

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Council

Place: Council Chamber - County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN

Date: Tuesday 17 October 2023

Time: 10.30 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 9 October 2023. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Tara Hunt of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718352 or email committee@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 3 - 6)**
- 7 **Update on the Council's Response to the Climate Emergency and revised Environmental Policy (Pages 7 - 16)**
- 15 **Questions from Members of the Council (Pages 17 - 28)**

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 16 October 2023

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Wiltshire Council

Full Council

17 October 2023

Item 5 – Public Participation

From Andrew Nicolson

To Cllr Nick Botterill – Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning

Pre-amble

Bearing in mind that the Anthesis Wiltshire County Report states (on page 3) that it should be noted that even its ‘High Ambition Pathway’ does not achieve Wiltshire’s carbon neutrality ambition by 2030, and achieves only a 55% cut in emissions by 2030, compared with a Paris-Agreement-aligned reduction of 80% and your target of net 100%

Question (P23-26)

- a) In the Local Plan Review process, have you (and if so how have you) addressed the areas where the March 2022 Anthesis Wiltshire County Report identified that:
- the Council **currently** has low influence on Carbon reduction pathways, but that
 - planning has a **key role** today, and that
 - you have opportunities in the planning system to **increase** your influence?
- b) If the Local Plan is adopted as drafted for consultation, do you anticipate that will it cause the County to:
- **exceed,**
 - **line up with,** or
 - **fall short of**

the Anthesis Wiltshire County Report ‘High Ambition Pathway’, in terms of the matters it covers such as:

- the location and energy efficiency of domestic and non-domestic buildings [in] new developments,
- the outcomes of policies for new transport infrastructure, and
- other planning policy areas such as:

- waste,
- industry,
- energy supply and
- the natural environment?"

Response:

- a) The draft Local Plan does address the areas where Anthesis suggested the local authority planning function has a role to play. The NPPF sets out that planning can play a key role, and the regulatory planning powers are an opportunity to influence the county's carbon emissions and these have been used by updating policies to reflect the carbon neutral ambitions of the council. The Plan seeks to incorporate measures required to adapt to the effects of climate change into its development policies. The framework for this is Policy 4 which is specific to climate change. This signposts to other policies which include measures with the potential to affect climate change, such as sustainable transport (Policy 70, 71 and 73), sustainable construction and renewable energy (Policy 85 and 86), woodlands, hedgerows and trees (Policy 90), and design (Policy 98). Members of the public are encouraged to provide comments as part of the live public consultation, which runs until 22 November 2023.
- b) The Council are required to monitor the Plan, and the effect of development over the plan period against the vision and objectives set out in Section 2 of the Plan. The Council is committed to an action within the Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-24 to "Investigate development of a method to better understand the climate and energy impacts of the Local Plan policies." The timeline for this is to 'investigate the methodology by end of 2024'. Therefore this is not a methodology that would be outlined in the plan, but one that would be developed to look at implementation of policies and track their impact where possible. The draft Local Plan Policies are just part of the whole suite of actions happening within Wiltshire to reduce emissions, so it would not be possible to say to what extent the Local Plan would cause the county to align with any of the Anthesis 'pathways to carbon neutral'.

Wiltshire Council

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Item 5 – Public Participation

From Henk Leerink

To Cllr Nick Botterill – Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning

Question (P23-28)

I initially contacted the council about their failure to notify in writing about the current plan being a key resident next to the development. They admitted that this would be a non conformity with regards the Statement of Community Involvement. When I raised a complaint this was dismissed, stage 2 was dismissed also and it has now been escalated to the Ombudsman, The fact that WC contacted 23000 people about this current plan and the 2 previous plans is irrelevant to all of those most impacted residents who were not made aware of any of these plans. Does the council not agree that they have not engaged with the most impacted residents and should have fully followed the processes described in the SOCI, that these residents have been denied the opportunity of a consultation under Reg 18 and there has been a violation in response from Spatial Planning?

Response:

The council has responded to this enquiry through e-mail correspondence. A response has also been replied to through the council's formal complaints process. The matter is now being assessed by the Local Government Ombudsman and therefore it would not be appropriate to comment further.

