

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Cabinet
Place: Council Chamber - Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge,
BA14 0RD
Date: Tuesday 13 September 2011
Time: 10.30 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 5 September 2011. The reports detailed below are now available and are attached to this agenda supplement. Please bring this supplement with you to the meeting.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Yamina Rhouati, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718024 or email yamina.rhouati@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225)713114/713115.

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

5. **Public participation** (Pages 1 - 2)

- (a) Petition: Waste Transfer Station Plan on the Castledown Business Park, Ludgershall

Cllr Christopher Williams will present a petition from the NO2WASTE group and students from Wellington Academy opposing plans for a Waste Transfer Station Plan on the Castledown Business Park. (Details of the petition attached)

- (b) Question from the Chippenham Vision Board

To receive the following question:

'If the patronage of the town's car park is reduced, what is the Cabinet's view on the damage to retail in the town, and whether the increase in car parking charges should be reviewed?'

(c) Question from Mr John Bowley

'In referring to reported remarks of Councillor Fleur de Rhe-Philippe "that Westbury was holding up Wiltshire with the lack of a bypass and the next inspector might have different findings" asks whether these broadcast remarks represent the view of the Wiltshire Council Cabinet?'

6. **Denominational Home to School Transport** (Pages 3 - 34)

 To receive the attached questions and statements.

The views of a Rapid Scrutiny exercise to be held on 8 September 2011 will be circulated.

7. **11-19 Commissioning Strategy**

 The views of a Rapid Scrutiny exercise to be held on 9 September 2011 will be circulated.

8. **Annual Governance Statement 2010-11**

Cabinet will be asked to recommend the following amendment to the Statement:

Paragraph 83, page 101 of the agenda:

The final sentence reads "The group will submit its application for charter status during 2011."

To be updated to read:

"Wiltshire Council was externally assessed by South West Councils on 9 August 2011 and was subsequently awarded Charter Status for Councillor Development. This is recognition that the Council has achieved best practice in the way it provides learning and development opportunities for its elected councillors. The accreditation lasts for three years."

11. **Urgent Items** (Pages 35 - 44)

The Leader has approved consideration of the following item as urgent business as the matter cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting:

Wiltshire Incubation Environment

Report by the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning is attached.

Date published: 9 September 2011

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 September 2011

Public Participation

Petition:

Waste Transfer Station Plan on the Castledown Business Park, Ludgershall

Councillor Christopher Williams, division member for Ludgershall and Perham Down will on behalf of students of Wellington Academy and the NO2WASTE group, present a petition with 1036 signatories.

The petition states that:

..they vehemently oppose the above plan by Hills Waste Solutions Limited for the reasons listed below:

- Numerous road hazard and congestion issues in the area
- Odour, noise and air pollution
- Detrimental to the Wellington Academy and our health and safety
- Too close to existing and planned new residential areas
- Out of character with the original plan to attract innovative businesses to the Park
- Detrimental to existing businesses and a deterrent to future innovative businesses
- Set undesirable precedent for more 'dirty' industries to move onto the Business Park, further impacting on our health and safety
- HWS may decide to co-locate other waste operations alongside further impacting on our health and safety
- Concerns related to the major aquifer beneath the site (ie drainage, contamination etc)
- Ancient woodland to the north-east may be sensitive to air pollution despite any increase to the volume of headgrow/tree line to the north of the site
- Totally out of character and appearance with the surrounding area impacting on amenities, safety and quality of life
- Contradicts guidelines set out in the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Site Selection and Site Appraisal Methodology Report dated August 2009 (in particular: 'Exclusionary: Avoid development that would lead to impacts on human health (eg proximity to residential areas, schools, existing urban businesses)')

We consider the views of the Wellington Academy students and local people (supported by the SCI (Statement of Community Involvement) and the forthcoming Localism Bill should carry proper weight before a decision is made to proceed any further with this proposal.

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Saint Joseph's Catholic School

Church Road, Laverstock, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 1QY
Tel: 01722 335380 Fax: 01722 410741
email: admin@st-josephs-salisbury.wilts.sch.uk
website: www.st-josephs-salisbury.wilts.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mr. P Hughes M.A. (Hons) NPQH

Ms Yamina Rhoutati
Democratic Services
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge BA14 8JB

13th June 2010

Denominational Transport

Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act (replicated in Section 9 of the 1996 Education Act), Principle 7 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child and Article 2 of the First Protocol of the European Convention of Human Rights reinforce the principle that no child shall be denied the right to education in accordance with the wishes of the parents, especially with regard to their own religious and philosophical conventions.

My first question is to ask Cabinet members if they accept that Catholic parents have a right to choose to send their children to a school where their children will be supported in their faith? If this is the case then you must surely accept that the decision to withdraw funding supporting denominational transport will have a negative impact on parental choice. The Council has committed itself to diversity and choice within all its services. By removing transport it is effectively removing choice for some Catholic families who will no longer be able to afford to have their children educated in a Catholic school.

I would like to set out my second question to the cabinet in the light of the historical context for this decision. In 2007 the then Headteacher of St Augustine's and I met with the Director of Education Mr Bob Wolfson. The outcome of that meeting was an agreement on support for denominational transport which involved compromise on both sides and arguably a more equitable arrangement. Since that meeting Catholic schools have kept to their part of the bargain by rigorously assessing each applicant against the criteria (ie being a practising Catholic). The result has been a dramatic reduction in the cost to Wiltshire compared with pre-2006 levels.

The meeting with Bob Wolfson followed a thorough public consultation regarding the proposed removal of denominational transport from 2007. This included public meetings Trowbridge and Salisbury in July 2006. Mr Wolfson, Director; Department of Children & Education and Mrs Bryant Cabinet member for Education were in attendance and saw for themselves the strong feeling from the hundreds of people who attended. In fact feelings were so strong that the Mr Wolfson took the unprecedented step of switching off the phone line of the relevant officer for transport in County Hall.

In the Director's paper to the Cabinet on this issue in 2006, it stresses that denominational transport will need to be subject to consultation and the 'outcome may limit the extent of savings that can be achieved' as well as acknowledgement that 'there is a risk of damage to the Local Authority's relationships with denominational schools and with parents' [par. 28-29].

My question to the Cabinet is with reference to process. Unlike 2006 where there was a full consultation, in 2011 the Local Authority has not consulted in accordance with the guidance on Equality and Human Rights Commission documentation.

'decisions should be subject to robust impact assessment, which should entail a sound consideration of relevant data to identify if the decision may have a negative impact on particular groups, and seek to avoid this. The decision-making process also requires effective consultation and involvement with stakeholders to identify and address relevant issues'

Equality & Human Rights Commission 2009

I would like to ask the Cabinet why the Authority has failed to consult properly on such an important question?

