part of the Local Plan Review. As set out in the report to Cabinet on 29 June 2021, the Review will involve further consultation and will be subject to an independent examination in public into the soundness of the plan led by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Preparation has already involved and will continue involve a number of stages where there is a sustainability appraisal of alternative strategies and the merits of individual sites,

Question 2 – (21-302)

Para 4.19 of the main Cabinet paper on Future Chippenham states that 'Subject to the Local Plan review status subsequent planning applications can be made (in respect of the Future Chippenham proposals)'. Will you please make clear the specific stage in the Local Plan Review process when such applications are proposed to be made?

Response:

Cabinet permission will be sought to make planning applications and that consideration will only be brought forward at the appropriate time in the Local plan review process.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement from Cllr Derek Walters

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and Health & Wellbeing

Question 1 – (21-303)

The revised proposal for Future Chippenham focuses on the southern section and excludes the northern section of the original proposal. Please could Cabinet give clear reasons for why the north section has been excluded in favour of the south section?

Response:

The reasons are set out in the report.

Question 2 – (21-304)

The proposal to Cabinet asks for contracts to be approved subject to the Local Plan Review etc. Please could Cabinet confirm that no contracts will be entered into until these conditions have been met, and that Wiltshire Council is not exposed to any financial liability (contingent or otherwise) of approving contracts on this basis.

Response:

Contracts reliant upon the outcome of the Local Plan Review will not be entered into until the necessary conditions have been met.

Statement

I would also like to state that presenting a document with over 2700 pages at such short notice gives a very limited opportunity for proper scrutiny.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement from Cllr Nick Murry

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

The lifting of the threat of a road across the Avon and Marden Valley is welcomed and provides an opportunity for Wiltshire Council to invest in protecting the environment and nature-based solutions to climate change, as well as in the future of its County farms and other farmland/ habitat in this environmentally important vale. However, the issues raised in relation to the previous HIF bid road proposals also apply to the current proposals for a road and housing to the South of Chippenham and a reduction of a thousand houses (from c. 5,000 in the last iteration of the Local Plan Review to c. 4,000 now being proposed) would still create an unsustainable commuter extension, with associated environmental destruction and vast quantities of carbon emissions. All being locked in without any reappraisal of the spatial strategy, site options or engagement with the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan, local town and parish councils and the residents of Chippenham.

The report mentions that it notes the consultation response, yet clearly hasn't understood this or taken it on board. In addition to Chippenham Town Council's, Calne Town Council's and Bremhill Parish Council's complete rejection of the road, 75% of respondents objected to having any road to the East and South and many of the remaining responses were not supportive but attempting to comment on what was being presented as a *fait accompli*. Some of the supportive responses included landowners and developers with financial interests, which can hardly be considered part of the community response, just as a householder's comments about the impact of proposed development on the value of their property would not be considered relevant in determining a planning application.

Moreover, Chippenham Town Council and the general public (in their submissions to the Town Council and their consultation responses) rejected predetermination of the Local Plan by a grant application, as the wrong way to approach this. Particularly when proposals had been worked up covertly and with complete lack of transparency in terms of the nature of the agreement with Homes England. Yet Cabinet seems to be falling into the same trap it did with the original HIF bid, which could lead to a similarly

disastrous outcome in terms of time and taxpayers' money wasted in developing an unsustainable Plan, by again attempting to predetermine the number of houses and their location ahead of the evidence that needs to be collected and the options appraisal that needs to be undertaken under the Local Plan Review.

Given that the Office for National Statistics predicts population growth for Chippenham to correspond to c. 2,000-2,500 additional houses (not the proposed 4,000), which may itself be unsustainable in the context of climate change and changing national climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, and that the Council will be reducing its County wide target by 5,000, it is hard to understand why Cabinet would want to commit to such a high number. Or why it would want to risk wasting tax payers' money on developing something that lacks evidence in the Local Plan and contains significant risks in terms of acceptability and delivery. It would seem to be much more sensible and prudent (in terms of investing further) to await the Local Plan Review's reappraisal of the HMA numbers, Spatial Strategy and Chippenham site options, with all the additional evidence that entails.

Question 1 – (21-305)

On what basis was the 3,800-4,200 houses put forward and where is the evidence for this in light of overall reduction in housing numbers for the County and the demonstrable unsustainability (ref. Consultation responses from WCA and others) of developing a large commuter extension for Chippenham?