Question (P23-29)

Since the plans is based on evidence the only objections residents can make is to challenge that evidence. To that end numerous FOIR's have been made generally resulting in fuzzy responses providing no evidence (mine was about traffic, pollution and emergency services). Does the council not agree that if the public are denied the evidence requested they are not able to challenge the plan, or if the evidence is not forthcoming within the consultation period they are denied making objections or if it expires such evidence does not exist that the plan is not credible?

Response:

The council has responded to requests for information in accordance with Freedom of Information Act legislation. The evidence base supporting the emerging Local Plan has been published as part of the current public consultation which runs until 22 November 2023, and representations can be made until that date. Following the close of the consultation, officers will review all representations received and produce a consultation statement, responding to the comments raised. The evidence that has been published has informed policies and site allocations in the emerging Local Plan. This will be subject to examination by an independent Planning Inspector in due course, taking into account all representations received.

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Item 7 – Update on the Council’s response to the climate emergency and revised Environmental Policy

Extract of Cabinet Minutes from 10 October 2023.

85 Update on the Council's Response to the Climate Emergency and revised Environmental Policy

Cllr Nick Holder, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change presented a report which provided an update on progress and actions taken in response to the climate emergency.

Cllr Holder explained that the council has made significant progress in responding to the climate emergency and in particular against the seven Climate Strategy themes. He reported on the trends against key performance indicators as set out in appendix 2 to the report and confirmed that the Council was on track to become carbon neutral by 2030. It was noted that Transport is still the largest source of emissions in Wiltshire and was not reducing significantly. Work was being undertaken with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding to these issues.

Cllr Holder reported that the Council continued to show leadership through tackling greenhouse emissions and mitigating other environmental impacts of its own operations, with the Environmental Policy at Appendix 1 to the report setting out how the Council undertakes this.

The Leader reflected on the Council removing 85% of its emissions helping the Council become more self-sufficient and suggested that other organisations could follow the Councils lead in this area. The Council would continue to engage with the government on long term programmes with delivery on a local level.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Climate Emergency Task Group reported that the Task Group met on 9 October 2023 welcomed the report and thanked officers for their continued commitment and responses to questions asked at Task Group meetings. He explained that Cllr Wallis chaired the Task Group meeting in his absence and questions about carbon emissions in the county, air quality, demand responsive bus service in Pewsey Vale, take up of active travel and encouraging schools to develop their own travel plans, retrofitting houses

and building carbon neutral homes and fitting solar panels on listed buildings. Officers provided additional updates in relation to the progress being made by the Climate Team and work streams.

Cllr Gordon King, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, agreed with the positive views of Cabinet members and welcomed the news that the Council was on track to be carbon neutral by 2030. He commented on (i) delays in delivery of some of the projects and the corresponding impact; (ii) the style and type of housing being developed on Council land; (iii) the amount of waste produced and how it is disposed of; and (iv) the need to continue to make good progress up to 2030. Cabinet Members explained that the requirement from Council is being fulfilled as update reports to Cabinet and Council only need to include detail of work undertaken. The Council is following an ambitious path and the remaining 15% takes longer to achieve due to more complex elements. Council housing is being built to zero carbon standard, requirements of which are included in the draft Local Plan. Government have been lobbied about waste issues and there needs to be a sensible approach to moving this forward.

Cllr Jon Hubbard commented on the recent briefing on sorting facilities at Council Household Recycling Centres (HRC). He was concerned at the lack of member attendance. He also highlighted the benefits from installing solar panels on village halls and the potential for hydro-electric generation in suitable locations. Cllr Holder reported his disappointment at member attendance for the HRC briefing. Further consideration would be given to the issue of solar panels and potential involvement of Area Boards providing information about funding streams. The Leader advised caution in relation to the hydro-electric schemes following recent technical analysis indicating negative cost benefit.

Members also commented on members being encouraged to promote active travel in schools, increasing passengers on public transport, energy from waste solutions and the need to increase recycling and reuse.

