

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (2)

Meeting: Cabinet
Place: Online
Date: Tuesday 2 February 2021
Time: 10.00 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 25 January 2021. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Stuart Figini, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718221 or email stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk

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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 and Questions from Councillors (Pages 3 - 36)**

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7 **Wiltshire Council's Budget (Pages 37 - 50)**

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DATE OF PUBLICATION: 1 February 2021 and updated
with additional statements on 5 February 2021

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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.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Statement and Questions from Kim Stuckey

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

Statement

Chippenham Town Council on 25th January have published a clarification of their involvement in Wiltshire Council's involvement in the Housing Infrastructure Bid for Chippenham.

Question 1 (21-16)

To assist in the understanding of this clarification, could Cabinet confirm yes or no if the following letters were used in communication with Homes England and/or the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in conjunction with the HIF bid

- a) Letter from the Leader and Chief Executive of Chippenham Town Council to the Growth Investment & Programme Director on 26th November 2018?

Response:

This letter was provided to Homes England as part of the Bid submission

- b) Letter from Chief Executive of Chippenham Town Council to the Growth Investment & Programme Director on 24th June 2019?

Response:

We are retrieving our historical data records and will provide an answer once the information is available

- c) Letter from Chief Executive of Chippenham Town Council to the Growth Investment & Programme Director on 11th July 2019?

Response:

In the time available to provide responses to all questions it has not been possible to confirm whether the letters we received were provided to Homes England. We will be able to respond as soon as that work has taken place

Supplementary Question

Can the Chippenham HIF consultation form be revised to allow a more open consultation.

Response:

There is no need to revise the consultation form. The existing form has always allowed those objecting to complete questions stating their objection and there is no need for them to complete the rest of the form. If that were not enough then the consultation page provides a direct email link for objections to be sent so that those who wish to object do not need to complete the consultation form.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Questions from Kathy Laurence

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and Communities

Statement 1

Please can I submit a topic/question for submission to the CABINET Meeting on 2nd February 2020. It is regarding the information below on the possible purchase of our homes by Wiltshire Council to help resolve our eviction issues.

My concerns are the following and i would like to request a formal response in writing please to all questions?

Question 1 (21-23)

Firstly, if they purchase the homes, under what criteria will they allow people in them? If our home is one of the ones purchased.

Response:

The Council is actively looking at ways in which it could help people avoid homelessness. If properties were purchased tenanted there would be no intention to require tenants to move to smaller properties although the Council always encourages tenants to move to the right size home.

Question 2 (21-24)

Under the Wiltshire Housing scheme, we are only entitled to a one bedroom flat with no pets. Our current home is a large detached 3 double bed house with garage.

Response:

The Council's allocation policy sets out the size eligibility for households and homes and is based on the governments bedroom standard to ensure we make best use of all housing stock.

Question 3 (21-25)

What confirmation do we have that if they purchase our homes, will they allow us to remain in our homes regardless of our entitlement.

Response:

Its needs to be stated the purchase of homes is not within the Council's gift. As stated previously the Council always encourages tenants to move to the right size home

Statement 2:

My second topic is along the same theme of being evicted by the MOD/Annington Homes. Without help - we simply cannot move. I am sure you are aware that there are not enough homes locally available for all of us to move, to get a similar home to our current one it would be a 50% increase in rent.

Please can all residents affected by this receive an update on any progress being made with DIO or Annington Homes in relation to the policy being changed from vacant homes, to homes with sitting tenants?

Question 4 (21-26)

our problem with moving, is a bad credit rating and no estate agents will help us - they are asking for a guarantor who either earns or has savings of £50K + - this is ridiculous. This is the area we need support in and maybe many other families. We have an excellent reference from our current landlord - but it is not enough.

Response:

The Council will work with households to help them avoid homelessness if they are required to leave their current homes.

Question 5 (21-27)

Without a guarantor, estate agents are asking for a deposit of 6-12 Months - which is £6K - £12K or more - again we do not have this.

Response:

The Council knows that it can be difficult for households to access private rented accommodation if they do not have a guarantor or poor credit rating and will support households in such circumstances to help them avoid homelessness.

Question 6 (21-28)

What help can you offer in terms of a guarantor or this huge deposit required.

Response:

The Council does not provide deposits of 6 months to help people access private rented accommodation but it can provide some financial assistance depending on the household circumstances.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Statement and Questions from Ian James – Bremhill Parish Councillor

**To Councillor Bridget Wayman, Cabinet Member for Highways,
Transport and Waste**

Statement

The Cabinet member for Highways has been in this position for a number of years now and is familiar with the arguments for better transport requirements in Chippenham.

Wiltshire Council is currently undertaking a consultation process on the proposed implementation of a road scheme for Chippenham which has been driven by subjective evidence that there is congestion in the centre of Chippenham. In fact, much of the promotion of the proposed new road hinges on how to reduce congestion in Chippenham.

The new road scheme to reduce traffic congestion in Chippenham is expected to cost in excess of £75m, which will be provided by the HIF bid money which is only a grant and the Council will have to pay that back.

If congestion has been so bad in Chippenham for a number of years why has Wiltshire Council not invested in a traffic light network which is computerised, and increases the flow of traffic automatically when the roads sense a build up in a certain direction, and also at peak times. A set of linked traffic lights from the Bridge Centre to the A350 would mean that traffic would flow smoothly and there would be little congestion.

Question 1 (21-29)

Why has Wiltshire Council, and the consultants Atkins, which we are all paying for not considered this solution rather than a £75m road around Chippenham which in the present times seems an excess amount of money to relieve congestion in the town centre.

Response

The HIF grant does not require repayment and is there to support the delivery of key infrastructure to unlock land for development and ease congestion in the town centre.

Question 2 (21-30)

Has the Council considered this technology, and if not why not?

Response

The Council has implemented various technologies to increase traffic flows at signal-controlled junctions and will continue to do so. The traffic signals at A350 Farmers Roundabout is one example of where such traffic control currently operates.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Statement and Questions from Ian James – Bremhill Parish Councillor

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications

Statement 1

Rawlings Green site has been part of the Local Plan since 2016, it is noted planning permission was granted to allow access to the rail crossing over the Great Western railway to allow access from Parsonage Way and into the new Rawlings Green site.

Question 1 (21-31)

Why has it taken 4 years to achieve this access, and when will construction start on this site?

Response:

This is a complex site. The timescales are not unusual. The planning application for the new bridge (reference 18/02037/FUL) was approved with conditions in November 2018. The applicant is in the process of discharging conditions attached to the consent with a view to commencement of development at the earliest opportunity.

The planning application for the site at Rawlings Green (reference 15/12351/OUT) was approved with conditions and planning obligation in September 2020. The date when construction begins will ultimately be decided by the developer

The Council has not paid for a ransom strip, nor does the Council believe there is a ransom strip as the land has been recorded as public highway since 1995.

Question 2 (21-32)

Wavin, the company that runs a business from Parsonage Way owned the land adjacent to the access to the rail crossing. Did the Council pay for the ransom strip to allow access to the rail crossing or did the developer?

Response:

See above response

Question 3 (21-33)

If the Council did pay for the ransom strip how much taxpayers money was used?