I ask this question in part because in my school many of the young people for whom the withdrawal of assistance for denominational transport will have the greatest impact come from minority immigrant communities. Their parents have chosen Catholic schools for their children to support their values. Those pupils currently in school will be directly affected by these proposals.

One of the central obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 3) is that in decisions affecting children, their best interests should be a 'primary consideration'. In one ruling Baroness Hale of the Supreme Court stated that while all other considerations could outweigh a child's best interests, 'the important thing...is to consider those best interests first'.

In the context of cutting denominational transport, the 'best interests' duty requires the impact of the decision upon them to have been the first consideration in the minds of the decision-makers. Any decision to cut services without children's best interests being a primary consideration is therefore potentially unlawful. The requirement to act in children's best interests could be enforced in the courts by the child, their parent or another person close to the child.

As a Catholic School community we have great sympathy with the problems facing the Council. I do not believe the decision to look again at this issue is motivated by any anti-Catholic or discriminatory feeling, it is about saving money.

One Catholic school in another county facing a similar situation sought legal advice from Professor Conor Gearty of Matrix Chambers, London. He suggests that the Local Authority may be acting illegally. The Counsel's Opinion was lengthy and complicated but the final paragraph was absolutely clear:

'...in Counsel's respectful submission, the local authority should maintain the policy as it is, on the basis that it is required by law and is not open to change in the way that the authority appears to assume'.

As well as the above questions I would like to make the following points;

- The proposals would put at risk the partnership between the Church and the Local Authority set up as part of the provision to serve a particular community. There is current assumption that Catholic children in Catholic primary schools will move to the appropriate Catholic secondary school. Since this could be some distance away, the removal of this support for travel will affect both the Diocese and local provision and penalise parents who are not able to fund the transport costs, especially if they have more than one child at the school.
- Catholic parents currently have to fund 10% of the capital costs of Catholic schools. If denominational transport were to be removed, they would have to make additional contribution towards the provision of an education enshrined in the 1994 Education Act and supported by an existing partnership between the Local Authority and the Diocese.
- Implementation of the proposal to end assistance for denominational transport would undoubtedly lead to increased car usage in order to transport children to and from school resulting in an undesirable environmental and safety impact.
- Finally I should point out that parents have already made decisions based on existing transport policy and that changing the current policy would have adverse affects on across the county.

Thank you for consideration of these points

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of P Hughes.

P Hughes
Headteacher

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Public Participation
From Sharon Pearce – Denominational Home to School Transport

Question

This is in response to a letter received from the Department of Neighbourhood and Planning, at County Hall, dated May 2011.

1) Does the council provide transport to work for any of its employees (ie transport that is not available to members of the public who may be travelling to the same or a near location)? If so what is the extent, how long has this been in effect and what is the cost?

2) Does the council provide transport for any of its employees to travel on a regular basis from one official site to another (again, transport that is not available to members of the public who may be travelling to the same or a near location)? If so what is the extent, how long has this been in effect, and what is the cost?

The following questions are regarding the planning that must have taken place to ensure the feasibility of the proposals:

3) What consideration has been given to the impact of the corresponding increase in traffic as parents drive their children to denominational schools? How was this information gleaned, how large was the sample group, and from which parts of the area was the sample group taken?

4) What is the extent of this traffic increase, and what routes will be particularly affected?

5) What will be the impact on other schools taking children who will have to change schools following the withdrawal/unaffordability of denominational transport? How was this information gleaned, how large was the sample group, and from which parts of the area was the sample group taken?

6) Is it known which schools will be affected? If so, can they be listed and made available to the public?

7) What provision is being made at these schools identified as potentially having to take children who will have to move schools as a result of the change in transport arrangements? (eg increase in running costs funding, capital investment, etc)

The final one is about the impact of choice on parents and children who do not attend denominational schools:

8) What is the estimated extent of the impact on parents who will no longer be able to send their children to their first choice school due to the school having to take children who previously attended denominational schools?

**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from Camilla Whipp

I am writing to you concerning the Council's recent announcement advising of its intention to withdraw the part-funding of home to school transport to denominational schools with effect from September 2012.

I will start by drawing your attention to comments made by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, when he addressed the Pope during the recent papal visit to England. Mr Cameron said a priority for the coalition government was to generate a culture of greater social responsibility and he said that the faith communities were important architects in doing this. I believe his comment clearly reflects the vital role government see faith schools have in developing and supporting young people to be ambassadors in building and supporting the government's 'Big Society'.

In the current economic climate, I fully recognise the pressure on Wiltshire Council to reduce spending and I accept that all within the community will need to bear their share of the burden. However, I would urge cognisance of the ever increasing financial pressure faced by families and the risk that if cuts are made as proposed they are likely to have a seriously detrimental effect on children's education and wellbeing. I would stress that the abrupt and finite manner in which the Council proposed to end the funding is likely to have serious and measurable impact on the education of children whose families will be forced to move them to other schools.

It is appreciated that Wiltshire Council has supported its schools for many years, and in doing so, has created many opportunities by which our children have benefitted in accessing their chosen religious based education. However our schools serve Wiltshire Council tax payers and I suggest that the contribution our schools have made to educational standards and the welfare of Wiltshire children has been, and is, outstanding.

I suggest that the realisation of the proposed savings could be problematic. In a rural community such as Wiltshire, the Council could find itself having to transport Catholic children, free of charge, to their nearest schools, whereas under the current system those families make a significant financial contribution towards the travel costs. I would ask to what extent an impact assessment has been made on whether other local schools have sufficient places to accommodate children who may no longer be able to attend their chosen faith school. Also, whether the proposal, if implemented as detailed in the letter, will merely transfer the cost to a different Council department therefore resulting in a financial loss to the Council?

Currently, significant morning rush hour traffic is attributable to the 'school run' and Government policy is to generate a modal shift from car to bus. For children entering denominational schools in the future and lacking transport support to those schools, the outcome could be an unacceptable increase in car use, presenting risks to the environment and subsequently to children's health and well being. The cost in maintain the transport infrastructure as well as transport disruption, are likely to exceed the small savings to the transport budget. Currently, St Augustine's Catholic College 'buses' in 11 coaches and any shift from bus to car would significantly impact on the environment, the through flow of traffic in Trowbridge at peak times which, we know, is already a problem and ultimately to the safety of motorists in terms of road safety and obvious increased risk of accident and consequential injury. St Patrick's school in Corsham is instigating a road safety campaign to reduce car travel to and from the school for the children's safety, and the loss of the currently supplied coach could mean more cars and more danger for the children in an already congested road.

