

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**29 November 2022**

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

##### **Questions from: Melanie Boyle**

**To: Cllr Richard Clewer - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing, Cllr Phil Alford - Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfer and Cllr Nick Botterill**

##### **Statement**

Barrow Farm Chippenham

Although this development for 230 has been refused several times it is now going to appeal as like many developments in towns and villages across Wiltshire they are using the lack of a five year land supply to develop land which was not allocated for housing and in this case was the last buffer zone between Chippenham and Langley Burrell.

##### **Question 1 (22-190)**

How many dwellings have been approved due to the lack of a 5 year land supply across Wiltshire? Broken down into the last 4 years?

##### **Response**

It is not possible to provide a definitive answer as to how many dwellings have been approved solely due to a lack of 5-year housing land supply. Planning decisions are complex and 5-year housing land supply is just one of the many considerations looked at when determining planning applications or appeals.

##### **Question 2 (22-191)**

How many dwellings would need to be added to the 5 year land supply to remove the developer tilted balance?

##### **Response**

The Council can currently demonstrate 4.7 years housing land supply. This is around 620 homes short of a 5-year housing land supply.

### Question 3 (22-192)

How can we have a lack of 5 year land supply when Wiltshire Council have delivered 140% of government housing allocations for the last 4 years?

#### Response

The main difference between the two is that:

- the five-year housing land supply measures the level of 'supply' that can be expected to come forward over a five-year period of time i.e. the number of homes that **will be** built; whereas
- the Housing Delivery Test measures the number of homes that **have been** built over a set three-year period.

### Question 4 (22-193)

When is the earliest the 5 year land supply can be updated to take away the developer advantage?

#### Response

We are currently working on updating the 5-year housing land supply position to a base date of 1 April 2022 and aiming to publish this as soon as possible early 2023.

### Question 5 (22-194)

Can the additional dwellings above shops such as Borough Parade Chippenham (owners are planning these dwellings) be included in the 5 year land supply to increase it?

#### Response

The 5-year housing land supply calculation includes an allowance for windfall housing sites which are not currently committed but may come forward in the future.

Future Chippenham

### Question 6 (22-195)

Why has work restarted on the archeology digs at South Chippenham when we were told work was on hold and no updates have been issued on Future Chippenham until the Cabinet meeting on 13 December?

#### Response

This is not work commissioned by Wiltshire Council.

**Question 7 (22-196)**

A recent article in the Wiltshire Times says that the South distributor road will not reduce traffic in the town centre as previously stated by Wiltshire Council, using the same consultants who made the claim it would reduce traffic in the town centre. Isn't this another example that there is too much doubt to do ahead with such a risky project with penalties?

**Response**

Wiltshire Council has provided access to the Council's Strategic Transport model to assess development transport impacts. This access includes the commissioning of the Council's term contractor Atkins to provide outputs from the model and no advice or decision making is given; all costs to the authority have been reimbursed. Access to the model is provided to all developers upon request subject to them meeting the Council's costs. Restricting access to the model for some parties would be considered prejudicial and would undermine the unfettered and unbiased 'Sustainability Appraisal' of sites proposed for the Local Plan review.

**Question 8 (22-197)**

What guarantees will Wiltshire Council give Chippenham residents that they are working in the best interests of our town? We see Cabinet Councillors (none supporting Chippenham) come and go but Chippenham is left with the scars of numerous bad decisions made by cabinet members that don't know the town and consultation results are ignored?

**Response**

The Council cannot fetter its discretion before due process is undertaken to arrive at decisions.

**Question 9 (22-198)**

Chippenham is already supplying it's share of houses:

1,000 houses just started at Rowden Brook

650 due to start at Rawlings Green

330 total at the old Westinghouse site only a small portion built so far

100 at the old ambulance site not started yet

60 more proposed at Hunters Moon

200 more being built at Hunters Moon

250 more being built at Birds Marsh

50 more proposed at Patterdown

72 in progress at Bluebells

100 retirement flats at the old college even though 40 retirement flats haven't sold for years at various locations and prices.

17 at Woodlands Road proposed

Have I missed any?