Response:

See above response

Question 4 (21-34)

Was any HIF money set aside to pay this ransom strip?

Response:

See above response

Question 5 (21-35)

If taxpayers money was used why is the Council subsidising a developer to enable that company to build at Rawlings Green when that surely must be the developer's responsibility?

Response:

See above response

Statement 2

In the Future Chippenham promotion material on line it states "The HIF grant enables us to draw down funding to support the delivery of infrastructure works should planning be granted for the development to proceed"

Now this statement seems to run contrary to the overall project plan promoted by the Council where it clearly states the planning permission for the road comes before the approval of the new Local Plan. In planning terms, the new emerging plan should be passed by an Inspector where he will set out the number of houses required and agree that the road infrastructure proposed by the Council will meet the needs of the development.

If this does not happen the Council could end up with a road and possibly less houses than the Council had planned for.

Question 6 (21-36)

Please can you affirm that Council will wait until the Local Plan has been passed and then put forward the planning application for the road as is suggested by Future Chippenham?

Response:

The Future Chippenham Team will progress the planning application for the road at the appropriate time.

Question 7 (21-37)

At the December Cabinet meeting you kindly agreed to supply the costs for the construction of the road infrastructure included in the HIF bid, please can you supply the information for the Future Chippenham consultation process as promised?

Response:

The Options Assessment report (published on the Future Chippenham Consultation page) confirms outline costs for the delivery of the road.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Questions from Peter Cousins

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications

Question 1 (21-38)

Were you aware that the letter from Chippenham Town Council, dated 26th November 2018, supporting the bid for the Housing Infrastructure Fund was signed without Council knowledge or authorisation?’

Response:

We can only assume this refers to Chippenham Town Council and as such that questions should be put to Chippenham Town Council.

Question 2 (21-39)

With regard to the consideration and actions following receipt of the letter from CTC who from the Wiltshire County Council used the support from Town Council to proceed with communication relating to the HIF bid, (knowing it had not been raised with Chippenham’s councillors)?

Response:

See response to question above.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Statement and Questions from Isabel McCord

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications

Statement

At the Wiltshire Cabinet meeting on 1 December 2020 in answers to questions from the public it was stated that “the Council has confirmed that it intends to release the HIF bid documentation once it has been fully reviewed and the appropriate areas redacted” and that “it is the Council’s intention to publish the Grant determination agreement.”

Question 1 (21-40)

I note that the redacted HIF Bid has been published on the Future Chippenham part of the Wiltshire Council website.

However, I cannot find the GDA. Has this been published? And if not, why not and when will it be published as promised?

Response:

The GDA will be published when the commercial nature of the contents will not prejudice the Council as it contains current commercially sensitive information.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Statement and Questions from Melanie Boyle

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications

Statement 1

Public consultation on the draft local plan for Chippenham has just started, I am a resident of 39 years who enjoys the countryside on our doorstep, photographing all the birds of prey, owls, birds, kingfishers, small mammals etc. and cycling 7 miles along a cycle path not on a road, but with countryside all around it.

Question 1 (21-41)

How can Wiltshire Council destroy this when there are so many brownfield sites?

Response:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must be taken into account when preparing a new Local Plan. The NPPF definition of sustainable development is not exclusively about the countryside. The NPPF says achieving sustainable development has three overarching objectives - economic, social and environmental. These are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

The 'Emerging Spatial Strategy' and 'Planning for Chippenham' documents, which form part of the Local Plan consultation say that needs for development should be met as far as possible on brownfield sites in order to help minimize the loss of greenfield sites. The Council suggests a target of 240 homes for Chippenham on brownfield sites over the next 10 years. This is far lower than the indicative residual housing requirement of 5100 homes identified for the town, hence why greenfield sites have been identified. The consultation asks whether there should be a brownfield target and if so, should it be higher or lower?

Question 2 (21-42)

Where is the detailed evidence of how Wiltshire Council decided 5,000 extra houses than the Government figures were required?

Response:

The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019 prepared by Opinion

Research Services contains the evidence for the higher level of 45,600 homes.

Question 3 (21-43)

What can we do to stop the road and housing, eg 100 people complete the consultation against it will that be enough? We need to know what we are aiming for?

Response:

The purpose of the Local Plan consultation is to seek feedback from the public and other stakeholders about the proposals. The content and substance of comments received will be considered and changes made if considered appropriate. No changes will be decided based on the number of comments submitted, but on the strength of evidence and arguments provided.

Question 4 (21-44)

We need the farms for local food, why are Wiltshire Council destroying them when there are so many brownfield sites?

Response:

See response to Q1.

Question 5 (21-45)

At the meeting it was mentioned about interested companies, we have 32 empty business sites and increasing, why can't they be redeveloped rather than tearing up the countryside?

Response:

Our employment land proposals are based on evidence set out in the Employment Land Review report, one of the supporting documents available as part of the Local Plan consultation. If you have any new information or comments to submit about this evidence, then please submit comments directly to the Local Plan consultation.

Statement 2

Please put both projects on hold until we know the full extent of the Covid impact, we have a great community using the countryside and helping each other at the moment. Good Energy pulling out of the Sadlers Mead development shows working at home is having a big impact, reducing the need for office buildings, hotels, student accommodation due to remote learning, cars commuting, shops becoming available for housing, Covid deaths, increased deaths due to cancer, heart treatments being delayed will all change requirements, the countryside could be destroyed for nothing?

Question 6 (21-46)

We are seeing many decision for Chippenham that are obviously not made by locals eg Sadlers Mead car park development, it is terrible, an eyesore added to the wonderful river and park area, the lights are left on all the time even on sunny days when there is nobody working there on a Sunday, the view of the car park for miles around due to the lighting is terrible, the cost to the tax payer and the environment are unbelievable, **why is there not sensor and zone lighting in a new building?** Photo attached. Good Energy pulled out and we are left with a blot on the landscape while we have a derelict

college site next to it and 4 other car parks adjacent to it?

Response:

There is sensor lighting on floors other than ground floor.

Question 7 (21-47)

Also why was the Magistrates Court built and demolished with only about 20 years use?

Response:

The Magistrates Court building was vacated a few years ago. The site was bought by Lidl and an application for a new supermarket (reference 19/11732/FUI) was approved with conditions in September 2020. Lidl's proposals include the demolition of the existing building.

Question 8 (21-48)

Why is more effort not being made to open Corsham and Devizes train stations which would reduce traffic into Chippenham and mean people could walk or cycle to those stations in those towns?

Response:

As part of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund, the Council submitted a successful round one bid for a Devizes Gateway station. Officers are now working with the Devizes Development Partnership to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case for submission to the DfT in March/April 2021.

For round two of the Ideas Fund, the Council submitted a bid to restore secondary services on the Great Western Main Line. As well as improving connectivity between Bristol to Oxford (and potentially further east) this would help realise new stations at Corsham and Royal Wootton Bassett / Swindon West. While the bid was unsuccessful, officers are liaising with the DfT and key stakeholders/partners to establish next steps.

Question 9 (21-49)

How does this plan fit in with the governments plan to save the NHS billions with green prescriptions, a County Park is not the same as the natural countryside?

