

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**17<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

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## **Public Participation**

**Question from Mr Michael Sprules, - Chairperson RADAR  
(Residents Against Development Affecting Recreational Land)**

**Item No. 6**

**Question : -**

**Open Season for Open Spaces in Chippenham (Approval of the Pre-Submission Draft Wiltshire Core Strategy and Arrangements for Formal Consultation)**

**Cabinet Members and attending Elected Members**

As many of you will be aware, the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011 saw the potential granting of permission, (Subject to the S106 Agreement), for the unwanted loss of the Westinghouse Sports and Recreation Ground, in favour of Housing.

During my visits to Cabinet, over the past year or so, I have tried to express my "Concerns" that, a decision, on Westinghouse Sports Ground, prior to the submission of the Draft Core Strategy for adoption, could send a clear signal to developers that "Open Space at Chippenham is unwanted and, indeed, no longer necessary", which would be potentially disastrous, not only for Chippenham, but for Wiltshire as a whole !

It is with deep regret that I have to inform Cabinet that this "potentially disastrous Signal" has been "Received and Understood" by a number of developers. I have already received notification of a proposed development for four dwellings on "Open Space" at Frogwell Park ! I am sure that this is only the start of things to come at Chippenham.

Taking my concerns into consideration, my question to Cabinet is :

Whilst I am aware that Cabinet can in no way comment on an individual site, how are Cabinet able to give an assurance that the Draft Core Strategy is able to withstand scrutiny if developers have been sent the "Signal" that there is no need to wait for a formal Adoption of the Core Strategy and that "Open Space" at Chippenham is neither wanted or, indeed, necessary ?

May I, once again, thank Cabinet Members and, indeed, Elected Members for allowing me to ask this question.

## **Response**

The Council will be publishing for consultation what it considers to be a Sound Core Strategy. Once adopted, the Core Strategy will provide a robust planning framework for Wiltshire. Any future planning applications will have to be in accordance with policies set out in the Core Strategy.

Developers have not been sent the “Signal” that there is no need to wait for a formal adoption of the Core Strategy in Wiltshire. Unfortunately, Wiltshire Council is unable to prevent speculative planning applications being submitted.

It is not the case that Wiltshire Council considers Open Space at Chippenham to be neither wanted or necessary. The key principles which underpin the proposed strategy for Wiltshire including Chippenham are set out at paragraph 1.2 of the draft Core Strategy, one of which refers to

*‘protecting and planning for the enhancement of the natural, historic and built environments, wherever possible, including maintaining, enhancing and expanding Wiltshire’s network of green infrastructure to support the health and wellbeing of communities.’*