Where is the evidence that the above isn't enough for the next 3 years until policies change and we get eco housing? We can't get doctors appointments (can't even get through on the phone), pharmacies can't cope with demand, dentists cannot even take children on the NHS, over 100 sewage spills and as more concrete is laid and more houses built without separate sewage and surface water pipes and grey water recycling as government policies will not change until at least 2025 more sewage spills will happen to cope with demand.

### **Response**

The sites listed will contribute towards delivery of the housing requirement for Chippenham of 4,510 homes over the period 2006 to 2026, as set out in the Chippenham Housing Site Allocations Plan (adopted 2017). It is unlikely that all the homes on this list will be delivered by the end of the plan period and new windfall housing sites will continue to come forward for consideration at the town.

Further information about sites and housing delivery is provided in the council's published Housing Land Supply Statement.

The impact of development on infrastructure is taken into consideration as part of planning decisions about new housing.

### **Statement**

It is good to see UK:100 has joined the Better Planning Coalition. As Richard Clewer is Co-President of the UK100 will we see:

### **Question 10 (22-199)**

A change to the 140% delivery of government housing allocations in Wiltshire we have seen consistently over the last 4 years?

### **Response**

The figure referred to comes from the result of the Housing Delivery Test, which has been set by Government - see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-delivery-test>. As this forms part of national planning policy, it will ultimately be a matter for them to change this.

**Question 11 (22-200)**

Will the 5,000 houses added on to Government targets be removed?

**Response**

Following consultation early 2021 on the Local Plan Review, Cabinet in June 2021 committed to reviewing the proposed number of homes and distribution of growth for Wiltshire.

**Question 12 (22-201)**

Will the 5 year land supply be sorted out so Wiltshire is not at the mercy of developers?

**Response**

The 5-year housing land supply position will continue to be updated annually as required by national planning policy. Whether the government decides to change the 5-year housing land supply requirement is a matter for the Secretary of State.

**Question 13 (22-202)**

Will the HIF funding (£75m of tax payers money on top of the £12.9m already wasted on this project) be rejected and the public consultation results be listened to?

**Response**

This matter will be dealt with via a report to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 13 December 2022.

**Question 14 (22-203)**

It seems strange Wiltshire Council has currently refused to work with Action on Empty Homes and address the 3,813 empty homes in Wiltshire but they are part of the Better Planning Coalition?

**Response**

We are not aware that as a Local Authority we have refused to work with Action on Empty Home, but we have explained that writing to owners of empty homes is currently not considered a high priority due to the very limited results it brings. As per our previous response to Empty homes we can confirm that the number of empty homes in Wiltshire is approximately 1.5% of the total number of homes.

Approximately 360 (or 0.15% of all Wiltshire homes) are empty long term and this number has been reducing over time. Analysis of homes currently recorded as empty confirm that 75% have been empty for less than a year. Many of these are temporarily vacant whilst they are in the process of being sold or refurbished or are between lets with potential owners and tenants generally wanting to move in as soon as possible.

A general social media campaign is not an effective tool for targeting such a tiny proportion of the population. The council will be writing to long term empty homeowners to take a targeted approach to bringing these back into use, but this is not considered a high priority piece of work as previous results have been minimal. As previously explained, there are often complex reasons for properties remaining empty long term.

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#### Questions from: Margaret Willmot

**To: Cllr Dr Mark McClelland - Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding**

#### Statement

The Salisbury Transport Strategy refresh identified both Park Wall junction (A3094/A36) and Harnham Gyratory as being ‘key junctions with delay’ [STS, July 2018, para 2.18]. Highway schemes were identified to enhance capacity at both of these junctions – H01 (Harnham Gyratory) and H09 (Park Wall Junction).

The Section 106 agreement for planning permission 19/05824/OUT for housing on Netherhampton Road committed £1.551 million towards projects in the Salisbury Transport Strategy. Comments dated 24/6/2019 submitted by Wiltshire Council Highways on this planning application considered that Harnham Gyratory (H01) should be a top priority for this funding together with Exeter St roundabout (H02), Park Wall Junction (H09) and Netherhampton to Salisbury cycle improvements (PC09).