Response:

A new country park is a good opportunity to provide green infrastructure. The NPPF encourages the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure to enable and support healthy lifestyles and a country park is one example of this.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Questions

Statement and Questions from Amy Davis

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism,
Housing and Communities**

Statement 1

I have recently attended the online Local Plan Review Consultation introduction event for Chippenham. At this meeting, the word 'sustainable' was used to describe the large expansion project proposed for the river valley and countryside to the east and south of Chippenham.

Question 1 (21-51)

Given that most people are now to some extent aware that 'sustainability' is an important consideration in any future development - but may not be aware of what the **most** sustainable alternatives would look like, or the extent and impact of carbon emissions and ecological damage that this expansion will cause - does the Cabinet agree that informing the public that such schemes are 'sustainable' is misleading and will prejudice consultees towards more favourable responses to them?

Response:

In preparing the Local Plan we must take into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF definition of sustainable development is not exclusively about protecting the environment. The NPPF says achieving sustainable development has three overarching objectives - economic, social and environmental. These are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

The 'Emerging Spatial Strategy', 'Planning for Chippenham' and supporting documents, which form part of the Local Plan consultation explain the reasons behind the proposals. The consultation allows people to put forward their views on these and to challenge the Council's thinking.

Statement 2

I want to ask this question at this juncture as I believe that a misappropriation of concepts like 'sustainability' in attempts to secure growth projects signals a clear lack of appropriately grave awareness of the seriousness and urgency of the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Furthermore, if the Council uses what I believe can be described as greenwash in this way, it cannot expect the public to fully understand and engage

with its climate ambitions, which will be crucial in achieving them.

Question 2 (21-52)

How can Wiltshire Council destroy this when there are so many brownfield sites?

Response:

See response to Question 1.

The 'Emerging Spatial Strategy' and 'Planning for Chippenham' documents, which form part of the Local Plan consultation say that needs for development should be met as far as possible on brownfield sites in order to help minimize the loss of greenfield sites. The Council suggests a target of 240 homes for Chippenham on brownfield sites over the next 10 years. This is far lower than the indicative residual housing requirement of 5100 homes identified for the town, hence why greenfield sites have been identified. The consultation asks whether there should be a brownfield target and if so, should it be higher or lower?

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

**Statement and Questions from Ian James – Bremhill Parish Councillor
– Part 2**

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

Statement 1

The HIF bid reference CSF 3 states that 7,500 houses to be built, however later in the section it references increases up to the period of 20 years.

Question 1 (21-53)

Clearly the 7,500 houses is just the start of a massive urban expansion of Chippenham which will realise over 20,000 houses. Was Chippenham Town Council made aware of these huge number of houses to be placed to the east and south of Chippenham?

These houses will be placed adjacent to the River Avon flood Plain.

Response:

The HIF bid identified the potential to deliver up to 7500 homes over a period of 20+ years.

Question 2 (21-54)

Additionally, it quotes 20 hectares of business land to be made available, but the Local plan on review quotes just 9. Does this mean that a doubling of industrial and office use will be placed in the urban expansion?

Response:

The Local Plan consultation proposes 5ha additional employment for Chippenham (see 'Planning for Chippenham' document). This is based on evidence set out in the Employment Land Review 2018 by Hardisty Jones Associates and is one of the supporting documents available as part of the Local Plan consultation. The concept plans 'Planning for Chippenham' shows proposed land uses that include 5 hectares and 3 hectares of employment on two of the preferred sites. The purpose of the consultation is to seek feedback and comments on the proposals and the questions ask "What do think of this scale of growth?" and "Do you agree with the location and amount of employment provided on Sites 1 and 2?".

Question 3 (21-55)

Wiltshire Council needs to be truthful in the consultation that is currently being undertaken, is it the intention of the Council and the new Venture Capital Company to drive through development which is far larger than being proposed in the Local Plan in the future?

Response

The Council is consulting on current plans. Any future proposals would be subject to the required consultation. The Council is investigating a joint venture partner for development of its land holdings subject to the outcome of the local plan review.

Question 4 (21-56)

Has Wiltshire Council resolved the technical issues on the Chippenham Consultation when members of the public were unable to log on to the consultation, this issue meant Councillors and the public were unable to take part?

Response:

On the basis that you are referring to the Local Plan consultation, we had 130 people successfully attend the Chippenham Local Plan event, which is a high turnout compared to similar face-to-face events we have held in the past, and any technical issues affected a very small number of users. We have held 15 Local Plan events so far, attended by more than 940 people, and there were no reported widespread issues.

Question 5 (21-57)

In view of these difficulties will the Council run another date for consultation for those who were unable to join the consultation for Chippenham?

Response:

We have no plans to rerun this event at present. The presentation from the event has been published on the Council's website so people can view it and a note of the questions asked at all the meetings will be made available in due course.

All the Local Plan consultation documents, background information, and the consultation form are available to view at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-local-plan-review-consultation

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Statement and Questions from Cllr Murry about the Local Plan

**To Councillor Toby Sturgis Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning,
Development Management and Property**

Statement 1

In preparation for the Local Plan Review in 2018 Wiltshire Council's spatial planning team informed Chippenham Town councillors that about 3,000 houses would need to be built in Chippenham for the Plan period 2016-36. Evidence recently gathered in Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) work undertaken by consultants for the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan using ONS census data (ONS, SNPP 2016) suggests Chippenham's net population growth as equivalent to 2,000 – 2,775 houses between 2016 and 2036, which is consistent with the original Spatial Planning team's 3,000 homes needs assessment cited above. The number now being proposed in the current LPR consultation is over 9,000. This equates to a commuter suburb the size of Calne and 20% of Wiltshire's housing numbers being unloaded onto green fields around Chippenham.

Question 1 (21-58)

Where is the justification for increasing this number threefold?

Response:

There has not been a threefold increase. In 2018, the Town Council were consulted on work in progress suggesting 7,000 dwellings, with 3,000 dwellings remaining to be planned for. This took forward the current Wiltshire Core Strategy. Since then, as explained in the Local Plan Review consultation material, an alternative development strategy has tested as being more preferable, which has a greater focus for growth on the town than the current approach. This proposes around 9,000 dwellings with 5,000 dwellings remaining to be planned for. Views on this proposal are invited.

Question 2 (21-59)

Isn't the fact that since 2018 the HIF bid has led the planning process and effectively forced the Spatial Planning team to retrofit its HNA accordingly?

Response:

No, this is not correct.

Question 3 (21-60)

Isn't the proposed Joint Venture with a Master Developer ahead the Local Plan for Chippenham has even been consulted on, let alone agreed, further evidence of this on-going predetermination?

Response:

There is no predetermination. This cabinet has approved the Future Chippenham project to proceed as outlined in the March 2020 cabinet report. The Joint Venture procurement is being considered as a model to support the work should it come forward.

Statement 2

Given that Wiltshire Council has put forward county wide housing numbers that are:

- unsustainable - unsupported by local employment and set to generate huge quantities of tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions through commuting, and
- undeliverable given that the Council cannot deliver its existing Plan or meet its 5 year housing land supply.

Question 4 (21-61)

Why isn't the Cabinet which is driving this, pushing back and explaining to central Government that this is neither working nor a good idea?