I would like to draw the Council's attention to the DfE home to school transport and travel guidance and in particular, refer to pages 27-30 which set out the provisions relating to "religion or belief". In paragraph 119 the reference to Section 509AD of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on Local Authorities in relation to the provision of travel to have regard to the wishes of the parent for their child to be provided with education or training at a particular school or institution on grounds of the parents' religion or belief. Also of particular note is Paragraph 131 which states:

"...the Secretary of State hopes that Local Authorities will continue to think it right not to disturb well established arrangements, some of which have been associated with local agreements or understandings about the siting of such schools."

More recently the 2006 Education and Inspections Acts specifically aimed to reduce the impact of transport as a barrier to parents exercising their education preferences and also improved and extended the offer of free transport originally set out in the 1944 Education Act.

As I have said above, I very much appreciate the need for the Council to make savings but would urge that before any decisions is made by the Cabinet, that a full and open consultation should take place in order that the full implications may be assessed and considered. It was indeed this approach during the last review of denominational transport in 2006 that created much trust between the stakeholders and facilitated the development of a solution that allowed the Council to significantly reduce its financial cost and yet maintain a status quo and stability in terms of families being able to access, at a fair cost, transport to their chosen faith school. I believe that such an approach is fair and just and I would urge the council to follow such a process on this occasion also.

I ask that you acknowledge receipt of this letter and I would welcome your views on my proposal for a full and open consultation process.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Camilla Whipp.

Question

For those who live in rural areas and would require transport to their “designated school”, would they be entitled to the equivalent discount off their transport or the costs of being transported by the Council to that “designated school”?

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**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

**Statement and Question from Father Jean-Patrice Coulon
Parish Priest for Catholic Parish of Devizes**

Statement

As the Parish Priest of the Catholic Parish of Devizes, I would like to express my objection to the proposal of Wiltshire Council to remove subsidised transport for children to attend faith schools. I believe that this process of consultation has been badly handled by Wiltshire Council. This was acknowledged by the Leader of the Council when she apologised in a private August meeting held between members of the Council and members of the faith community. This apology was welcome and was accepted. However, the impression given at the meeting was that the saving needed to be found as the budget had already been set. This situation is in some ways analogous to the Salisbury Car Parking issue. As reported in the Salisbury Journal about the reintroduction of a one hour parking charge, the Salisbury Area Board "accepted that it would be hard to fund the move but said next time Wiltshire is setting a budget it should consult local people earlier in the process."

This lack of consultation has led to a process where there is an undue haste to try to remove the subsidy. This is shown in the fact the consultation has been handled by the Transport section of the Department of Neighbourhood and Planning alone, whereas in 2006 it was a joint effort between Education and Environmental Services. This had a negative impact when it was due to be debated by the Children's Services Select Committee in July, but could not be since the members had only two days to see the Report. This led to the formation of a Rapid Scrutiny Task Group.

This Task Group meeting seems to have a further role of allowing parents to have a say. It has been appreciated that this meeting has been held in the evening in a reasonably large venue. But due to the short time between the Task Group meeting and the Cabinet meeting, it would seem unlikely that members of the public will be able to see the recommendations of the Task Group until the day before the Cabinet meeting. This severely impedes the democratic rights of the public to make input to the Cabinet meeting which is the final decision-making meeting. Furthermore, the Task Group will not be able to report to the full Select Committee until after the Cabinet meeting, meaning that the Select Committee is reduced to simply retrospectively endorsing the decision of the Cabinet.

The education of children according to the religion or belief of their parents is far too important to be dealt with in such a way. It is clearly understood that the Council is facing severe financial pressures. But it should be recognised that students receiving

denominational home to school transport subsidy only represent less than 5% of the total of all students receiving this help in Wiltshire. Furthermore, they do not receive free transport but only a subsidy of 50%, despite the fact that they go to Voluntary Aided Schools which fund up to 10% of building and maintenance costs themselves, so saving the Council this money. The Department for Education is conducting a review of efficiency and practice in how all Councils deliver home to school transport. Wiltshire Council should take part in this review, and consider how it can make savings throughout the whole provision of statutory home to school transport in order that it can safeguard the discretionary portion as it is a tiny fraction of the total.

Such a move would mean a postponement of at least a year. It can be seen that Wiltshire Council can make such moves as they have made a significant U-turn in the case of Salisbury car parking. It would be appreciated if such a move could also be made here in order that an irreversible decision affecting the education of children is not taken without considering all possibilities for retention.

Question

This question follows on from a question I asked to the Rapid Scrutiny Task Group about the allocation of funds from the Department for Education to Local Authorities to continue funding for extended rights to free travel and the general duty to promote sustainable travel. The funds allocated to Wiltshire Council are substantial: £603,165 for 2011-12 and £748,325 in 2012-13. In his reply, Cllr Richard Gamble stated that around 100 children would benefit from this grant as they qualify for extended rights: that is to say, they come from families of low income.

In speaking to the Head of Service Passenger Transport, I learnt that this is not an exact figure, but in any case there would be funds left over from the sum mentioned above. The Department for Education has indicated that this sum is not ring-fenced, and so can be used for "locally identified priorities." The initial Report of the Department of Neighbourhood and Planning and the subsequent information provided to the Task Group indicate that there will be a significant impact on sustainable travel if any of the three proposed options are taken forward. This is certainly the case as under the options, schools are supposed to provide transport, and there is no way that they can provide it at the same price than the Council as they do not have the expertise.

How does Wiltshire Council propose to use the remainder of the funds left after providing for extended rights? What have they identified as their local priorities? Why not consider the retention of subsidised transport as a priority, given the many detrimental impacts, not least the impact on sustainable travel?

Father Jean-Patrice Coulon MSFS
Parish Priest
Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, Devizes

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 September 2011

**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from Sarah Westhoff

I am writing again about the cuts to Denominational transport that Wiltshire Council are intending to make in September 2012 because I am really worried about the huge effect it will have on my family.

We are aware and we are also very grateful for the transport subsidy we have received to date but we are obviously very concerned that if this was to stop it would make a huge financial difference to our family. My husband`s total earnings for this year was £17833.82 so as you can imagine with our second child starting at St Augustine`s this September we are going to find paying the extra extremely hard.

I do understand that some would say it was our choice to send our children to St Augustine`s and not our local school, Lavington. As a practising Catholic family we feel very strongly that our children receive a Catholic education and unfortunately Trowbridge is the nearest Catholic secondary school in this area.

If these cuts are made we will have to seriously consider changing schools, which would have a detrimental effect on our children`s education and would surely be a great concern to an already oversubscribed Lavington school.