The development of housing on land north of Netherhampton Road (PL/2021/06594) has also been approved, with Highways England making the comment (9/8/2021) that they accepted that the measures identified within the Salisbury Transport Strategy would deliver the necessary mitigation to offset the impact of planned development in respect of A36 Park Wall junction and the A36 College roundabout.

However in August 2021 the consultation report on junction improvements revealed “*considerable doubt that the proposals would improve conditions for most users*”<sup>1</sup>. Subsequently in March 2022 Wiltshire Council announced that it had decided to “*..pause its Salisbury Junction Improvements project, which looks to improve Exeter Street Roundabout, Harnham Gyratory and Park Wall junction*”<sup>2</sup>. Despite this Wiltshire Council still proceeded to subsequently approve application PL/2021/06594, with the officer’s report suggesting that there would be no grounds

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<sup>1</sup> Salisbury Junction improvement Public Consultation p.3, see [https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/7021/Proposed-Salisbury-Junction-Improvements-Public-Consultation-Report/pdf/Proposed\\_Salisbury\\_Junction\\_Improvements\\_-\\_Public\\_Consultation\\_Report.pdf](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/7021/Proposed-Salisbury-Junction-Improvements-Public-Consultation-Report/pdf/Proposed_Salisbury_Junction_Improvements_-_Public_Consultation_Report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See Wiltshire Council press release 11/2/2022 <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/wiltshire-council-working-to-improve-a36-congestion>

to object on the basis of traffic increases **provided the proposed mitigation is implemented**<sup>3</sup> .

### **Question 1 (22-204)**

Did Wiltshire Council have an agreed, workable and fundable “proposed mitigation” for junctions including Harnham Gyratory and Park Wall when the officers report was written for the Strategic Planning meeting on October 5th 2022?

### **Response**

Following the ‘pause’ of the Major Road Network (MRN) funded Salisbury Junction Improvements project, a smaller scheme was sought initially from Wiltshire Council engineers. This smaller scheme was to be engineered to provide additional capacity at the junction and to accommodate the developments coming forward along Netherhampton Road in accordance with the Salisbury Transport Strategy. A concept design for the scheme was provided to the project team on the 12th August 2022. The scale of the scheme is designed to fit within the envelope of funding provided through S106 and additional funds available through Community Infrastructure Levy; the Salisbury junctions project was included in the CIL infrastructure list in December 2021, thereby providing funding for the ‘Local Contribution’ to the MRN scheme, or delivery costs for the smaller scheme.

### **Question 2 (22-205)**

Assuming this proposed mitigation had been agreed, could details, including plans, timeframes, indicative funding costs and sources for funding, be made available?

### **Response**

The concept design for the scheme is currently being assessed by Wiltshire Council’s term contractor Atkins. This concept stage will conclude in December 22, with detailed design and costs provided towards the end of 2023; the scheme will target a cost within the scope of S106 funding and additional CIL. A full consultation will be made upon the scheme as plans develop.

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<sup>3</sup> See Para 9.3 of report to 5/10/2022 Strategic Planning Committee, p.67 in report pack “Both Highways England and the Council’s Highways Engineer have therefore concluded that whilst traffic will increase as a result of this development, provided the proposed mitigation is implemented there would be no grounds for objection to the proposal on this basis.”



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**Questions from: Dr Gill Anlezark**

**To: Cllr Dr Mark McClelland - Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding**

#### **Question 1 (22-206)**

How many respondents were there to the individual documents in the recent consultation on the

- Wiltshire draft LCWIP ([opens new window](#))
- Active Travel Infrastructure Design Standards([opens new window](#))
- Active Travel parking standards([opens new window](#))
- Salisbury LCWIP summary ([opens new window](#))
- Salisbury draft LCWIP

#### **Response**

We received 82 responses on the Salisbury LCWIP and 135 responses to the Wiltshire LCWIP consultation. There were two specific responses made on the Infrastructure Design Standards and Parking Standards. However, most responders incorporated their comments on the design standards and parking standards within their response to the Wiltshire LCWIP and these have not been disaggregated.