Response:

The proposals in the Local Plan are presented with supporting evidence. The consultation provides the opportunity for the Council to seek feedback and comments on those proposals.

The Council has responded to Central Government with concerns about 5-year land supply in their response to their proposals in the Planning White Paper and Changes to the Current Planning System last year. The 5-year housing land supply is about speed of delivery, rather than deliverability, which is in the control of developers.

Question 5 (21-62)

Why has it decided to take on 5,000 more houses than even the flawed housing algorithm is indicating?

Response:

The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019 prepared by Opinion Research Services contains the evidence for the higher 45, 600 homes housing requirement. This is one of the supporting documents available as part of the Local Plan consultation.

Question 6 (21-63)

How is this supporting localism and how will it enable Wiltshire's local communities and parishes to develop Neighbourhood Plans (for which the Council claims to be an advocate), when the extreme numbers obliterate such Plans (as will be the case for Bremhill) and create the conditions for on-going failure to meet a 5 year housing land supply, thereby allowing developers to build outside the Local and Neighbourhood Plans (as in Malmesbury)?

Response:

When preparing local plans, decisions need to be made about the amount and location of new development. The Council through its Local Plan sets the strategic context for Neighbourhood Plans and in this instance is looking forward to 2036. Neighbourhood Plans like Local Plans will need to be reviewed to ensure they remain up to date.

Question 7 (21-64)

Isn't the emerging Local Plan setting us up to fail and ruin our county's character and irreparably damage its natural capital in the process?

Response:

No, the Local Plan is seeking to make the right choices about where the growth it needs to plan for should go and is asking for people's views on this. Also, it is seeking to achieve well planned developments that incorporates green infrastructure and achieves biodiversity net gain.

Statement 3

Local Plans are required by planning and environmental legislation to be at least consistent with the UK's national climate change commitments, including reducing carbon emissions in line with the UK's net zero emissions target, which under the 6th Carbon Budget [Sixth Carbon Budget - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk) requires 68% reduction in emissions by 2030 (on a 1990 baseline). This involves setting a carbon reduction framework based on the assessed carbon reduction potential of the proposed Local Plan scenarios, demonstrating how these would cut carbon to meet the national target and putting forward a means of measuring progress.

There is no evidence that Wiltshire Council has done this, or even calculated the potential carbon emissions associated with its strategic site options, some of which seem to be working in completely the opposite direction (e.g. destroying valuable carbon sinks and increasing car dependency and commuting). Either the Cabinet doesn't believe cutting carbon via the Local Plan is a key priority or will now commit to doing this.

Question 8 (21-65)

Which is it?

Response:

Preparation of the Local Plan is still in progress. The Addressing Climate Change and Biodiversity Net Gain Paper which is included in the Local Plan consultation sets the policy themes which will help support the plan's objective in respect of adapting and mitigating climate change and is asking people to provide feedback in order to help develop our evidence.

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 February 2021

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Statement and Questions from Cllr Murry about the Chippenham HIF Consultation

To Councillor Philip Whitehead Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications

Question 1 (21-66)

Isn't it the case, as stated by several councillors at Chippenham Town Council's recent full council meeting, that we need to consider what housing numbers and potential locations around the town, before contemplating whether we need a road, two major river crossings and canal crossings?

Response:

The Future Chippenham Team has secured substantial government funding to support delivery of key infrastructure subject to the statutory planning process and policy.

Question 2 (21-67)

Isn't this another example of the cart leading the horse on local planning, or thinly veiled attempt at predetermination of the local plan, which seems to have lost all semblance of democratic process and accountability?

Response:

As previously stated, there is no case of predetermination. The Future Chippenham team has secured substantial government funding to support delivery of key infrastructure subject to the statutory planning process .

Question 3 (21-68)

Isn't this a thinly disguised attempt to predetermine the Local Plan for Chippenham before people have even had a chance to consider the scale or growth and its potential location?

Response:

As previously stated, there is no case of predetermination. The Future Chippenham team has secured substantial government funding to support delivery of key infrastructure subject to the statutory planning process and policy.

The Local Plan Review process and its consultation will consider the allocation of sites for housing

Question 4 (21-69)

If as has been claimed, the housing numbers for Chippenham and all the other strategic sites are genuinely up for discussion, and local views will genuinely be taken into account, isn't it a huge risk and waste of public money to promote this road in advance of the Local Plan?

Response:

The HIF Grant supports the preliminary stages of the road design including any required consultation.

Question 5 (21-70)

Given that we are in a Climate Emergency and need to cut carbon emissions by more than 2/3 by 2030 nationally [Sixth Carbon Budget - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://theccc.org.uk), what are the carbon emissions associated with building a road, two extended concrete river crossings, canal crossings and the necessary large scale infrastructure, include extensive flood alleviation/urban drainage necessary for the Future Chippenham sites, and why haven't these been calculated, or even considered, up front before taking such a risky proposal forward?

Response:

The Future Chippenham programme distributor road options have been assessed in terms of the environmental impact. Further work will be completed at the appropriate stages of design.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 February 2021

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Questions from Chris Caswill about the Chippenham HIF

To Councillor Whitehead Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications

Question 1 (21-71)

At the January Cabinet meeting I asked about the publication of the paper and Minute of the Part II discussion of the Council's response to Homes England on the HIF Bid, which was correctly assumed to be about the Grant Determination Agreement. The response was that "This has not been published", which is factually correct. Will you now confirm, one way or another, if :

- (a) You will publish the Part II papers, redacted as necessary, as I believe you said you would in answer to my question at the December 2020 Cabinet meeting? And if not, why not?

Response:

The Council will not publish information that is commercially sensitive and would be prejudicial to its current interests.

- (b) You will publish the Grant Determination Agreement, so that the public can at the right time take an informed view of the pros and cons of the Future Chippenham plans for HIF-funded distributor roads in Chippenham? And if not, why not?

Response:

The GDA will be published when the commercial nature of the contents will not prejudice the Council as it contains current commercially sensitive information.

Question 2 (21-72)

Future Chippenham are currently consulting on routes for the HIF-funded distributor roads in Chippenham, which are explicitly proposed to facilitate up to 7500 new houses around the town. However no decision has as yet been taken on additional houses for Chippenham, and indeed a first preliminary consultation on that subject is running concurrently. How can any view be properly taken by the public on the roads absent decisions on housing, and how can the Future Chippenham consultation be legitimate in these circumstances?

Response:

The Future Chippenham consultation is specifically on the road route options that have been identified to establish a preferred route option for the distributor road to the east and south of Chippenham. This allows the project to progress the preliminary stages of the road design in a timely manner and utilise the HIF funding to do so.

Question 3 (21-73)

Given that the Council has declared a Climate Emergency, and committed to being carbon neutral by 2030, why is there no carbon budget for either the HIF-funded distributor roads in Chippenham, nor for the massive housing increase around the town which was central to the HI Bid and is now central to the preliminary Local Plan consultation?

Response:

As part of the options for the distributor road options the climate impact is being identified and considered.

