

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 February 2021

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Statement and Questions from Helen Stuckey

**To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Leader and Cabinet Member for
Economic Development, MCI and Communications**

Statement

Public consultation on elements of the draft local plan for Chippenham has just started and has already met with a huge public outcry that neither the proposed road nor the massive housing developments to the South and East of Chippenham are wanted. The road and housing numbers appear to reflect a £75m grant from Homes England which the council finalised on 18th December 2020. We understand from questions raised at the Chippenham Local Plan online event last week, that the timescale for having an approved Local Plan is not likely to be until 2023.

Please could the cabinet explain:

Question 1 (21-09)

Why the public were not consulted prior to entering into the £75m HIF Grant Determination Agreement to build a road and 7,500 houses to the South and East of Chippenham?

Response

The Council does not as a matter of course consult on seeking funding from Government.

Question 2 (21-10)

Why the Future Chippenham project, set up to manage the HIF grant, has already launched a public consultation on the road route options?

Response

The cabinet paper of March 2020 and its minutes set out the activities of the Future Chippenham programme and provides detail on specific workstreams.

Question 3 (21-11)

Whether the Future Chippenham project could submit a planning application for the road before the Local Plan is agreed?

Response

Planning applications can be submitted by developers at any time and be considered by the planning authority. The Future Chippenham Team will progress the planning application at the appropriate time.

Question 4 (21-12)

Whether the terms of the £75m HIF grant reflect that the Local Plan has not been agreed and what would happen if the road and houses are not subsequently agreed in the Local Plan?

Response

The Grant Determination Agreement reflects the current stage of the Local Plan process and this is not unusual for schemes such as this. If the Local plan does not identify the site currently being promoted by Future Chippenham, this will be considered at that time.

Question 5 (21-13)

Why the council is entering into a Joint Venture with a Master Developer before it has an agreed Local Plan?

Response

The Future Chippenham Team are investigating opportunities through a Joint Venture Partnership to deliver housing through the use of Council owned assets.

Question 6 (21-14)

Whether the Joint Venture legal agreement will allow flexibility if the road and scale of additional housing were not subsequently approved in the Local Plan; and

Response

This questions cannot be answered at this stage as it is premature in the process.

Question 7 (21-15)

Whether the Council will fully reflect public feedback on the Chippenham Local Plan or is now biased towards utilising the £75m HIF grant to build a road and 7,500 houses in 2 new suburbs to the South and East of Chippenham?

Response

There is no bias towards the HIF bid. The Local Plan process will take into consideration public feedback on the Chippenham Local Plan proposals.