#### **Question 2 (22-207)**

What is the process for

- (a) incorporating comments from the consultation into the above documents
- (b) adopting the documents
- (c) implementing adopted Plans

#### **Response**

The consultation comments are currently being collated and responses are being prepared. The documents will be amended where necessary and the final versions of the documents will be reviewed by the Active Travel Steering Group and the Director of Highways and Transport before a report is prepared for the Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding. The documents will be adopted as part of Wiltshire's fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

### **Question 3 (22-208)**

What funding is available for implementing the Plans?

#### **Response**

There are a number of sources of funding that could potentially be used to implement the LCWIPs including LTP integrated block funding, S106 developer contributions and grants from LHFIGs. In addition, we will be submitting bids to Active Travel England for funding from the Active Travel Fund (Tranche 4) when it is launched.

### **Question 4 (22-209)**

The draft LCWIPs for Trowbridge, Devizes and Chippenham identify strategic routes in a logical, easily understood manner whilst the Salisbury draft LCWIP is difficult to follow, complicated and not logically organised to identify strategic priorities. Why is the Salisbury Draft LCWIP so different?

#### **Response**

The Salisbury LCWIP was the council's first LCWIP and was developed in collaboration with the Department for Transport's consultants WSP to ensure that it followed the prescribed process and government guidelines. The LCWIP development process has evolved over time and the experience gained from the Salisbury LCWIP has shown that the process can be simplified and more focused. Future LCWIPs will follow the model used for the Chippenham, Trowbridge and Devizes LCWIPs.

### **Question 5 (22-210)**

How will the Plans assist implementing measures that promote the hierarchy of road users as specified by the Department for Transport and the Highway Code (pedestrians in particular children, older adults and disabled people, cyclists, horseriders and motorcyclists, i.e. the road users most at risk from road traffic)?

#### **Response**

The aim of LCWIPs is to plan the networks for walking and networks for cycling in order to provide the appropriate infrastructure for both modes and all users of the public highway. In so doing, the LCWIPs will promote the hierarchy of road users as set out in the Highway Code.

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Questions from: Dr Celia Beckett

To: **Cllr Phil Alford - Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfer and Cllr Nick Botterill - Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning**

#### Statement

EIR 202201054 (PS) - Trowbridge Local Review Plan

On the 24<sup>th</sup> October we made a request under Freedom of Information to Wiltshire Council to see the 3 baseline reports on archaeology, landscape and heritage completed for Lightwood Strategic the Master Developers, for the development of Sites 4 and 5 under the Trowbridge Local Review Plan. We understand that these reports were commissioned by Wiltshire Council to help formulate the Local Plan Review.

The request was refused on the 18<sup>th</sup> November for the following reasons, despite the Master Developers having previously offered to meet with us and share information.

- *Releasing the info would prejudice the company's financial position.*
- *Release of the information into the public domain will enable competitors to potentially unfairly compete or outbid the company we're using.*
- *There is a public interest in the requirement to preserve confidentiality between the contracting parties.*
  - *Adverse effect on the ability of the council to carry out the planning process if third parties become reluctant to engage in the process due to disclosure of confidential information.*
  - *The information was provided to the council on the understanding that it would remain confidential.*

We are not a competitor nor a contractor; we are a group acting in the interests of the local community under the auspices of Hilperton and Staverton Parish Councils. We are in the process of gathering evidence completing our own heritage and landscape reports and are happy to share these with Wiltshire Council. Our joint concern should be to protect the local environment. The information in the baseline

reports is evidential e.g. a bat survey, archaeological survey and we cannot understand how it would be unfairly used by another company. Part of the site in Staverton already has a comprehensive ecological report published online by Tyler Grange for L & G Estates which was available on your Local Plan Review website, how does this differ?

We will reapply and go through the complaint's procedure, suggesting that any sensitive information could be redacted, but we are concerned that this will cause unnecessary delay and feel that our efforts are being obstructed.

### **Question 1 (22-211)**

Why can we not receive this information now?

### **Response**

ny information provided in response to an Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) request is not a discrete disclosure of information to an individual or organisation. The release of information through EIR means that it is available to anyone who wishes to see it.

During the processing of the request, we were informed by Lightwood Strategic that they would consider the publication of the information as an actionable breach of confidence and would harm their commercial interest. In such circumstances, the information is exempt from publication.