Question 4 (21-74)

The previous Cabinet meeting was held on 5 January, just after the Christmas break. This meant that Democratic Services were not in the office to receive and process public questions and statements on the date which was given as the deadline for guaranteed responses. No one begrudges hard working officers a decent Christmas and New Year break, but the effect of this timing was that answers to questions delivered on time were not answered at the Cabinet meeting, and in my case not until 19th January, two weeks later. Assuming we have elections this year, we don't know who will be chairing Cabinet meetings next year, but will you now agree to recommend to the Chief Executive that any future January Cabinet meetings will be held sufficiently distant from the Christmas break to enable the normal democratic process of Cabinet questions and answers to happen effectively?

Response:

Public Questions for Cabinet on 5 January 2021 were processed by Democratic Services following the deadline for statements and questions in the period leading up to the Christmas break. The public were informed that, due to officer leave across the organisation between Christmas and the New Year, responses may not be circulated until after the meeting. The public are welcome to submit questions in advance and do not need to wait until near the deadline, particularly where questions are unrelated to items on the agenda.

The date for the corresponding Cabinet meeting in 2022 is set for 11 January 2022, one week later than the date set for 2021.

Supplementary Question

Question 1 was repeated as a supplementary question, see above.

Response:

Homes England have been asked whether they are content for the GDA to be published with redaction. Their response is awaited.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 February 2021

Agenda Item 5 – Public Questions

Statement and Questions from Myla Watts

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism,
Housing and Communities**

Question 1 (21-76)

On 25 January, Chippenham Town Council published clarification of their involvement in Wiltshire Council's Housing Infrastructure Bid for Chippenham. However, the simple fact remains that the CTC letter which supported the HIF bid at key early stage, was signed without CTC knowledge or authorisation. Without this illegitimate letter of support, the HIF Bid may not have been successful and therefore it surely invalidates the whole submission. Please could you clarify the legal standing of this?

Response:

Whether or not the letter from Chippenham Town Council had sufficient and necessary authorisation is not a matter for Wiltshire Council to answer. As to whether the inclusion of the letter in good faith if not duly authorized invalidated the submission that is again not something that Wiltshire Council can answer and that question will be put to Homes England for their view once the veracity of the letter has been substantiated.

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APPENDIX to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Minutes of 26 January 2021 Wiltshire Council

Cabinet 2 February 2021

Council 23 February 2021

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the Draft Financial Plan Update 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021-2026

Purpose of report

1. To report to Cabinet and Full Council a summary of the main issues discussed at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (“The Committee”) held on 26 January 2021.

Background

2. The meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee provides an opportunity for non-executive councillors to question the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, the Chief Executive, and the Interim Corporate Director of Resources on the draft 2021-22 Financial Plan and medium-term financial strategy before it is considered at Cabinet on 2 February 2021 and Full Council on 23 February 2021.
3. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment, Councillor Pauline Church, supported by the Interim Corporate Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, Andy Brown, was in attendance along with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Philip Whitehead, and the Chief Executive, Terence Herbert, to provide clarification and answers to issues and queries raised by the Committee. Other members of the Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team were also in attendance to provide further detail and clarity.
4. In addition to the draft Financial Plan update made available on the council’s website on 18 January 2021, a briefing from the Cabinet Member and Interim Corporate Director of Resources open to all elected Members was held on 20 January 2021.
5. Details published in the budget papers had included:
 - Council Tax to be increased by 1.99% and an Adult Social Care Levy of 3%;
 - A net general fund budget for 2021/22 of £412.561m;
 - Including £34.236m of additional investment and £2.000m of additional savings;
 - The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2021/22 to be set at £23.626m expenditure with social dwelling rents to increase by 1.5% except for rents currently over the formula rent which will be capped at formula rent as per national guidance;
 - A forecast budget gap of £45.512m for the 2022/23 financial year with regular updates to be received on delivery against strategy and addressing the forecast budget gap.

APPENDIX to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Minutes of 26 January 2021

6. Financial management and spending controls together with emergency funding from Government during the Covid-19 pandemic has seen a forecast balanced budget by the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

Main issues raised during questioning and debate

7. This report is divided into sections relating to each of the Select Committee areas as budget proposals and impacts on service areas were discussed, as well as general comments.

Financial Planning Task Group

8. The report of the Task Group on the budget proposals was received and noted. The report and its comments are included as an annex to the Committee for attention at Cabinet and Full Council.
9. The Task Group had sought details in relation to council tax and business rate balances, grants, that many planned 2020/21 savings could not be released due to the pandemic, changes to the assessment of risks to the General Fund Reserve, and the further delay to the fair funding review for local authorities.
10. The Task Group stated it may hold further meetings as further budget queries are raised.

Children's Select Committee

11. Details were sought on the £6.6m allocated for investment in Children's Social Care in relation to a forecast increase in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) of 10.73%, with 4733 plans estimated and accounts for £1.532m of the cost pressure for Children's Services.
12. In response to queries on whether more specialist support could reduce the need for EHCPs it was stated the service was guided by policy and legislation with a focus on supporting children to remain in schools, and undertook benchmark comparison with other authorities and explored where improvements could be made, however the growth in demand was still anticipated.
13. Questions were asked about the change in the Children's Social care budget including reference to £0.108m of listed unachievable savings and the £5.608m of demand. Which have subsequently been provided to the Chairman of the Children's Select Committee.

Environment Select Committee

14. Details were sought in relation to homelessness funding, with it being confirmed that there had been an increase of £0.156m on previous allocations, with other amounts held in earmarked reserves from previous grants. It was stated that a ban on evictions during the pandemic had led to a decrease in demand in one respect, though there had been other increases, and when the ban came to an end a further rise was being planned for.

APPENDIX to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Minutes of 26 January 2021

15. It was noted that there had been an increase in volume of recyclable materials collected from curb side collection during the pandemic, and a reduction in the value of the materials. In response it was stated that prices fluctuated quite widely which made firm estimation of future costs difficult, and also that with Household Recycling Centres closed for much of the year there had been lower collection at those sites.
16. Questions were raised in relation to forecasted impacts in relation to behavioural changes in areas such as leisure and libraries, and whether this was expected to be temporary or permanent behavioural changes. It was explained that estimates had been calculated looking at the impacts of the past year when the services had been in operation, the impact of income loss schemes, and estimations of how long social distancing measures would impact the services.

Health Select Committee

17. The Risk Assessment Balance of the General Fund Reserve was queried, including the estimated cost of organising a new provider to carry out elements of the adult social care service should a large contractor go into administration, and the likelihood of that occurring.
18. It was stated in reply that the budget recognised key financial risks and that the social care market did include a risk of contractors and/or care homes going into administration/liquidation, assessed in the report as 10%. The £20.000m assessment of the potential cost to continue providing the statutory service was a combination of estimates for provision of the service and risks, and the information was factored into work of the council's Commissioning services.
19. In relation to the potential risk of a reduction in the level of income received, it was stated that the council had not previously operated gross payments to care providers and client debt recovery, which was reflected by a higher risk estimate, which is expected to reduce as the process is operated over time. Risks would also be evaluated at least annually.
20. It was stated that Children and Mental Health Services including Thrive hubs were funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group with limited amounts provided by the council, and there had been an impact for some schools as the funding was more evenly distributed.