Please can I ask you to take our families circumstances into account before you make your final decision?

This isn`t just about next year or the year after, it`s about the rest of their lives.

Please stand by what Wiltshire Council say `Where everybody matters`.

Thank you for your time

Sarah Westhoff

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 September 2011

**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from Colette and Dave Williams

We are very concerned with regards to the council's decision to cease funding for denominational transport. This will have a huge impact on my family. As practising Catholics we have sent our eldest son to St Gregory's Catholic College in Bath as this is the Catholic school in our catchment area. We obviously have to pay a subsidy for the transport which the council have to date provided. However it concerns us that the council will no longer fund this as of September 2012 and with another child going to St Gregory's in the next few years this will have a huge impact on our family. As we live in a "Christian" country it is a great shame that councils are no longer able to provide this subsidy for travel to denominational schools. Equality and Diversity is such an important aspect of education - surely we should have transport provided to accommodate the learners' needs? We go to great lengths within our schools to do this - surely transport should be a factor also. Many students throughout the county have taxis provided to get them to school and college - will this cease as of September 2012 also?

We belong to the parish of St Mary's in Chippenham and it is our understanding that there was an agreement in the 1960's between the parish and the county council with regards to providing transport for Catholic students wishing to attend a Catholic School. There were enough Catholic students in Chippenham and the surrounding villages to warrant building a Catholic secondary school in Chippenham, however the council decided not to build but gave a guarantee that transport would continue to be provided for these students who wished to attend a Catholic secondary school. In later years another secondary school - Abbeyfield was built which still does not accommodate the needs of practising Catholics who wish to send their children to a Catholic school.

We hope therefore that the council will change its mind with regards to denominational transport subsidies. We can appreciate that the council has to make savings, however it would be a great shame if the council no longer saw the need to support families who wish to send their children to specific schools due to their religious beliefs. This is surely not looking after their equality and diversity needs.

Regards

Colette and Dave Williams

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 September 2011

**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from Stuart and Hazel Donaldson

We live in Chippenham and our oldest child attends secondary school in Bath, and uses the school bus service. Our youngest child plans to start the same school in a year's time. We would like the cabinet to know that we are strongly opposed to any reduction in the subsidy used to support this service. Myself and my wife have both had wage freezes, and are very grateful for any subsidies that we receive at the present time. We feel that we would struggle to pay the full cost of bus transport. Despite our attempts to find out this information, we are not aware of how much the council subsidizes the home-to-school transport from Chippenham to Bath, but we would hope that Wiltshire Council continues to subsidize the denominational home to school bus service.

Regards

Stuart and Hazel Donaldson

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 September 2011

**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from Mike Corcoran

By e mail to:-

Jane Scott, Andrew Kerr, Carolyn Godfrey, Sharon Davies, Stephanie Denovan, Francis Morley, all at Wiltshire Council.

Dr Andrew Murrison MP

10 July 2011

Dear all,

Transport subsidy to faith schools.

It's disturbing that Wiltshire Council is thinking about stopping the transport subsidy to state schools.

Faith schools, such as St Augustine's in Trowbridge, are amongst the best in the county and country. They tend to be good schools because they provide a discipline and structure which has proven benefits, in exam results, for children from varied social backgrounds.

In stopping this subsidy, at a time when family budgets are under more strain than ever, we are effectively excluding poorer children from some of our best schools. In an era when access to top universities is fast becoming the preserve of a few elite schools, this scrapping of the subsidy will reduce social mobility still further.

Please, preserve meaningful parental choice and continue to give some of our poorer families a chance in life.

Thanks for your time.

Mike Corcoran

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**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from Paul Hughes

While a wide range of reasons were presented to retain the 2007 agreement the main argument in favour of removing the subsidy for denominational transport seems to be economic rather than educational and more specifically the economics of transport. Firstly I would argue that the economic argument has not been as clearly made as might seem. The figures do not take account of the knock on effects of such a shift in pupil population because the full effects are unknowable.

It has been said that schools could become the providers of transport. Do we really want our schools to take on this role?, is this not another example of the rolling back of public services for all the wrong reasons?

More importantly in this debate is the human cost. I frequently read in literature from Wiltshire that there is a commitment to 'diversity and choice'.

Let us imagine we have a child from a minority faith who will be told that they cannot continue with their education because the Council cannot afford to continue to subsidise transport. They must leave their friends and change their courses go to a new school, catch up on the work they have missed and try to fit in - Why ?, because of 'the cuts' -That is the human cost of this proposal and it will scar and damage the lives and educational chances of Catholic children. We will be going from the forward thinking of the 1944 education act to a pre-war system which denies parental choice.

Diversity and choice; no, the message Cabinet will be sending to young people is that if you are Catholic, if your parents want to educate you in a value system which has been the backbone of Western Civilization for 2000 years, you will not be given that choice unless you are from a rich or very poor background.

I must also ask members to really consider the environmental considerations of this proposal which really have not been thought through. Quite simply if you vote for this it is a vote for hundreds more vehicles on our roads during the school run.

For almost 50 years Wiltshire has worked in partnership with the Catholic diocese of Clifton to deliver good quality education. Cabinet members must understand that your decision today will be sending a clear message, either you value our Catholic schools and the work we do, or you do not.

Paul Hughes

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**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from Kate Saunders

I am writing to you about the proposed changes to the home-to-school transport arrangements for denominational schools. If the changes go ahead as currently proposed, they will have a major impact on my family and many families who have chosen their current school on Faith grounds.

I currently have 3 children attending St. Augustine's who will still be at the school when and if the new changes are implemented. There will be a huge increase in what we currently pay through standing order as the amount we pay will double. This September, we will pay £150 a month but next September this will increase to £250 or £300 if you also increase sixth form payments too. I'm sure you will agree that this is a large sum of money in these difficult times.

The letter states that we have been given sufficient notice to make suitable alternative arrangements if we are unhappy with the new charges (i.e. change schools/ use other transport means). If children have to change schools, it would involve some children having to move schools in the middle of GCSE or even A level courses. This would be difficult not only for the children but all schools concerned. If they use alternative forms of transport, this may lead to the discontinuation of the buses altogether (making life for those who have to continue to use the buses, no matter what the cost, very difficult indeed). It may also lead to more congestion on the roads at a time when councils are supposed to be encouraging us to be more environmentally friendly.

Faith schools have been recognised by many people to be one of the successes of the state system. I know that when the charges for transport were first introduced that some parents had to make the decision then not to send their children to the school of their faith because of the costs involved. As the increased costs will inevitably force more children to make this difficult decision, the make up and ethos of this school and other faith schools will undoubtedly change and I am sure that this will ultimately have an impact on learning. Also what impact will it have on local schools? Will they be able to absorb the children who would previously have gone to their local Faith schools?