The ecological report for L&G Estates was formally submitted to the council as part of the formal consultation process and as such been made available

### **Question 2 (22-212)**

If these reports were provided for Wiltshire Council was this commissioned and paid for by the Council using council tax receipts?

### **Response**

The reports were commissioned by Lightwood Strategic for their use. Lightwood Strategic chose to provide them to the council as part of their promotion of land through the Local Plan.

### **Question 3 (22-213)**

Finally, why do commercial interests take precedence over the interests of the local community in learning more about the development of our own area?

### **Response**

See response to Question 1.

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**Question from: Colin Gale**

**To: Cllr Nick Botterill - Cabinet Member for Finance,  
Development Management and Strategic Planning**

#### **Statement**

Allocation of Infrastructure Levy & Process for LHFIG to refer projects for CIL funding

At the Cabinet Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 Cabinet resolved:

- i. Approves the updating of the Infrastructure List to include:  
“Infrastructure projects identified through the Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Groups (LHFIG) that provide for pedestrian and cycle improvements”.
- ii) Approves the allocation of:
  - a) Subject to the approval of (i), up to £400,000 to the LHFIG programme for projects that relate to pedestrian and cycle improvements.

The Council Leader, Cllr Richard Clewer advised how this funding could help to link communities together and improve overall infrastructure links. After the meeting Cllr Clewer, Cllr J Kunkler (Chair Pewsey LHFIG) and Colin Gale discussed this change and Colin Gale advised how this could help to join both Upavon and Rushall together coupled with the new housing development, Whistledown at Upavon. A footpath/cycleway would help children from Upavon to get to Rushall Primary School.

Rushall PC submitted issue 10-22-8 ‘Rushall Elm Row Phase 3 – New footway from Manor Cottage to newly built footway from Whistledown farm’ dated 27/04/22. Unfortunately the Wiltshire Council Senior Highways Engineer who attends the Pewsey LHFIG does not know how to progress this issue and obtain access to this Infrastructure Levy funding. The new LHFIG Terms of Reference only deal with routine funding through the LHFIG budget and the application for substantive grant funding and does not identify how the LHFIG refers items for access to the ‘Infrastructure Levy’.

**Question 1 (22-214)**

Please can council clarify how the link between the LHFIG and the Infrastructure Levy is intended to work and what the process is so that this issue can be moved forward. Rushall did not receive any CIL or S106 money from the development at Whistledown. The primary school at Upavon has been closed for a number of years and the Upavon School site has now been identified for disposal by Wiltshire Council. The footway/cycleway link between Rushall and Upavon is an essential community infrastructure link which needs to be implemented now.

**Response**

Cabinet on 26 April 2022 approved the allocation of up to £400,000 of the council's Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Fund to the Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Group (LHFIG) programme for spending on projects that relate to pedestrian and cycle improvements.

This CIL funding can therefore be accessed through the normal LHFIG process.

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**Questions from: Susan McGill**

**To: Cllr Richard Clewer - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing and Cllr Nick Botterill - Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning**

#### **Statement**

On 23 November 2022, Wiltshire Council's website (<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/1653/Statement-of-accounts>) recorded that, as of 31 July 2022, the 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22 Statements of the Council's Accounts have not yet been approved and published.

#### **Question 1 (22-215)**

Please would the Leader of the Council provide detailed, unambiguous, accurate and specific reasons for this failure to publish Wiltshire Council's Statement of Accounts.

#### **Question 2 (22-216)**

Please would the Leader of the Council particularly identify the problems and issues that have arisen from previous audits, with reference to the distinct questions that prevent publication of the accounts.

#### **Question 3 (22-217)**

Please would the Leader of the Council detail the specific questions asked by the Council's auditors to which the Council has failed to provide satisfactory answers.

#### **Question 4 (22-218)**

Please would the Leader of the Council identify the specific risks arising from its failure to publish Statements of its Accounts that affect the Council's assets, its ability to service its outstanding loan repayments, its ability to service its other debts, and its ability to service commitments such as those to refugees, to children in care, or to vulnerable adults.