Resolved:

- 1. That Cabinet notes the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in May 2023, and notes the progress made against key indicators as well as areas of limited progress.**
- 2. That Cabinet recommends that Full Council approves the updated Environmental Policy in Appendix 1 and adds it to Paragraph 1.2 of Part 3B of the Constitution for inclusion as part of the Policy Framework.**
- 3. that future climate updates are received annually at its October meeting.**

Reason for Decision:

- 1) *To provide Cabinet with an update on actions taken in response to the climate emergency.*
- 2) *To ensure the council's Environmental Policy is up to date and has sufficient weight.*
- 3) *Moving to annual reporting would be in line with the annual publication of greenhouse gas data, mirror the reporting frequency of other local authorities and reduce the administrative burden on the climate team, enabling them to concentrate on project delivery.*

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Wiltshire Council

Full Council

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Item 7 – Update on the Council's Response to the Climate Emergency and revised Environmental Policy

From Bill Jarvis (Wiltshire Climate Alliance)

To Cllr Nick Holder – Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Pre-amble

The update to climate progress issued to Cabinet on 10th October 2023, contains little of any substance on the progress made in supporting and guiding the county as a whole to reach carbon neutrality by 2030 although it recognises that 99.5% of all carbon emissions arise from the county and not the council.

The Council is however making good progress in tackling a wide number of areas in its direct control. There are a number that are behind programme but there are plans to address these.

The Council intends to develop case studies on their adopted actions and to make these available to businesses in the county; a good and productive idea.

One area where the council is making very little progress is on the matter of scope 3 emissions, a large percentage of total council carbon output. This issue needs outcomes set and plans made if anything is to be done in good time for the 2030 deadline.

I understand the council decided to limit themselves to scopes 1&2 after the acknowledgment of the climate emergency in 2019, but excluding them from calculations does not make them go away.

Question (P23-30)

Can the Council provide details of meetings and action agreed with any Wiltshire business where climate issues have been specifically addressed in the past 12 months, including:

- specific offers of case studies and their appropriateness for those businesses.

- Financial incentives, for example, rates holidays for climate related action or council supported charging points at taxi ranks.
- Estimated carbon reduction in the county from such discussions.

Response:

It is correct that we are making good progress on reducing the council's own emissions, and we are also making progress on the council's Scope 3 emissions, by working with suppliers, developing a contract management toolkit, including climate considerations in major contract tendering processes.

We have regular contract meetings with key suppliers and climate issues are on the agenda. For example an Environment Forum meets quarterly to discuss environment and climate issues relating to the highways maintenance contract. In November a Sustainability and Carbon Reduction event is being jointly organised by the council's highways team and contractors Milestone, and key supply chain partners are invited to showcase new innovation and share learning.

It is correct that we aim to use case studies and explore the opportunities for working in partnerships to deliver the climate strategy. This includes using our existing business networks and communication channels, not only to share our experience but also for the council to learn from Wiltshire businesses.

We can't detail specific meetings and actions discussed with our Wiltshire businesses due to commercial confidentiality, and information about quantifiable carbon reduction from our engagement with businesses is not available. However, we have regular 1-to-1 conversations with our larger businesses who very often are focused on energy efficiency and sustainability as part of business as usual.

We also have quarterly meetings with organisations such as housing associations, Ministry of Defence and public sector organisations.

Regarding financial incentives and support, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund "Invest in Wiltshire" grant programme has a cross-cutting theme of decarbonization for all projects.

Wiltshire Council will, in the next two months, be going out to tender for SME energy efficiency programme delivery which will provide support to a minimum of 100 Wiltshire businesses in the form of energy efficiency audits and advice.

Pre-amble

Firstly, we do not agree with the statement Councillor Holder made at the Cabinet meeting on 10th October regarding WCA statement on the council's efforts to address climate adaptation.

To be clear, WCA were encouraged by the statement that the Council are now addressing adaption because it was last addressed in 2015, some 8 years ago.

WCA are disappointed that this has been further delayed until 2024 through lack of staff availability. The impacts of climate change are rapidly increasing and delay in implementing mitigation measures will only increase disruption and costs for the council and the people of Wiltshire.

Adaptation to climate change is required because of a failure to address climate change. Delay to addressing adaptation compounds that failure, only making impacts worse.

These adaptations must also reduce the risk that civil emergencies caused by climate are minimised.

Question (P23-31)

- a) Can the Council confirm that responsibility for developing adaptation plans sits with all departments within the council and their contractors; that clear co-ordination and input from parishes is in place.
- b) Can the Council confirm that a dedicated adaptation co-ordinator is in place to manage this development and that all adaptation plans will be in the public domain in order that citizens of the county can be reassured that clear actions are taking place to mitigate the impacts of climate change across the county.

Response:

- a) For clarification, the existing Adaptation Plan is published on the council's website and was last updated in 2016, not 2015. Meanwhile, the existing Adaptation Plan contains information on climate impacts and predictions for Wiltshire that remains relevant.

