



**Chippenham  
Town Council**

Improving  
the quality  
of town life

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30<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dear Mr Townsend

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2017 TO 2027**

Chippenham Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Wiltshire Council Business Plan 2017 to 2027. The council is currently working to produce its own strategic plan for Chippenham Town Council and will be engaging with the local community over the coming months.

As a council it continues to support and promote partnership working and welcomes the opportunity to be part of the discussion on future transfers of assets and devolvement of services. It also welcomes, in principle, the potential investment and improvements highlighted for the A350 and in and around the railway station.

However it is disappointing that Chippenham continues to be behind in the delivery of its campus or health and wellbeing hub and would like to see this made a higher priority.

The Town Council notes the possibility of increasing the hours of operation of the household recycling centres. As Chippenham is set to expand over the coming years the opportunity for an additional site for recycling would be welcome, as the site at Stanton St Quinton is busy and comes with frustrations of poor access and heavy traffic which deters people using it at its peak times.

Providing opportunities for employment and improvements to existing infrastructure for established businesses is most welcome. However there is no reference to any improvements to the well-established industrial estate of Bumpers Farm which contains a wide range of large and small businesses and yet continues to struggle with parking and access in and out of the site. This limits opportunities and so an additional access point from the A350 would enable it to achieve continued growth over the next few years and would increase employment in the local community, rather than employers having to look elsewhere to site their businesses.

Having considered the plan in detail the council has the further comments to make:

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## **GROWING THE ECONOMY**

There is no mention in the plan of supporting and integrating older people back into the work place, nor any reference of support to encourage mothers back to work. The emphasis is on younger people and providing them with opportunities. Consideration needs to be given to these 2 sectors of the population in order to achieve a diverse workforce.

It is understood that there will potentially be 3000 students and apprentices working out of the Dyson site at Hullavington. Chippenham wants to ensure that it is able to offer them a place for living, for leisure and for services.

## **HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT**

The Town Council believes that a strategic review of health care provision in Chippenham is needed, particularly in light of its growing population and the investment needed to support it.

The business plan states that housing development should take place in areas where it is needed. In which case, the town and parish councils need to have a bigger say on where development is placed. Please proactively engage with the Town Council at the earliest stages with respect to future housing development in town.

There is a significant reference to the return of military personnel from Germany over the coming years, but the development of the site at Lyneham is not mentioned. The council believes strongly that for a successful integration into the northern part of the county investment must be made, certainly in the road infrastructure and areas around the motorway and railway hub, which will see much more activity. This infrastructure is vital in order to move people around.

What exactly is the future building programme for Chippenham in relation to housing?

Can the document include a definition of affordable housing?

## **TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

There is a concern in Chippenham that the improvement to the railway station could be seen as an improvement of the town centre. The council accepts that the railway station needs investment but in Chippenham the two sites are separate. The council would like Wiltshire Council to invest in the town centre and to regenerate the town. Why is investment in Chippenham's town centre not mentioned in the plan? In particular for Chippenham there is the disappointment of the Bridge Centre that has become an eye-sore with no firm plans for either regeneration or development. There is also a concern that the Law Courts centre will be closed, but currently with no firm plans or vision for its future.



## **STRONG COMMUNITIES**

The Town Council is concerned by the ineffectiveness of the Community Area Transport Group in a town the size of Chippenham. The Group presently uses a lot of councillor and officer time for very little by way of achievement. The current level of funding needs to be increased to allow priorities to be taken forward and Chippenham needs to have a dedicated budget, separate from the surrounding villages.

The Town Council recognises that there needs to be more volunteers but does not know where they will come from.

The Town Council notes the reference to asset transfers and devolution of services. Chippenham, however, is very concerned that it is not listed as being in the first phase. It notes that the first phase consists of larger towns and some of the smaller towns. Chippenham is one of the largest towns in the County and needs to be in the first phase.

In relation to Neighbourhood Plans, Chippenham Town Council would like to work with Wiltshire Council to develop a plan, but to consider what other plans are available in order to achieve a similar outcome. It might be that a Neighbourhood Plan is not suitable for Chippenham but that some alternative plan can be developed to influence development, growth and opportunity.

