

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

3 November 2020

From Adrian Temple Brown

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council

Item 5 – Public Participation

The set of documents that has been released under Freedom of Information (or appeal) to date are available in the following public folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hJuQS9EmTVOG3nktKgnT-8iUzwujeo_E?usp=sharing

The Atkins document “*Chippenham Urban Expansion Environmental TAG Report Wiltshire Council 07-February 2018*”, listed as Appendix 33 of the HIF Bid has one single section related to the impact of Greenhouse Gas emissions from this WC Cabinet project, as follows:

4.3. Greenhouse gases

4.3.1. Assessment

The scheme will introduce a new source of greenhouse gas emissions from road transport. It may also serve to change journey distances due to traffic rerouting via the distributor road rather than through central Chippenham. The proposed scheme may also affect average vehicle speeds on existing and proposed routes.

Construction of the scheme would include additional embedded carbon emissions.

4.3.2. Impacts

The potential impact of the scheme on greenhouse gases is anticipated to be slight adverse.

Cabinet is aware that I would particularly like to spotlight the huge amount of environmental damage and the immense quantity of GHG emissions that will occur from the site preparation and construction associated with this 6.5million m² of countryside being turned into a housing and industrial estate. The above document considers GHG emissions from the extra vehicle journeys which this Countryside Expansion will bring in excruciating detail, but it does not consider the CO₂ emissions from it's construction in any detail at all.

In the concluding GHG “Impacts statement” presented by Atkins to Cabinet, the phrase “slight adverse” is

- a. not defined and is
- b. utterly meaningless when used in the context of the other words in the impact statement.

Significant emissions will occur from the following sources which are not detailed by Atkins in this document:

- CO₂ and CH₄ emissions from the removal and the compost of (incineration of) trees, shrubs, vegetation, insects and soil bio-matter prior to site clearance
- Inorganic Carbon CO₂ Soil emissions from site levelling
- Inorganic Carbon CO₂ Soil emissions from excavation of foundations
- CO₂ and NO_x emissions from all on-site construction equipment through the clearance, build and finishing phases
- CO₂ emissions from all personnel through the project and fuel for their transport to and from site during the project
- Carbon footprint of concrete and steel materials used in foundations and utility channels
- Carbon footprint of all construction materials for houses and industrial units built to current HMG planning regulation standards
- Carbon footprint of all construction materials for roads, pavements and street furniture
- Carbon footprint of all internal finishes for new houses and industrial units
- CO₂ and NO_x emissions from all transport of personnel and materials to and from the site through the duration of the project

The arguments that “cabinet is just following orders”, that “there is a housing crisis”, that “there is no money”, that “new houses will be sustainable”, that “we can’t we don’t have any detail” have all been repeatedly trotted out, but it is clear from the HIF application document that this development is about money and work and has no consideration for Emissions and Ecological destruction.

Since each cabinet member is individually responsible for driving this project forward by voting this project through either in public or in secret, each cabinet member really should be aware of the immense damage they are personally planning to do to the environment and to the atmosphere, NOW - at the outset of the project. The information which quantifies this damage in terms that cabinet members can understand is completely missing from the documentation set.

There is no WC Policy that forces WC Carbon and Ecological budgeting for building projects and Cabinet currently has no plan or intent to put such a policy in place. It is therefore unclear if the lack of detailed GHG emissions data in the documentation set is due to incompetence, ignorance or deliberate suppression.

Cabinet members cannot possibly balance the economic and social gain of this project against Climate Damage and Environmental Loss because you don’t have the key information to make a decision!

I often ask myself how long will you guys will string out doing nothing on the huge infrastructure projects, whilst fiddling around with the little green projects - despite having declared a Climate Emergency *18 months ago!*

So I have a few of questions for cabinet on this:

Question

1. Is Section 4.3 of Appendix 33 of the 1000s of pages associated with the HiF Bid the only place where CO₂, CH₄ and NO_x emissions are considered and an impact statement about GHG is made ?
2. If the answer to 1. Above is 'No', could you list all HIF-bid document references that consider GHG emissions – and release the [redacted] documents (or relevant sections), if required, so that the full detail and calculations which drive the 15-word impact assessment in “Section 4.3.2” can be reviewed by the public?
3. Considering the existing peaceful countryside *today* vs the proposed Chippenham Urban Expansion *when finished*, what is the reasonable worst case figure for the number of extra vehicle journeys in Wiltshire brought about by this project [document reference for this figure much appreciated]

Response

(Q submitted post deadline on 30/10/20)

A written response will be provided after the meeting.