

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

1 December 2020

From Steve Perry

**To Cllr Philip Whitehead – Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications; and
Cllr Toby Sturgis – Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property**

**Item 5 – Public Participation; and
Item 8 – Consultation to inform the Wiltshire Local Plan Review**

My questions relate to the proposed Public Consultation on the 'Distributor Road' that Wiltshire Council has successfully bid for £75M of HIF funding.

Question 1

Will the Consultation ask the public's opinion on whether or not the road is necessary, or will it assume that - as a given - and just consult on the choice of route, thereby making the building of the road a fait accompli, and the consultation just a box-ticking exercise?

Response

The consultation will focus on possible road routes. Whether or not the road is developed will be determined by the statutory planning process.

Question 2

Prior to the Consultation, will Wiltshire Council make public their risk assessment of their Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) with Homes England, as other Councils have done - such as Essex County Council in their Report title: Housing Infrastructure Fund – Contract for A120/A133 Link Road and Colchester Rapid Transit Development?

Essex CC has been very transparent in making all information available to the public, while Wiltshire Council seems to work vigorously *against* doing so, rejecting FOI applications on very dubious grounds, hiding such detail in 'Part 2' meetings, not having a recovery program in place for the HIF funding, and including land and plans that have already been rejected by HM Inspectors twice at EIP and which are not in the current Local Plan and have yet to be consulted on in the 'emerging' one.

Response

It is the Council's intention to publish the Grant determination agreement.

Question 3

Will the Council not review its position on their claimed (and misleading) statements that the proposed road will 'relieve traffic congestion in Chippenham', because they have provided no evidence at all that their claims are true - indeed a recent report by CPRE, "The end of the road? Challenging the road-building consensus - Learning from previous road schemes for a better future" suggests, using other reports and studies conducted from existing data, that the exact opposite may well be true?

Response

The Council will provide evidence to support the consultation process.