Chippenham has a Masterplan that was produced in conjunction with Wiltshire Council which could form an ongoing reference document for the Town Council to build upon. The Town Council requests that reference is made to the Town Council taking on this Master Plan as a living document that could be used to articulate its aspirations for development of the town, and particularly the town centre. The plan emphasises Chippenham being a river town and the Town Council does not want to lose sight of the river being central to the town's regeneration.

## **SAFE COMMUNITIES**

Chippenham is proactive in this area and has achieved the status of Purple Flag. It would benefit from more support from Wiltshire Council to continue to retain this accolade.

Flooding is an issue for all areas and is set to become a serious issues in future years. Chippenham is vulnerable to flooding in and around the town centre and the Town Council would like to see a reference to climate change and increased flood risk being taken into account in its future strategic planning.

## **PERSONAL WELLBEING**

The council notes the reference to the campuses and community hubs in certain towns and would like to know why there is no mention of such developments, which are much needed, in Chippenham. Neither is there any mention of investment in sports and leisure provision (generally)



or investment in or upgrading of the Olympiad Leisure Centre (the only leisure centre in Chippenham). Please could Wiltshire Council inform us of its intention around the Olympiad?

## **PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE**

The plan does not clarify who is deemed to be vulnerable. It makes no reference to those who have autism. Chippenham has 3 wards (from the top 10 in Wiltshire) which are deemed to be areas of severe deprivation and more needs to be done to address this situation.

## **WORKING WITH PARTNERS AS AN INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE COUNCIL**

There is a lack of reference to the town and parish council sector as key partners, yet reference to them throughout the plan as working with Wiltshire Council. There is a lack of reference to Chippenham being one of the largest towns and the council would like this to be addressed. The Town Council also requests that opportunities for inclusion and consultation as a partner are developed.

## **ONE WILTSHIRE ESTATE**

The reinvestment of capital receipts elsewhere, rather than in the town where the money was generated, is a concern for Chippenham. Chippenham is a prominent county town, not merely defined by its parish boundary, as it provides services for so many from outside of the parish. Money needs to remain in the area in which it was generated, and not diluted and passed away. That money is needed for investment in infrastructure, roads, transport links and campus and leisure facilities. The town is aspirational and will only be able to deliver on these aspirations if there is money to support the infrastructure, to encourage growth, to create opportunities and to encourage people to migrate their homes and businesses to Chippenham.

Development of infrastructure must be considered and delivered before the development itself. This will encourage further investment and will make a success of development.

## **DELIVERING TOGETHER**

The Town Council is disappointed that the “delivering together” does not list the town and parish council sector as key partners when so much of the document refers to this sector. The Town Council, individually and collectively with other councils, is an important partner and wishes to be considered at such. The council is grateful for the opportunity to comment on this document, but notes that it was a request from the town council, and not an invitation from Wiltshire Council, to consult on this document that had resulted in this response. The council emphasises that it is an important partner and requests to be considered in future consultation and dialogue.



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The Town Council recognises that previously there has been a lack of investment in Chippenham, but moving forward the council requests that consideration is given to Chippenham Town Council as a key partner. It is inevitable that Chippenham will increase significantly and that the council will be a partner in asset transfers and it welcomes the opportunity to work with Wiltshire Council.

Chippenham has experience where previous developments and consultations have failed to deliver on infrastructure: The Pewsham development failed to generate an improved road network, and more recently the development of Cepen Park North and South left the development with no community assets or spirit. The Town Council wants to ensure that this is not repeated and wants to invest in all communities at the right time, with the right infrastructure and assets, in order to build a strong community identity. The Town Council wants to make sure that the communities are not sterile, that they are not transient and do not become areas for commuters only.

It appears that the general tone of the business plan is aimed at the rural parishes and remote communities and recognises less the role that the larger urban and more diverse communities play.

The Town Council notes that Baroness Scott has highlighted the need to have a vision of a strong community and this can only be achieved with investment.

On a final note, there is little reference to Climate Change. It is noted but there are no actions to address any concerns.

As stated earlier, we welcome the opportunity to share the council's comments with you and look forward to being part of the next stage of the process.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Sandie Webb

Leader of Chippenham Town Council