Other

21. The Cabinet Member for Finance had provided details of additional reserve funds established during 2020/21 in response to the pandemic. In response to queries it was confirmed that the Latent Demand Reserve of £4.958m, created from the underspend across the council in some services, did not have any elements ringfenced for a particular service. Cabinet would determine on evidence-based metrics how to adjust to the level of demand as the year progressed and utilise the fund.
22. Some Members felt that further time may be needed to fully scrutinise the budget, though the Leader noted that the budget papers had been published at an earlier or

APPENDIX to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Minutes of 26 January 2021
the same point as in previous budget cycles. It was agreed that further questions or meetings may take place as appropriate.

23. Details were sought in relation to estimates of inflation assumptions used within the budget, and it was confirmed that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) forecast by the Bank of England was used as the measure for determining inflation uplifts.

Conclusion

24. To note the Financial Plan Update 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021-26 and to refer the comments of the Committee and the report of the Financial Planning Task Group to Cabinet and Full Council for consideration on 2nd and 26th February 2021 respectively.
25. To support ongoing scrutiny investigation of the budget, including the Financial Planning Task Group's continued focus on monitoring delivery of the budget and the development of the budget for 2022-23.

Councillor Graham Wright

Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Report Author: Kieran Elliott, Senior Democratic Services Officer, 01225 718504,
kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

27 January 2021

Annex – Report of the Financial Planning Task Group for 20 January 2020

**APPENDIX to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Minutes of 26 January 2021
Wiltshire Council**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - Annex

26 January 2021

Report of the Financial Planning Task Group:

Wiltshire Council Financial Plan Update 2021/22 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25

1. The Task Group met with the following guests on 20 January 2021 to discuss the reports:

Cllr Philip Whitehead	Leader of the Council
Cllr Pauline Church	Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment
Andy Brown	Interim Corporate Director Resources (S151 Officer)
Lizzie Watkin	Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Leanne Sykes	Head of Finance Growth Investment & Place

Observing:

Cllr Graham Wright	Chairman, OS Management Committee
Cllr Alan Hill	Vice-Chairman, OS Management Committee
Cllr Jon Hubbard	Chairman, Children's Select Committee
Cllr Chuck Berry	Chairman, Health Select Committee

2. Due to the limited time available, some scrutiny of all of the budget papers has not been possible in advance of OS Management Committee's meeting.
3. However, below are the key issues raised by the Financial Planning Task Group on 20 January 2021 and the responses provided.

Issue (page and paragraphs numbers refer to the Budget Report)	Further information / Comments
Forecast Collection Fund (Council Tax & Business Rates) Balances (para 66-71)	There is a statutory duty to forecast any Council Tax deficit at the end of the financial year. The assumed deficit has reduced since Q2 to £3.75m. Growth (new build figures) estimates 2020/21 have been revised. Officers are confident that the majority of Council Tax will be recovered. From 2022/23 council should see a return to previous levels.

APPENDIX to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Minutes of 26 January 2021

	<p>Business rates are an area of uncertainty, though the 2020/21 deficit is now forecast as £0.045m. It is difficult to assess the overall impact of COVID-19 as there has been limited interaction with businesses in 2020/21. Significant business reliefs and rate holidays may have masked the effects of the pandemic. Any growth in income is unpredictable after 1 April 2021. Uncertainty will begin to be resolved with support from the Government and an overall economic recovery. The council will have a clearer indication of the situation at the end of May 2021.</p> <p>Government has mandated that all councils spread their Council Tax and Business Rate deficit over 3 years. Funds have been set aside to deal with the deficit.</p>
<p>Lower tier services grant (para 41)</p>	<p>This is a new non-ringfenced grant believed to be replacing the local services support grant. Further details are awaited from Government.</p>
<p>Adult social care (para 77-78)</p>	<p>The growth in adult social care funding is part funded by the adult social care levy (£8.522m). There is growth in the budget (£8.6m) to cover forecast demand. Should latent demand exceed the adult social care budget the new latent demand reserve can be drawn upon. Demand will be reviewed regularly.</p>
<p>Children’s Services (para 97-98)</p>	<p>The growth in this budget is driven by increasing numbers of children and young people with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) as well as requirement to provide school transport for those with EHCP.</p> <p>Latent demand has been provided for in the increased reserves held against Assessed Financial Risk (see table at para 122)</p>
<p>Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25 (para 127 and table)</p>	<p>There is a challenge ahead in terms of efficiencies and savings with significant budget gaps forecast from 2022/23 (£45.512m). The projected deficit figures reflect the current position without any assumptions built in, therefore the position is likely to change. For example, the council is awaiting the outcome of the fair funding review, which is expected to have an impact upon the deficit, as well as the anticipated White Paper on adult social care reform.</p>
<p>Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (para 160)</p>	<p>There is a deficit reserve (£19.933m) in the DSG due to pressures on the high needs block (HNB). Funding has not kept pace with demand and the</p>

APPENDIX to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Minutes of 26 January 2021

	<p>council has been lobbying Government about this situation. There is a management plan at Appendix 12 (to be signed off by SEN Board and Schools Forum on 21 January 2021) to mitigate that deficit.</p>
<p>Detail by service savings (Appendix 6)</p>	<p>Many planned savings in the 2020/21 budget could not be realised due to the pandemic. The council will be looking at future savings going into recovery.</p> <p>Some savings from 2019-20 will still need to be delivered as there continues to be financial challenges and a need to deliver efficiencies. For example, £0.2m identified under Corporate Directors and Service Devolution was a procurement saving, which is now a procurement target for 2021/22.</p>
<p>General Fund Reserve – Risk Assessed Balance (Appendix 7)</p>	<p>It is the first time that ‘% likelihood of risk’ has been calculated against the General Fund Reserve. These are the assessments of the Interim Corporate Director Resources. They identify risks unique to Wiltshire against the levels of reserves. Higher percentages relate to higher uncertainty and likelihood e.g. in Adult Social Care.</p> <p>Using a comparison with 2019/20 might not have been helpful as 2020/21 is such an atypical budget year. That unusual situation is reflected in the risk assessments.</p> <p>The Financial Planning Task Group (FPTG) is pleased that the issue of reserves has been addressed and the new methodology of assessment is welcomed.</p>
<p>General – business grants</p>	<p>Staff have been deployed where needed to and where there is a priority.</p>
<p>General – budget data</p>	<p>This year’s budget has not been approached in a conventional way. A one year holding budget has allowed a more detailed interrogation and re-evaluation of the figures.</p>

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group

Report author: Simon Bennett, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 718709

simon.bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

26 January 2021

Report of the Financial Planning Task Group:

Wiltshire Council Financial Plan Update 2021/22 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25

The Task Group met with the following guests on 20 January 2021 to discuss the reports:

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	<p>Business rates are an area of uncertainty, though the 2020/21 deficit is now forecast as £0.045m. It is difficult to assess the overall impact of COVID-19 as there has been limited interaction with businesses in 2020/21. Significant business reliefs and rate holidays may have masked the effects of the pandemic. Any growth in income is unpredictable after 1 April 2021. Uncertainty will begin to be resolved with support from the Government and an overall economic recovery. The council will have a clearer indication of the situation at the end of May 2021.</p> <p>Government has mandated that all councils spread their Council Tax and Business Rate deficit over 3 years. Funds have been set aside to deal with the deficit.</p>
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	as the anticipated White Paper on adult social care reform.
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General – business grants	Staff have been deployed where needed to and where there is a priority.
General – budget data	This year’s budget has not been approached in a conventional way. A one year holding budget has allowed a more detailed interrogation and re-evaluation of the figures.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Financial Planning Task Group

Report author:

Simon Bennett, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 718709

simon.bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 February 2021

Agenda Item 7 – Wiltshire Council Budget

Statement from Adrian Temple-Brown

**To Councillor Pauline Church Cabinet Member Finance, Procurement
and Commercial Investment**

Statement 1

In the [MTFD Document](#) Appendix 7, the Risk Weighted Impact table lists “Extreme Weather” as the second highest **risk**.