My children have always attended the local faith school. I am a practising catholic and it is important to me that my children are also brought up in the catholic faith. In fact when I married this is one of the promises that I made. When they were younger, they went to the local catholic school in Warminster. The closest catholic

secondary school is St Augustine's in Trowbridge and that is why, they go there.

I know that the council has to save money but I think it would have been much fairer and cause less disruption if the changes were phased in.

I will look forward to hearing the council's decision after the 26th July and hope that they consider all possible courses of action that may be open to them.

Kate Saunders

Assisi'
3 Gipsy Lane
Warminster. BA12 9LR

22nd June 2011

Dear Councillor MORLAND :

DENOMINATIONAL TRANSPORT

The enclosed copy letter dated 26 May to Councillor Jane Scott, your Council Leader, expresses our dismay over Wiltshire Council's recently announced proposal on funding denominational transport. We believe the implications are very much more far-reaching than may appear on the surface.

We have received a letter from the Head of the Passenger Transport Unit attempting to claim that you "are certainly not discriminating unfairly against faith schools." We are not in a position to read into the intent of individual councillors, but the stark fact which we ask you to linger over is that whereas parents were given the human right under the 1944 Education Act to educate their children in a church school, effectively your current proposal would take away that right. The proposal is being dressed up as fairness but actually in its effect (which is what matters) it is deeply unfair and discriminatory. It is squeezing more parents out of the chance to exercise their given right. You also seem to have ignored the Millions of pounds extra that the churches and their members (already regular tax-payers) pay into the public purse in order to provide the schools in the first place.

Moreover you face the alarming prospect that your proposal poses a challenge to the future viability and very existence of denominational schools. You can only go so far in penalising parents financially (over and above their existing taxes) before you cross the RUBICON and commit yourselves to total disruption, even dismantling, of an extensive education system which has worked well since WW 11. Have those concerned really thought through these profound implications and ramifications ?

In conclusion, in the kindest possible way we offer a final question for your consideration. Do you know what it really feels like to be squeezed out of existence? Or what it feels like when a major component of your whole being and ethos in life is being threatened? Well, that is what your Council's current proposal is effectively threatening, for those parents and children committed to Denominational schools. You know that education deals with the whole person and his or her values, which have to be respected; and it is the whole person, in the context of beliefs and values which have prevailed for 2000 years of Christianity, which Denominational schools address in their own traditional way. Significantly, that tradition is essentially what underlies our own British democracy and legal system and the freedoms of a host of charitable organisations. Does Wiltshire Council want to initiate the crumbling of that ancient institutional edifice?

Likewise the important symbolism of the recent marriage service for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in Westminster Abbey, which had such a stunning impact world-wide, only highlights the traditional stability of the relationship between Church and State and Family which has matured over hundreds of years. We respect other non-Christian faiths, even though we believe some may be incompatible with the Christian faith. But do the Councillors of today, with an average tenure in office of just a few years, feel comfortable in subscribing to the destruction of a Christian culture which has been built up over many centuries.? We believe prevention is better than cure.

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**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement and question from William and Petrella Pope

We are the very perturbed grandparents of a 15 year old grandson attending St Augustine's Catholic College – very perturbed because of the recently announced proposal by Wiltshire Council to withdraw completely the already reduced part funding of home to school transport for denominational schools. This represents the serious disturbance of a well established arrangement for parents to exercise their wish for their children's education according to their religion and conscience and this is under a system which we personally have seen has worked well throughout the country since the end of World War II.

We respectfully request your serious consideration of the following questions / comments:

1. There is solid accounting training / qualifications in our family but simply applying an accounting knife to certain items of expenditure runs the serious risk of not factoring in the potential lethal and disruptive consequences – social, administrative, political, transport and environmental – in fact the total upheaval of a successful cooperative and integrated education system which has provided for so long. How could the Councillors involved in this proposal have taken this potential disruption and serious disaffection among so many families into account if they had received no feedback on appropriate consultation with the Clifton Diocese or the school concerned – consultation which never took place.
2. Why has a minority segment of the community, based on religious persuasion and choice, been singled out for such discriminatory treatment?
3. To what extent is a proportion of Wiltshire Council members being placated or appeased in order to satisfy a misguided and ill-informed learning which many parents regard as bigotry against faith schools? You must surely know that faith schools are the big success story in education since World War II, their ethos, teachers love of God and our neighbours without exception (including all those whose views may differ from ours). What is wrong with that?
4. Have the Councillors concerned fully thought through the consequences of large groups of Catholic parents/students transferring to alternative schools if the extra transport cost burden becomes intolerable? It is a disruption which would carry drastic social consequences totally out of proportion to the overall cost of the transport for the Council as a whole, but totally disproportionate for

the collaborative parents concerned who already pay full taxes like the rest of the community.

5. What about the consequences for other local schools which may be already oversubscribed, if hundreds of St. Augustine's pupils are forced to secure a place elsewhere.

Finally, Councillor Scott, we would urge your colleagues to reflect on the truth of a well accepted principle; that a decision made under financial duress and often haste, if it carries an element of injustice or unfairness or even discrimination, will prove to be a source of profound regret and may leave a stain which is never really removed. Accordingly the wise decision may be prevention rather than cure.

We will be glad if you will kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Signed by:

Mr William Pope

Mrs Petrella Pope

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 September 2011

**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport
Statement from Anthony Leonard OBE**

Thank you for the opportunity to make this statement.

There is not a person in this room who does not appreciate the difficulty of your task in balancing the budget by bringing in the required savings. You have extremely complex decisions to make but as the Wiltshire Council's senior decision making body you are ill-served by the report proposing the removal of the Denominational Home-to-School Transport subsidy.

It is clear at first reading that the report has been written in defence of a decision that has already been made by the Transport Department, and, as we heard repeatedly at the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise last week, it does not provide sufficient information in a range of important areas. The risks associated with these shortcomings will, I am sure, be illuminated in other statements made at this meeting and during the debate so, in the interest of time, I will restrict myself to an area that was not addressed in the report: educational continuity and the human cost.

As an example, my 12 year old Grandson attends St Augustine's Catholic College and a week does not go by without him asking for my reassurance that he will not be forced to move to another school because of '*the problems with the school transport*'. He has been at St Augustine's for one term; he is settled; he has friends; he is not bullied; and, despite his dyslexia, he is thriving. He is not a front runner by any means, but he is happy and both we and the school are delighted with his progress.

At the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise last week there was some ill-informed discussion on how Service children were able to cope easily with moving school. As an ex-military man of many years I can state that moving school was agony for my three sons and it is one aspect of our family life that I deeply regret. Many of my military colleagues would say the same.