## **Response to Questions 22-215 – 22-218**

This issue is the responsibility of the Audit & Governance committee and has been reported on many occasions. Detailed reports have been presented and updates given by both council officers and external audit to this committee. The issue is not a simple one that can be explained easily but relates mainly to the value of assets recognised in technical financial terms, on a non-cash basis and does not affect the resources available to the council to deliver services, nor does it affect the reserves and funding available for service delivery now or in the future. It also does not affect the council's ability to either raised future debt, nor does it affect the councils ability to repay any liabilities including debt repayments as the issues are of a non-cash basis.

### **Question 5 (22-219)**

Please would the Leader of the Council provide an account, including a balance sheet, of the Council's use to date of the £75m grant awarded in 2019 by Homes England.

#### **Response**

This matter will be dealt with via a report to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 13 December 2022.

### **Question 6 (22-220)**

Please would the Leader of the Council describe in detail the current status of the Homes England 2019 grant.

#### **Response**

This matter will be dealt with via a report to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 13 December 2022.

### **Question 7 (22-221)**

Please would the Leader of the Council state whether the Council has any current liability to Homes England for monies the Council has already expended from its initial or subsequent drawdowns, or both.

#### **Response**

Any matter will be dealt with via a report to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 13 December 2022.



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#### **Questions from: Steve Perry**

**To: Cllr Richard Clewer - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing**

#### **Statement**

A front-page and inside article appeared in the Gazette & Herald in the November 17th edition, entitled 'Go east and slash congestion', and 'Study supports Eastern Distributor Road option'!

The article talks about the EDR and SDR as if they were always two separate schemes, when the reality is that they were both part of one scheme that was proposed by Wiltshire Council to gain HIF funding of £75M. The reduction of that original scheme to what is now called the SDR was by a decision of WC to remove the eastern section of the proposed road due to no local councils support and overwhelming public opposition, not least shown by the over 6,000 signatures on the 'Stop The Road' petition.

Yet, it seems that the developers calling themselves 'Chippenham Riverside', are claiming support from both Wiltshire Council and Atkins, arguing apparently irrefutable proof that the road is needed to ease congestion in the town of Chippenham. In the article, Chippenham Riverside claim that they commissioned a study from WC and Atkins - at a cost of £23,000 - to confirm which option was better for Chippenham's congestion. The unseen study appears flawed, anyway, as the planned southern link road does not channel traffic back into Chippenham, but on to the A350.

If WC (and Atkins) are in fact willing participants in this charade, then there is a very large democratic deficit to be addressed.

#### **Question 1 (22-222)**

Is it true that WC and Atkins were commissioned by Chippenham Riverside (or any other entity) to carry out a study of the road options? If not, will the Council demand a front-page retraction from the Gazette & Herald, along with an apology?

#### **Response**

Wiltshire Council has provided access to the Council's Strategic Transport model to assess development transport impacts. This access includes the commissioning of the Council's term contractor Atkins to provide outputs from the model and no advice or decision making is given; all costs to the authority have been reimbursed. Access to the model is provided to all developers upon request subject to them meeting the Council's costs. Restricting access to the model for some parties would be considered prejudicial and would undermine the unfettered and unbiased 'Sustainability Appraisal' of sites proposed for the Local Plan review.

### **Question 2 (22-223)**

The reported fee of £23,000 suggests a slight piece of work, not an intensive study of traffic, as would be required for evidencing such a scheme. Was any of this work financed by the Council's call-off contract with Atkins?

### **Response**

The fee, being £17,560+VAT, relates to the production of a modelling evidence base, upon which the promoter will develop a wider and more intensive assessment. All the Council's costs have been remunerated.

### **Question 3 (22-224)**

Is this study going to be published and open to public scrutiny? If not, what credibility does a study have that is commissioned by a developer, and shows that the developers land needs to be built on?

### **Response**

Wiltshire Council have no plans to publish the modelling outputs, however they may form part of publicly available submission to the Local Planning Authority, as made by the promoter. Upon submission, the full assessment will be scrutinised against current and emerging planning policy, including the Local Plan Review.