By combining data in the [Stonehenge Tunnel Environmental Statement \(Sec 14.6.8\)](#) with 30 years of hourly temperature records from [Meteoblue](#), I was shocked to see that the average annual temperature here in Wiltshire has increased by 1.69 degrees since 1960. Compare that to the Paris target of 1.5 degrees and you’ll see how far political rhetoric is from actual reality.

But temperature rise, wind and rain are *not* the biggest **Risks** to our complex society here in Wiltshire.

The bigger **risk** comes from mass human migration due to drought, flood and famine from North Africa and Southern Europe.

Current modelling suggests that for every 1 degree rise in global average temperature, a billion people will need to migrate to avoid starvation.

A cursory look at [the trajectory](#) of average annual global temperature rise shows that a 0.5 degree increase over the next 15 years is highly likely.

So what’s the **risk** to us here in Wiltshire when hundreds of millions of people begin to migrate north to Northern Europe ?

A quick Risk assessment is in order:

It’s fair to assume that the EU will continue to accept climate migrants and that Russia will not.

It’s fair to assume that when populations have to move due to climate change, not only do they need food in their new host country, but their home country will no longer export food.

If the UK **doesn't** accept a fair share of climate migrants, it will be excluded from global food markets.

If the UK **does** accept a fair share, our current complex society will buckle, then break, in trying to accommodate millions of migrants each year.

In a year *without* extreme weather events, the UK grows around 40% of its own food, so the biggest Climate **Risk** to us in Wiltshire is the inability to feed our population and the timescale is around 15 years.

Within and beyond the next 15 years, extreme weather events in the UK will become more intense and more frequent, lowering the yield from UK farming and increasing the **Risk** yet further.

I looked at the [Cabinet responses](#) to the first Climate emergency Task Group report and read through the MTFs report and I asked myself yet again,

How long are you, our Local Government leaders going to ignore the **Risks** associated with Climate change in favour of Economic Growth for Wiltshire?

It's not *just* that you have to plan, and spend to lower these **Risks**, you actually have to stop planning and stop spending on your hugely destructive projects.

[CO₂ and Temperature data](#) show that our political leaders have made no progress whatsoever on the most serious **Risk** to all Life on this planet – the changing climate. What will it take to wake you people up to the **Risks** you're running by keeping Economic Growth as your top priority?

To those of you in this Cabinet who *still* don't get the **Risks** we're facing, watch the BBC's A Perfect Planet series.

It takes around five hours to scratch the surface of what's wrong with our Climate and our Environment and what could be done about it.

The **risk** of losing all life on this planet is already extremely high.

Your capital expenditure plans, core policies and destructive projects increase climate and ecological damage and you still refuse to acknowledge it.

Your Personal values place Economic Growth higher than the *existential risk* to Life on Earth.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 February 2021

Agenda Item 14 – Update on Council's Response to the Climate Emergency

Additional Statement from Amy Davis

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism,
Housing and Communities**

Statement

My question related to the use of the word 'sustainable' to introduce the 'Future Chippenham Project' to the public for consultation. In addition, the word 'inevitable' was used to describe levels of predicted growth for Chippenham over the plan period, and to claim that the expansion is essential.

I continue to feel that the use of these words attempts to mislead and to greenwash what is, in any everyday sense of the word, an 'unsustainable' plan.

The community should not be expected to appreciate that your use of 'sustainable' in plan proposals invokes a nuanced concept, taken from the National Planning Framework, and I think it a further dishonesty to claim that it has been used purely in this light.

The proposed road and associated housing development in Chippenham, if we are honest with ourselves, constitutes **the opposite of** what is **generally considered** 'sustainable'.

Today I expect the Cabinet will endorse the update report on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency. But where is the full, honest, and unflinching appraisal, and rigorous governance needed to manage what is, I feel the need to stress here, an **existential emergency?**

I have been watching this closely over the last few years and observe interrelated and alarming barriers to an appropriate and effective Council response.

The appointed Task Group ticks one requirement of the Feb 2019 Climate Emergency motion, but the Executive seem content to avoid or minimise take-up of their recommendations, even when this makes no good sense. So how are we to proceed?

The key decision-makers and Head of Climate Change appear in public statements not to support or understand the need for the 2030 net zero goal, and therefore do not lead

on, or inspire others to embrace the bold vision and fast-paced change that is required. Addressing climate change and the biodiversity crisis still appear to be tagged-on considerations, secondary to a perceived greater emergency related to short-term economic drivers, which only deepen the problem and its many costs for all of us in the future.

I could go on.... but I would instead like to ask any members of the Cabinet who have yet to watch the David Attenborough film 'A Life on our Planet', which is available on Netflix, to watch it. The film neatly depicts the harrowing impacts the world, and we, can expect to suffer over forthcoming decades and leaves no room for doubt about what the nature of our response must be.

I have two children who are 13 and 10. None of us want this future and it is very frightening, but I do need to ask you to act on it with upmost integrity, courage, and urgency, as I believe is your duty to the young people of Wiltshire and the wider world.

Thank you.

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 February 2021

**Agenda Item 14 – Update on Council’s Response to the Climate
Emergency**

Statement and Questions from Bill Jarvis

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism,
Housing and Communities**

Statement 1

The journey for Wiltshire Council to grasp the scale of the problems of tackling carbon emissions, mitigating the inevitable impacts of change on local communities and delivering substantial sequestration to absorb emissions has been well meaning but slow. A lot slower than many of its peers.

However, progress is being made.

What is lacking still is a plan to deliver real and substantial change.

The measures being put in place by the Council to mitigate its own emissions will help demonstrate the Council as a local climate leader. However, by your own admission, that reduction is less than 1% of the total in the County.

And the Council itself makes a mockery of its own efforts by driving forward with large scale building and infrastructure plans, the emissions from which will, unfortunately, dwarf any savings made in their own push to net zero.

You might say, it’s not in our control, we’re required to build new homes, developers will shy away from building net zero homes with easy active travel routes to the County’s facilities; we have to widen/build roads to cope with the increased traffic. None of this is true.

Have you ever objected to a central government infrastructure scheme or edict to build on the basis that it will destroy any chance you might have to deliver a zero carbon County?

Have you ever objected on the basis that they are in conflict with Central Government targets to achieve their own 68% reduction in emissions by 2030?

You, quite rightly say, we should provide leadership in this task, but this only works if you are actually delivering carbon reduction, not massive increases through development.

The “**Update on Council's Response to the Climate Emergency**” contains a great deal of information and analysis of the problems we face. However, it remains short on action.