This proposal will force some parents to move their settled children against their will because they will not be able to afford the additional travel costs; that cannot be right.

Thank You

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**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from St Patrick's School Governing Body

The Rapid Scrutiny Exercise on 8th September demonstrated to the public participants that there were no concrete figures associated with this proposal in terms of current pupils having to migrate schools. The Admissions Forum could not be definitive on answers as numbers were not known. The disruption to education for children was noted to have not been properly researched. No definitive costing could be given for future scenarios. Assumption is the mother of all mistakes.

All we can do at this point is to appeal to the Cabinet to please not vote to go ahead with this action, in any of its proposed options.

St Patrick's is a small school, and upwards of 30 pupils currently rely on this travel. To lose those pupils should they have to move elsewhere, and to lose future pupils, will result in a 40% drop of the denominational children attending our school. This action means that the school built for their needs becomes inaccessible, and the fabric of the school itself is shaken. Fundamentally, Faith schools need denominational childrens' attendance to survive. The Faith community cannot support a school if it is not serving its purpose. Financially our school's viability is at stake as well; if we lose these children, and should the school not survive, you as a council will have not just 30 children to place at other schools as could happen in 2012, but the other 170 St Patrick's pupils living in Corsham.

Should you accept option 3 of this proposal we also do not have the expertise, staff and funds to cope with travel arrangements ourselves. The council has offered to help us with travel, and we have already starting making enquiries to travel operators as suggested by the Transport Team. The prohibitive cost of any arrangement makes this an impossible situation in our case, with an annual fee of £36,000 to be spread across some 30 children on average; we are looking at £1200 per child, a sum I am sure you agree is extortionate. We are prepared to ask parents to contribute more via an inflation-based percentage to the current costs, but how can we ask them to pay more than double? There is no public transport available for our children as an alternative. The congestion in Corsham is already at dangerous levels at school run times, so more cars would exacerbate the problems, if there are enough parents who can transport their children. It is a no win situation for our school.

We have mentioned before the worries we have that this is a pre-determined decision. Cllr Gamble assured us at the Rapid Scrutiny meeting that it was not. Maybe it is caution on the Council's part, or maybe it is pre-determination, but our school has already been removed from the School Transport Team's list for travel assistance in 2012. The Council's letter to parents sent on 5th May which started this process, repeatedly stated it was withdrawing transport. There was no offer of consultation in that letter, and what has followed has not adhered to due process and has been hastily patched together.

I would urge you to please think of the long term consequences of this proposal which indicate higher & unfathomed costs to the Schools, Education and Travel departments. We are all aware and sympathise with the cost cutting exercises necessary across the Council, and that to reject this action will be to 'rob Peter to pay Paul' for your departments. But the wider implications that we see for the future of Faith Schools and the children who attend them if this action goes ahead, are far more detrimental and expensive to the Council and Children than the saving of £170,000.

To honour the children and your own motto 'Where Everybody Matters' this must not be a political decision in any form, but a humanist one. To break a traditional arrangement that is so successful and cause such disruption for the sake of £170,000, is a real catastrophe. This country's constitution and fabric is supposed to be based on Christianity and Faith; we swear an oath in court in God's name... assistance on the daily practicing of faith in a Christian country will be taken away from the children by not helping them have access to their schools,. Not just that, but taken away by the people constitutionally charged to nurture them.

**Public Participation
Item No. 6 - Denominational Home to School Transport**

Statement from Michael Stevenson MBE

My name is Michael Stevenson and I am the Chair of Governors at St. Augustine's Catholic College. Having addressed the full Council, the Children's Select Committee and the Rapid Scrutiny Task Group previously I would like to reiterate my initial statements and add the following.

I want to thank the Council for the opportunities offered to discuss the Denominational Transport subsidy but have to admit the more facts I am given the more I have come to the conclusion that there is a real possibility Faith Schools are being discriminated against either directly or indirectly by your Transport Department. When I say Faith Schools I actually mean the pupils within those schools because when it comes down to the final analysis the decision to remove the subsidy, if taken, will affect most of all the children and my final plea to the Cabinet is on behalf of those children.

You should not underestimate the traumatic effect the removal of a child from a school against their will can have, not only on the child but on their family. As a member of the Armed Forces with children who went through this on a number of occasions I know first-hand what a debilitating experience it can be for the child and how much their education can suffer. The Government is aware of the problem and millions of pounds are spent to assist Service families and children get through the experience.

I am sure you as Cabinet members are all aware of the Armed Forces problem yet the forcible removal of a child from his or her school is what you as a Council are intending to do if you cut this subsidy – and all for the insignificant sum in your £1 Billion budget of £162000; thousands of pounds less than the salary of your Chief Executive. You are going to force a child out of their school where they are settled and learning into an environment which is alien to them and could affect them for the rest of their lives. You are going to unsettle families who are already struggling to make ends meet with the most serious problem they can face – the happiness and well being of their child. You could in theory – and a lot of the figures produced by your Transport department are theoretical - make 450 happy, settled children into 450 vulnerable children and the cost to your Council would run into millions.

This is only a short address but in conclusion I urge you on behalf of the children to throw out this request by the Transport department and keep the subsidy intact. I urge you to see what value you are getting for the small amount of money invested

in the subsidy and finally I urge you not play with our children's lives because if you do then you and I will have failed in our duty of care.

Thank you for your time.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 September 2011

Subject: Wiltshire Incubation Environment (WIE)

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Fleur de Rhe-Philippe
Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Tourism**

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary

The Wiltshire Incubation Environment (WIE) project is concerned with creating an integrated and supported incubation and enterprise environment across Wiltshire for start up and early stage businesses. The Project will deliver incubation space with common resources for the tenants to access facilities and services that they individually would not normally be able to access in the early stages of their growth, but which can be provided to them on a 'pay as you go' or inclusive basis. A key element of the project is the provision of expert support and coaching to maximise the opportunities available to the businesses and to assist in overcoming any barriers to start up and growth.

The Project will deliver the phased roll out of new business incubation centres in refurbished council buildings to complement existing workspace at the Council's Castledown Business Centre in Ludgershall and the privately owned Glove Factory Studios at Holt. This will be achieved through the conversion of existing vacant Council owned office space and the conversion of two existing industrial units at Castledown Business Centre to provide suites of individual desk/workspace units with business development and support programmes. The project will pilot the inclusion of business incubation space as part of future campuses around the county. The project will prioritise investment to those areas that are either dependent on military/MOD employment or have experienced significant job losses in recent years.