Yes I can confirm that all departments will be working with the Climate team on reviewing and updating our Adaption Plan.

'Increasing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change' is a master risk on the council's corporate risk register, meaning that every service area has a responsibility for managing and mitigating this risk in relation to its operations.

Currently the Climate Team is working with all directorates to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and to support service areas to carry out a climate change risk assessment and set up adaptation action plans.

Parish and Town councils will also be invited to input to the Adaptation Plan work at the relevant stage of the project, however for the time being, their development of emergency plans is an important step, as outlined in the Adaptation Plan 2016, and supported by the council's Emergency Planning team.

- b) Currently there is a dedicated Climate Officer coordinating work on the revised Adaptation Plan. An update and initial actions and recommendations will be provided in March 2024, leading on to detailed action planning. The council will publish appropriate information and communications for audiences including residents. Citizens of the county can be reassured that clear actions are being taken by the council.

Item 7 – Update on the Council's Response to the Climate Emergency and revised Environmental Policy

From Andrew Nicolson

To Cllr Nick Holder – Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Question P23-32

- a) One of the most serious gaps in the Update being progress on Procurement, where you still haven't even defined a KPI target for G1 Supplier Emissions, does your proposed Environmental Policy's plan to merely "work with" and "encourage" suppliers and contractors, with no mention of climate or Net Zero GHGs, mean that you have abandoned your two-year-old "Starting immediately!" commitment to "Develop a requirement for suppliers to measure and reduce their environmental impact", and indeed your nearly 15-year-old Sustainable Procurement commitment? and if not, then what are the difficulties and obstacles, when do you think you will manage to define a target, and would you like Wiltshire Climate Alliance or other NGOs to help you out?
- b) How far have you got with Climate Strategy Delivery Plan Actions G2.1 "Engage and establish baseline with top 10 suppliers where possible by Autumn 2023" and X1.3 Support Area Board Environment Leads, including training all Environment Leads, bearing in mind that some Area Boards have new 'ABELs' or all members are now leading on Environment?

Response:

- a) The proposed Environmental Policy says that we will work our suppliers and contractors and encourage them to demonstrate commitment to our shared environmental objectives – which include being carbon neutral, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The delivery plan action to "Develop a requirement for suppliers to measure and reduce their environmental impact" has not been abandoned, and is being progressed through procurement policy and practice, and was indeed started immediately:

One month after the delivery plan was published, Cabinet endorsed the Socially Responsible Procurement Policy (discussed at [Cabinet Nov 2022](#)) and the development of accompanying toolkits, which include guidance for

consideration of climate considerations through tendering and contract management. Implementation is already underway, with climate-related questions being built into recent major contract tendering processes. We work with our suppliers to understand their carbon emissions, and KPIs are built into contracts as they renew.

A KPI relating to supplier emissions (G1) can only be developed and a target set once we have data for a baseline and an understanding of suppliers' emissions and the data that can be provided. This is part of current work with suppliers, as per actions G2.1 of the Climate Strategy Delivery Plan and C7 of the Carbon Neutral Council Plan.

- b) Work is underway with the top 10 suppliers by carbon emissions, as defined in the Pathways to Carbon Neutral study 2022. Milestone is one of the newest contracts and has been setting out their first carbon report to establish a baseline and specific actions. We have regular contract meetings with key suppliers and climate issues are on the agenda. For example an Environment Forum meets quarterly to discuss environment and climate issues with highways contractors and consultants. In November a Sustainability and Carbon Reduction event is being jointly organised by the council's highways team and contractors Milestone, and key supply chain partners are invited to showcase new innovation and share learning.

A specific event for Area Board Environment Leads was held last year, and now that area board priorities have been set we are looking at where we can add value and support to what the area boards are already doing. A video presentation was produced in May 2023, and a similar one will be provided following this update to cabinet and council, highlighting climate activities that area boards, local councils and community groups can be involved in.

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Members Questions Update

Summary

1. A total of five questions from Councillors have been received since the last meeting of Full Council on 18 July 2023.
2. Details of questions submitted and the order they will be received at the meeting are shown at Appendix 1. Questions and responses are included at Appendix 2.
3. Four questions were received before the first deadline of 5pm on 3 October 2023. Those were therefore guaranteed written responses as attached to this report.
4. One question was received after the deadline for a written response but prior to the second deadline of 5pm on 10 October 2023 and will receive a verbal response at the meeting.
5. The Chairman will go through the questions and responses as is customary, taking responses as read and giving the questioner an opportunity to ask one relevant supplementary question for each question submitted.