By the time a firm Climate Strategy and Delivery plan is tabled and hopefully agreed, it

will be 2022.

That will only leave 8 years to deliver the change.

Wiltshire Climate Strategy Discussion Document contains excellent analysis, and we look forward to proper debate on all the issues it contains, but the Council, in the end, must deliver.

The summaries in the Strategy Development looking at “**What does a climate resilient and carbon neutral council look like**” and “**What Wiltshire Council can do**”? are again well thought through conclusions.

Interesting it does not say “....look like in 2030...”, which would give us a clue as to ambition.

And, will the Council fully commit “doing” the many things proposed?

You are asking for input to the thinking there and I’m sure there will be many of us in Wiltshire happy to contribute. Let’s hope that it’s a genuine request and that proper engagement can take place.

Time is of the essence. We are already 2 years into the journey to 2030 zero carbon, with some good deeds and many fine words and analysis.

You all have done an amazing job during the pandemic.

You’ve worked out how to bend the rules to make things happen at speed. Why can’t you apply that thinking to the climate and ecological crisis.

The answers are already in your papers, if you really look.

Treat this as the emergency it is before it’s too late.

Question 1 (21-78)

Can you please re-confirm that you will continue to seek to deliver a carbon neutral County by 2030 or will you pull back from the Full Council’s commitments made in 2019?

Response:

As per the [minutes](#) of the Council meeting on 26 February 2019, the motion as adopted still stands:

1. Acknowledge that there is a ‘Climate Emergency’.
2. Seek to make the County of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030.
3. Requests and supports the work of Overview and Scrutiny to set up a task group of the Environment Select Committee to develop recommendations and a plan to achieve this pledge along with undertaking a carbon / renewables audit.
4. Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible.
5. Work with other local government authorities (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C.

6. Continue to work with partners in the private sector and civil society across the County and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans.
7. Report to Full Council on a six-monthly basis with the actions the Council is taking and will take to address this emergency and reporting these against the Carbon / Renewables Baseline audit.

Question 2 (21-79)

Can you advise the timescale you have for delivery of “**What Wiltshire Council can do**” already identified in the Climate Strategy document?

Response:

The Discussion document in Appendix 1 explains that delivery plans will be required in addition to a climate strategy (section 8.1). This does not mean that the council is waiting for a strategy and delivery plans to be in place before acting on climate change. The update report shows that significant progress has been made since the last update in July 2020 and that this is happening in parallel to the development of a strategy.

Both the strategy and delivery plans will be shaped by engagement and feedback, which cannot be rushed if they are to be meaningful. Timescales for the delivery plans will be developed in line with the priorities identified through consultation. The first delivery plan to be developed will for the council’s own footprint and we expect to have this draft plan by the end of 2021.

Question 2 (21-80)

Can you confirm that open debate will happen with communities regarding the Climate Strategy and Local Plan, giving local people a real say and not simply filling in the consultation online, for the information to be relegated to the bottom drawer on completion

Response:

The Local Plan is currently open for consultation and the Climate Strategy will be widely consulted on too. Recommendation 2 of the report is for the council to develop a Climate Engagement Plan, because to quote section 6 of the Discussion document: ‘It is crucial for the council to engage widely in order to be able to deliver on the climate agenda.’ A range of engagement methods will be used to seek feedback, and although face-to-face events may still be limited due to the pandemic we do want to encourage real discussion.

Question 2 (21-81)

Will you consider a Citizens Assembly to review key elements of the Climate Strategy and Local Plan development?

Response:

We have no plans to bring together a Citizens Assembly at this time.

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Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

2 February 2021

Agenda Item 17 – Procurement of Joint Venture Partner

Questions from Susan McGill

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

Question 1 (21-17)

Please would you state in detail the grounds for asserting that it is in the public interest to restrict access to information about the proposal to procure a Joint Venture Partner?

Response:

The independent professional advice concerning the viability of a Joint Venture process contains commercially sensitive information which if placed in the public domain would prejudice the Council in a procurement process.

Question 2 (21-18)

Will the Joint Venture Partner be part of a company limited by shares? Please state the reasons for your reply.

Response:

It is too early in the process to determine this.

Question 3 (21-19)

Is the Joint Venture Partner to be part of a temporary or permanent contractual arrangement with Wiltshire Council? Please state the reasons for your reply.

Response:

If a JV partner is procured there will be a contractual arrangement which is yet to be determined.

Question 4 (21-20)

Will the Joint Venture Partner be part of a limited liability partnership with Wiltshire Council? Please state the reasons for your reply.

Response:

That is a model that could be pursued but at this stage it is too early in the process to determine this. Part of the process will be to identify and determine the best options for the Council.

Question 5 (21-21)

Will the Joint Venture Partner be part of a general or limited partnership with Wiltshire Council? Please state the reasons for your reply.

Response:

As above

Question 6 (21-22)

Please would you describe the arrangements that Wiltshire Council has put in place before procurement of a Joint Venture Partner...

a) to safeguard public assets

Response:

The Council has obtained independent professional advice and will commission professional advice and support for the procurement process.

b) to prevent strategy 'creep' from ill-defined objectives that are not mutually understood

Response:

As above

c) to specify the corporate identity of the joint Venture Partnership

Response:

As above

d) to protect Wiltshire Council from joint and several liability

Response:

As above

e) to ensure full fiscal transparency

Response:

As above

f) to ensure open reporting and transparent access to information about financial commitments by Wiltshire Council

Response:

As above

g) to ensure full compliance by Wiltshire Council with relevant legislation

Response:

As above

- h) to protect Wiltshire Council from liability resulting from third party contracts.

Response:

As above

Update – 10 June 2021

In addition to the above questions, a number of further questions were submitted on 26 May 2021, as detailed below, and a further response was supplied, also detailed below:

Questions:

1. Please would you state in detail the grounds for asserting that it is in the public interest to restrict access to information about the proposal to procure a Joint Venture Partner?
2. Will the Joint Venture Partner be part of a company limited by shares? Please state the reasons for your reply.
3. Is the Joint Venture Partner to be part of a temporary or permanent contractual arrangement with Wiltshire Council? Please state the reasons for your reply.
4. Will the Joint Venture Partner be part of a limited liability partnership with Wiltshire Council? Please state the reasons for your reply.
5. Will the Joint Venture Partner be part of a general or limited partnership with Wiltshire Council? Please state the reasons for your reply.
6. Please would you describe the arrangements that Wiltshire Council has put in place before procurement of a Joint Venture Partner...
 - to safeguard public assets
 - to prevent strategy 'creep' from ill-defined objectives that are not mutually understood
 - to specify the corporate identity of the joint Venture Partnership
 - to protect Wiltshire Council from joint and several liability
 - to ensure full fiscal transparency
 - to ensure open reporting and transparent access to information about financial commitments by Wiltshire Council
 - to ensure full compliance by Wiltshire Council with relevant legislation
 - to protect Wiltshire Council from liability resulting from third party contracts.

Response:

The Council has appointed commercial advisers to provide professional advice concerning the viability, and structure of the potential joint venture and the procurement of a partner. It is the intention to report that advice to the Cabinet for their consideration at the appropriate time. As is always the case the Council will not publish in the open agenda information that would be prejudicial to the Council's commercial interests.

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