Proposals

That Cabinet:

1. approve the provision of up to £375,000 of capital funding to support the conversion of industrial space at Castledown Business Centre at Ludgershall, vacant Council owned office space at Manor House, Wootton Bassett and two other locations as yet to be confirmed and to recommend that Council approve this addition to the Capital Programme;
1. delegate authority to the Service Director, Economy & Enterprise in conjunction with the Programme Director, Transformation, ICT and Information Management to work up and implement a more detailed scheme and

2. delegate authority to the Service Director, Economy & Enterprise in consultation with the Cabinet member for Economy & Enterprise and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to agree the terms of the contract with CLG when the offer of European Regional Development Fund is made for this project.

Reason for Proposals

WIE will help to meet the demand for flexible business space and business support services that will enable the start-up, survival and growth of new and existing micro businesses and thereby create and safeguard jobs. It is an important element of the Action for Wiltshire programme which is concerned with supporting economic recovery and contributes to meeting Corporate Plan targets relating to job creation and safeguarding. The project will align with the Government's Growth Agenda by providing the right environment within which local enterprise can be started and developed within a nurturing and supporting network. Given the disproportionate impact of the recession on certain Wiltshire towns, the project provides the opportunity to target those areas where the impact of the recession has been greatest.

Mark Boden
Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 September 2011

Subject: Wiltshire Incubation Environment (WIE)

Cabinet Member: Councillor Fleur de Rhe-Philippe
Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Tourism

Key Decision: No

Purposes of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - (i) To set out the background to the WIE proposal and its relationship to Corporate Plan objectives
 - (ii) To seek members' approval to the provision of capital funding that will provide the capital proportion of the match funding required to draw down the European Union grant aid, enabling the creation of four new business incubation and enterprise spaces. This will be achieved through the conversion of three existing vacant Council owned offices and the conversion of existing industrial units at Castledown Business Centre to provide a single complex of individual desk/workspace units.

Background

2. Wiltshire's GVA has declined by around 5% as a result of the downturn in the economy. Within Wiltshire, the ongoing effects of the downturn have been felt almost exclusively in West Wiltshire. At the small area level, the most affected workplace economies in Wiltshire continue to be: Trowbridge, Salisbury, Westbury and rural North and West Wiltshire. Between December 2007 and December 2010 the claimant unemployed rose by 3,200 from 0.8% of the working age population to 1.9%. Unemployment volumes have risen most in Trowbridge, Chippenham and Salisbury...but absolute % changes are highest in those Wiltshire areas which are characterised by relatively low levels of indigenous workplace employment activity, high net out-commuting, and a location on the periphery of Wiltshire. Around 30% of all job losses have been skilled. More recently, there have been significant job losses announced in Trowbridge with Vodafone and Virgin Mobile due to close their operations in the near future.
3. Research commissioned by the council through the Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership (WSEP) (supported by anecdotal evidence from Business Link) identifies that since the recession there have been a growing number of individuals and new businesses looking for start up and incubation

space. In addition, the research identifies that Wiltshire professional workers are increasingly likely to establish their own businesses nearer to home to avoid commuting. It concluded that greater consideration should be given to the provision of enterprise centres in or near residential areas/town centres to provide a range of facilities for new businesses together with support for innovation. However, the Wiltshire Workspace Strategy (DTZ, 2009) identified a shortage of start up accommodation across the county.

4. On the basis of the research evidence, we have now built a better understanding of the current market and the potential to supply the demand now and in the medium term across Wiltshire. A summary of that understanding is outlined below.
 - (i) Within Wiltshire there is limited availability of space for incubation and early stage businesses. Those that do provide have little spare capacity to market, and others have space that is too large for incubation and early stage businesses.
 - (ii) No other establishment or provider within a 30 mile radius of Castledown Business Centre both offers business support and dedicated space from which to operate as an integrated package. Castledown Business Centre would appear to be unique in this regard, particularly with its links to business development support services and this service can be extended across Wiltshire, both to new Council owned facilities but also to other providers.
 - (iii) There is little appetite for private sector investment in appropriate incubation space and support services owing to the risks associated and poor returns. With the demise of the support services offered through Business Link the ability for the private sector to support new provision will be even more limited.
5. The Council's Transformation Programme provides an opportunity for the identified demand to be met through the conversion of vacant office spaces in suitable locations around the county. Using redundant council properties has a number of benefits for the Council and local community:
 - a. It retains employment and activity in a property that otherwise would be empty in the short to medium term.
 - b. It reduces the number of properties to be disposed of during difficult market conditions
 - c. It will support new employment activity in town centre locations.
 - d. Through grant funded refurbishment, the property will have a higher market value if disposed of in future.
6. Initially three vacant sites had been identified for this programme, but due to operational requirements, two sites have been withdrawn, leaving the Manor House in Wootton Bassett as the only identified site. Wootton Bassett was chosen owing to the loss of economic activity relation to the withdrawal of the RAF from Lyneham. The recent announcement regarding the re-use of Lyneham will still result in a medium term shortfall in income and employment in the area. The project will also support the conversion of two large units at the Castledown Business Centre to create a single complex providing up to

40 individual desk/workspace units to meet the high level of demand for such facilities at the Centre.

7. The need to identify replacement sites does not, at this stage, pose a problem for the project. The drawdown of EU match funding is predicated on achieving the projects outputs at an agreed intervention (match funding) rate. Providing that at the time of signing the contract we have identified and costed new locations, or re-structured the project within the agreed overall budget, we can proceed. Indeed, the requirement to identify new locations provides an opportunity to better align the project to reflect the known impact of the recession in market towns across Wiltshire.

Main Considerations for the Council

8. WIE will help to meet the demand for flexible business space and business support services that will enable the start-up, survival and growth of micro businesses. The project will also create and safeguard jobs. It is an element of the Action for Wiltshire programme that is concerned with supporting economic recovery and will contribute to meeting Corporate Plan targets around job creation and safeguarding.
9. Specifically, the project will help to meet the following objectives:
 - To enhance the micro/small business base of Wiltshire.
 - To diversify the local economy, reducing the dependence on the military and MOD employment.
 - To provide start up, incubation and business development support for the local business community.
 - To build capacity in readiness for greater skilled work-force in the area.
 - To create and grow new businesses in order to deliver sustainable economic growth.
 - To provide affordable flexible accommodation to pre-start, incubated and start up businesses and access to high quality facilities and support services for start-up businesses with growth potential.
 - To assist their growth and onward development over the first three years of their existence.
10. Project outputs will include:
 - (i) To support the incubation of 58 new businesses by 30th June 2014 through the provision of new incubation environments (this is a very conservative output aligned to the cost per job criteria required by ERDP).
 - (ii) To enable 300 businesses to improve their performance by 30th June 2014 through the provision of a coordinated business support and incubation service linking new centres with Castledown Business Centre and established work hub at the Glove Factory Studios, Holt.
 - (iii) To create 108 net additional jobs, generate £4.5 million additional GVA (net) and safeguard £3m (net) within the Wiltshire economy.
11. The project will align with the Government's new Growth Agenda by providing the right environment within which local enterprise can be started and developed within a nurturing and supporting network.