Tara Hunt, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Appendix 1 – Councillor questions summary

Appendix 2 – Questions received.

Appendix 1 – Member Submitted Questions Summary

Questions will be received in the order listed below as specified in the Constitution.

Questions for Council (attached at Appendix 2)

Ref	Questioner	Date Received	Written or Verbal	Subject	Cabinet Member
23-20	Cllr Derek Walters	11/09/23	Written	Speed Limit of Bradford Road, Rudloe	Cllr Richard Clewer
23-23	Cllr Jon Hubbard	13/09/23	Written	Statutory Notices	Cllr Richard Clewer
23-24	Cllr Brian Dalton	10/10/23	Verbal	Salisbury Joint Transportation Plan Committee	Cllr Caroline Thomas
23-21	Cllr Derek Walters	11/09/23	Written	Speed Limit of Bradford Road, Rudloe	Cllr Caroline Thomas
23-22	Cllr Derek Walters	11/09/23	Written	Speed Limits	Cllr Caroline Thomas

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Item 15 – Members’ Questions

From Cllr Derek Walters – Corsham Without

To Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing

Question (23-20)

On Points West broadcast on 5th September Richard Clewer stated that the speed limit on the Bradford Road, Rudloe outside the primary school could not be dropped below 40mph legally?

Could Richard confirm this as accurate and if so, reference the law that he refers to.

Response:

Speed limits are set under the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2016. This is a Statutory Instrument, and these regulations apply to all roads in England. It is the Highway Authority’s duty under section 85 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to place speed limit signs in accordance with TSRGD. To determine an appropriate limit, Wiltshire Council, in common with all Local Authorities use the DfT Guidelines - Setting local speed limits, as updated in 2013.

Changes to a speed limit must be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which goes through a consultation process. To be clear, the recently advertised Traffic Regulation Order for Bradford Road along the section in question is for a speed limit of 40mph.

It is possible for Wiltshire Council to set a different speed limit to that proposed in a Traffic Regulation Order following a review of the consultation responses alongside the DfT Guidance. I apologise for not making that clear, but I was not aware at the time that this was possible.

As a moving traffic enforcement, the Police are the enforcement authority for speed limits and accordingly, their support is required prior to implementation of any speed limit changes.

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Wiltshire Council

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17 October 2023

Item 15 – Members’ Questions

From Cllr Jon Hubbard – Melksham South

To Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing

Question (23-23)

Like council’s across the country budgetary pressures mean we should be exploring all options for saving money and getting best value for money wherever possible.

Could the leader therefore help me understand why it appears that it is the policy of this council to place statutory notices that affect communities in Melksham and Westbury in the Wiltshire Times newspaper rather than in the local newspapers serving those areas which charge just 25% of the price being paid?

The distribution of the Melksham News alone exceeds that of the Wiltshire Times, so therefore it is without doubt that the number of residents within the local community that will be affected by a statutory notice who actually see the advert will be significantly higher should the more local paper be used.

We speak as a council about wanting to support local businesses yet here are preferring to place our statutory advertising with an American conglomerate rather than a Wiltshire based local family business.

Why are we not taking up this opportunity to support a local business and place advertisements for Melksham and Westbury in the local papers for those towns, and indeed investigate similar options for other town’s with local newspapers such as Warminster.

More coverage, less cost, supporting local business – I struggle to understand the reasons not to?

Response:

Thank you for your question. This issue has been previously raised with us by the Editor of the Melksham News, the Mayor of Melksham Town Council and Councillor Jonathan Seed.

Wiltshire Council's practice of placing statutory notices in a paid-for newspaper is based on legal advice. This advice reflects the wording in the relevant legislation, the likelihood that paid-for newspapers are read (based on a reasonable assumption that some people may not choose to read a free paper that is sent to them), and that paid-for newspapers have a circulation which has been confirmed by the Audit Bureau of Circulations. We do not believe the Melksham Independent News are using this industry standard method.