Response:

Future Chippenham have identified the overall potential number of houses that the site could deliver which would be over more than one plan period

Question 2 - (21-306)

Shouldn't we be waiting to see what the Local Plan Review evidence shows, undertaking a new site options appraisal, engaging the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan and other key stakeholders first, before coming up with revised numbers and sites for expanding Chippenham? Isn't this the process we are supposed to follow?

Response:

Future growth proposals at Chippenham, their scale and location will be determined as part of the Local Plan Review. As set out in the report to Cabinet on 29 June 2021 about the Local Plan, the Review will involve further consultation and will be subject to an independent examination in public into the soundness of the plan led by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Question 3– (21-307)

Will Cabinet commit to a proper evidence-based planning process being followed ahead of anything being decided for Chippenham and not attempting to retrofit untested proposals to the spatial strategy?

Response:

Future growth proposals at Chippenham, their scale and location will be determined as

part of the Local Plan Review. As set out in the report to Cabinet on 29 June 2021 about the Local Plan, the Review will involve further consultation and will be subject to an independent examination in public into the soundness of the plan led by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Question 4 – (21-308)

Does Cabinet agree that it therefore makes sense to delay agreeing contracts with landowners, undertaking compulsory purchases and investing tax payer money in detailed masterplans, until such time as the Local Plan Review has reappraised and reconsulted on the Spatial Strategy and Chippenham numbers and options?

Response:

The Council is continuing its programme in line with its obligations under the Grant Determination Agreement. Land Agreements and Compulsory Purchase are dependent upon the outcome of the Local Plan Process, masterplan and planning application(s).

Question 5 – (21-309)

What does the mooted 'town centre regeneration' consist of and has the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan been consulted or engaged on this?

Response:

This recommendation is yet to start in earnest but will be progressed with the Town Council and other relevant stakeholders and have regard to the Neighborhood Plan process as mentioned in the report.

Question 6 – (21-310)

Can Cabinet please agree to press Homes England to share the Grant Agreement and any subsequent renegotiated agreement (with any necessary redactions for commercially confidential information) which is clearly in the public interest?

Response:

Following questions about the publication of the GDA HIF Agreement advice was sought from Homes England. Their advice is that the GDA should not be published. The further request will be put to them.

Question 7 – (21-311)

What is meant by the "land assembly status and associated risk with GDA conditions" mentioned in the report?

Response:

As part of the Grant determination agreement, there is a requirement to achieve milestones and post contract conditions. Obviously, ensuring the land is available for the construction of the road if it reaches that stage is a milestone and therefore anything that affects this, is a risk.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

21 July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – Future Chippenham

Statement from Nick Parry

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, and
Health & Wellbeing**

Statement

This so called revised road plan would do very little to alleviate traffic in the town centre, the same could be achieved with a link road from Avenue la-flech to the hospital roundabout, in fact this proposed route would probably not alleviate the amount of congestion the Council and Atkins have recently caused in Chippenham with there ill thought out changes at Station Hill and the Little George Junctions. The cynic in me says these may well have been devised to cause said congestion!

Question 1 – (21-312)

Could the council please justify WHY given the abject failure to produce a consultation document fit for purpose, the Future Chippenham project should continue given that whilst there was no option on the consultation to say no road the vast majority of respondents have rejected the need for ANY roads, this so called compromise is yet another folly to waste taxpayers money and waste valuable resource?

Please could you let us know why the Future Chippenham team is still relevant and in post?

Response:

This question was received after the deadline for a written response at the Cabinet meeting on 21 July 2021. The question complements other questions raised throughout this document and responses given to those questions should be read alongside this submission.

Question 2 – (21-313)

Why do Wiltshire Council believe that they can pull the wool over residents eyes selling off council owned farms (local assets) and then appease Chippenham town with maybe £4-5 million pounds of CIL monies when this development land would raise more like £400-500 million pounds, please identify what you intend to do with these (local funds) are these destined to be spent on Chippenham and surrounding villages? If not, why not.

Response:

This question was received after the deadline for a written response at the Cabinet meeting on 21 July 2021. The question complements other questions raised throughout this document and responses given to those questions should be read alongside this submission.