12. Bids for external funding have already been submitted to CLG for revenue funding under the ERDF Incubation Environments programme and with Plain Action Local Action Group for capital funding under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). Therefore there is the prospect of a good level of financial leverage being achieved.
13. WIN is an opportunity to pilot an approach in preparation for the establishment of campuses across the county and explore whether local business incubation space should be provided as part of this programme

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

14. The Project intends to address environmental sustainability on two levels. Firstly it will ensure that its internal activities and delivery minimise their impact on the environment. This will be achieved by developing and communicating an environmental policy to all Project staff, partners and beneficiaries involved in delivery. An environmental impact assessment will be carried out on planned activities prior to commencement and ways sought to minimise this impact. Every aspect of the Project will be examined, for example local delivery of event activity will be planned to minimise total delegate travel, recycled material will be used where practical, and care will be taken to minimise any sources of waste. A requirement to demonstrate due regard for the environment will also be a condition for any company or individual contracted to carry out work for the Project.
15. Secondly it will, through its support of individuals and businesses across a range of business sectors, have a positive impact. Many such individuals and businesses will be developing technologies and services whose net result will be a positive contribution to, and impact upon, the reduction of environmental effects and increases in sustainable business and community practices.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

16. The following practices will be put in place:
 - (i) Recruitment of programme staff will reflect the Council's equal pay principles, equality profile of staff working on the project active promoted of jobs under-represented groups, a statement about being an equal opportunities employer, explicit statement that posts can be filled at part-time, and equality training will be implemented for all staff employed by the project
 - (ii) Equality will be embedded into the project procurement process by asking equality questions within any pre-qualification questionnaire (processes, policies, equality accreditation and principles of the proposed contractor), and in the tender brief (evidence of how the organisations can bring relevant equality experience to the project, how they plan to embed equality into what they plan to do etc)
 - (iii) We will promote equality within the businesses being supported by the Project, emphasising a need for equality policies, the importance of a good policy standards for supply chain purposes, and informing businesses about the equality business case

Risk Assessment

17. A number of risks have been identified and are presented in the following table together with actions and contingency.

Risk	Potential impact	Impact	Probability	Proposed action	Contingency
Failure to attract sufficient businesses in early years	Income may not be sufficient to cover centre management and running costs	H	L	Vigorous marketing strategy. Focus more on supporting the development of local businesses with potential to grow in the early years	Income in early years underwritten by EU funding Develop stronger links into sources of high growth start-up businesses such as HE/FE and sector clusters
Failure to achieve projected rent/service charge levels	Reduction in income levels and threat to financial sustainability	H	L	Projected income at bottom end of market values for the sites to ensure that income targets can be met	Income in early years underwritten by EU funding If significant difficulties arise, additional revenue funding will be found from the A4W budget
Shortage of coaches and trainers/business support resources	Performance against output targets	H	L	Early identification of gaps with appropriate recruitment instigated	Engagement with the business community to identify suitable coaches/sources of business support

Financial Implications

18. The total capital cost of the project is estimated at circa £610,000. It is anticipated that, if successful, the EU grant aid will fund approx £235,000 therefore a requirement for £375,000 will be needed from the Council. The capital funding is based on the following assumptions:

- (i) The conversion of a total of 1535 sq. m. of existing workspace across 3 locations at a total cost of £610,260

- (ii) A specification which includes:
 - 10 sq. m. of office space per person
 - Each person to be provided with a desk, seat, wired phone, power points and some filing capacity
 - Category 5 cabling
 - Insulated partitioning
 - Carpets
 - Heating and lighting
 - Communal facilities including a meeting room, reception, kitchen and toilets
 - (iii) The revenue cost of borrowing the Councils funding contribution of £375,000 will be met from the Economy & Enterprise revenue budget.
19. The requirement to legally commit to this programme arises at the time that CLG make a written offer (legal contract) of EU grant aid for this project. At this time, the exact location and cost of the office conversions will be known. If the EU grant aid bid is unsuccessful the requirement for Council funding will be withdrawn.
20. The remainder of the capital funding would be levered from CLG's ERDF Incubation Environments programme in the South West and Plain Action's RDPE. Over the next four years £400,000 of revenue investment funding has been identified within the Action for Wiltshire Programme Board to be matched through the ERDF Incubation Environments programme.

Legal Implications

21. It will be necessary for legal advice to be provided in the context of:-
- a. agreeing the terms of the contract with CLG when an offer of ERDF grant is received for this project.
 - b. ensuring that the final scheme meets all legal requirements.

Options Considered

- 22.
- (i). **Continue current Wiltshire Council and private operator delivery.**
This option would maintain the activities at Castledown Business Centre but not build upon the activity established there and not to replicate this success across the county to provide greater and wider access. The primary focus would be local to Castledown, and its focus on military resettlement. This option would leave no organisation taking a sub-regional focus to develop incubation support for start up and growth businesses. With the demise of Business Link and SWRDA there would be no sub-regional capacity to support incubation and growth of the SME base in Wiltshire.

- (ii). **Reduced Scale Intervention.**
Reduced scale intervention with reduced funding balanced by a reduction in the number of centres and scale of beneficiaries without any saving in core costs – see below.
- (iii). **Preferred option** to create a fully integrated project with delivery of a scale that provides maximum use of resources and value for money. This preferred option creates a network of incubation centres, providing comprehensive engagement with business support providers, colleges, universities, sector groups and cluster, and the emerging iNets, and other ERDF projects, such as Coaching for High Growth and Starting a High Growth Business. The Project enables four council centres to be managed collaboratively and one programme of activities and services to identify, encourage and support potential growth businesses to be delivered across the council and private sector incubation spaces. This option provides the best balance of resource utilisation, and therefore value for money

Conclusions

- 23. The WIE project is an opportunity to support new business and job creation in communities that are either dependent on military employment or have been hardest hit by job losses. Capital funding is essential to delivering the conversion of vacant space to create the required business incubation spaces.

Mark Boden
Corporate Director, Neighbourhood and Planning

Report Author:

Alistair Cunningham

Service Director – Economy & Enterprise

01225 713203

16 August 2011

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

(WIE) Proposal & Business Plan 20 June 2011

Appendices: None

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