We also can't assume that certain Traffic Regulation Orders will only affect people in Melksham. People drive through on a regular basis and those residents are unlikely to see the Traffic Regulation Order in the local free newspaper, but more likely to see it in a paper with a wider county-coverage.

To ensure we are providing value for money, we know the Government has consulted on making alterations to traffic regulation order (TRO) (see link below) processes and requirements and they are analysing feedback on that. We propose to review our current policy considering the outcome of that consultation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/traffic-regulation-orders-changes-to-publishing-requirements-and-special-events-order-approvals>

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Item 15 – Members’ Questions

From Cllr Brian Dalton – Salisbury Harnham West Division

**To Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Streetscene, and
Flooding**

Question (23-24)

Would this council consider re-forming the Salisbury Joint Transportation Plan Committee, which existed pre 2009, with Wiltshire County Council and Salisbury District Council?

There are many transport issues in the city and many unresolved and this committee would be the place to take these local issues and hopefully get them resolved with our excellent highways officers.

The committee would be between Wiltshire Council and Salisbury City Council members.

Response:

A verbal response will be provided at the meeting.

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Item 15 – Members’ Questions

From Cllr Derek Walters – Corsham Without

To Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding

Question (23-21)

As Cabinet Member for Highways could Caroline Thomas confirm the statement made by Richard Clewer on Points West broadcast on 5th September that the speed limit on the Bradford Road, Rudloe outside the primary school could not be dropped below 40mph legally?

Response:

There must be a sound basis, including local consultation, for any speed limit change as the restriction can be challenged in court. To be clear, a Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the speed limit to 40 mph at this location has been subject to consultation, in accordance with the statutory legal process.

In consideration of TRO consultation responses, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport will:

1. Implement the proposals as advertised;
2. Not implement the proposals;
3. Implement the proposals as advertised.

As a moving vehicle offence, the enforcement authority for speed limits is the Police and therefore agreement and support for any change must be sought from them before any changes are implemented.

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Wiltshire Council

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17 October 2023

Item 15 – Members’ Questions

From Cllr Derek Walters – Corsham Without

To Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding

Question (23-22)

As Cabinet Member for Highways could Caroline Thomas confirm that the Department for Transport delegates decision making on speed limits to the local Highways Authority?

Could she also confirm that the DfT states that this is to allow local knowledge to be used?

Currently local Parishes have to request and contribute to the cost of Speed Limit Assessments. Local Highways and Footway Improvement Groups (LHFIG) have to agree any requests, prioritise them and also contribute to the cost. They do not do this frivolously.

If the Assessments take into account local knowledge and surely the best local knowledge is that of the Parish Councils and LHFIG then why are 75% of requests refused and the remaining 25% mostly watered down (eg. 50 to 40 rather than 50 to 30)?

Could Caroline also confirm that the current view within Wiltshire Highways is that speed limits are of little use in modifying speeds on our roads?

Could Caroline confirm that she is in agreement with this view?

Does the Cabinet Member for Highways have the authority to overrule a decision by Wiltshire Highways?

Response:

The council as Local Highway Authority has the responsibility to set speed limits on local roads.

The Department for Transport Circular 01/13 Setting Local Speed Limits sets out guidance as a basis for assessments of local speed limits. Traffic authorities can set local speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest a speed limit

which is lower than the national speed limit. Speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining, and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel.

Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed.

They should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, such as a single road junction or reduced forward visibility. The principal aim in determining appropriate speed limits should be to provide a consistent message between speed limits and what the road environments looks like; therefore, changes in speed limit need to be reflective of changes in the road layout and characteristics. This approach is intended to provide consistency across the country for drivers.

The underlying aim should be to achieve a 'safe' distribution of speeds. The key factors that should be considered in any decisions on local speed limits are:

- History of collisions;
- Road geometry and engineering;
- Road function;
- Composition of road users;
- Existing traffic speeds; and
- Road environment.

The consultation process provides the opportunity for the public, interested parties and the police to comment on proposed changes to speed limits.

Speed limits are an important tool in improving road safety, but they need to be set appropriately to be effective. This requires a consistent approach to be taken following Department for Transport guidance.

The Council officers make recommendations based on the Department of Transport guidance and requirements, which in conjunction with the consultations results, enable the Cabinet Member to reach a decision.

Setting speed limits is a legal process which needs to follow the correct procedures in order to ensure they are enforceable and not open to legal challenge.