### **Question 4 (22-225)**

Assuming my source has got their facts right, would the Leader agree that the G&H has misrepresented the Council and misled its readers. The impression the article (advertorial?) gives, is that Wiltshire Council is behind this study and its implicit conclusion, thereby giving it completely unjustified credibility/ weight.

### **Response**

The article dated 14th November states: "*It [Chippenham Riverside] commissioned the study from the council and its highways consultant Atkins in October to confirm which option would better ease congestion*". This statement may be considered misleading, given that neither Atkins nor Wiltshire Council have been involved in any

study of the modelling outputs or comparison exercise. Wiltshire Council provided modelling outputs at the request and cost to Chippenham Riverside, with all assessment of model outputs carried out by the promoters appointed transport consultant.

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#### **Questions from: Dr Jimmy Walker**

**To: Cllr Richard Clewer - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing and Cllr Dr Mark McClelland - Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding**

#### **Statement**

There have been a number of issues recently in the Salisbury Journal relating to concerns at the lack of progress that you have been making in areas related to:

1. The failure to deliver improvements for the movements of motor vehicles through the gyratory, Exeter St roundabout and Park Wall.
2. Accessibility of motorists to the city
3. Withdrawal of blue badge holders for parking

In addition there are a number of decisions that you and Cllr Clewer have made that impact on all active travel road users that has resulted in Wiltshire Council being allocated £0.00 from Active Travel England.

Your inability to support the hierarchy of road users as detailed in the Highway is extremely disappointing, particularly with the removal of the experimental traffic regulation order in Laverstock that would have provided those children with a safer environment. All of our children are at risk outside our schools including your own.

As highlighted in the BBC Panorama documentary (<https://www.salisburyjournal.co.uk/news/19855896.wiltshire-police-commentbbc-panorama-highlights-epidemic-road-fatality/>) there is an 'epidemic of road incidents' in our county and Wiltshire council through its civil enforcement officers need to do more to protect road users.

It is with great sadness to read of yet another death of a cyclist, a young man, on the 7th November in Wiltshire.

Ruling out measures across the county such as School Streets, Quiet Streets and Liveable/Low Traffic Neighbourhoods heavily impacts on the most vulnerable in society as reflected not only in the Highway code but even the AA have recently called for more cycling infrastructure. The lack of allocation for active travel and the blocking of School Streets shows a blatant disregard for the health and safety of vulnerable road users and children.

### **Question 1 (22-226)**

As you are clearly not going to support LTN1/20 infrastructure, what are you going to do to improve safety for cyclists in Wiltshire and to prevent more cyclists from dying on our roads in Wiltshire?

### **Response**

The council has implemented LTN1/20 compliant schemes (e.g. Hilperton Road, Trowbridge) and will submit bids to Active Travel England's Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 to secure capital funding to deliver more LTN1/20 compliant walking and cycling schemes. The schemes will be identified from the council's LCWIPs and each scheme will be looked at on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the needs of all road users are adequately taken account of before proceeding.

### **Statement**

A recent count along Fisherton St, counted 22 illegally and irresponsibly parked cars that were impeding traffic flow and most of the loading bay and pavements in the market square are impeded by illegal parking including in the disabled bays - most of this is a daily occurrence.

It is a sad reflection in the WC policies that you are personally promoting that WC are not providing any benefits for any residents who use our roads including those that walk, cycle, scoot, use mobility aids, bus users or those that choose to drive and are faced with unnecessary queues and delays.

Access needs to and must be provided to and from our car parks in the city centre but why are the city centre streets allowed to be grid locked to the detriment of our traders whose income would be increased with increased footfall that you are denying the city.

### **Question 2 (22-227)**

What are you doing to decrease illegal and irresponsible parking in Salisbury city centre?

## **Response**

We continue to patrol all of Wiltshire to reduce the incidences of vehicles being parked in contravention of the Traffic Regulation Order.

### **Question 3 (22-228)**

What measure are being put in place to control drivers who illegally park on pavements (over double yellow lines), block roads by parking on double yellow lines, impede pedestrians and park in disabled bays (when they are not blue badge holders).

## **Response**

We continue to patrol all of Wiltshire to reduce the incidences of vehicles being parked in contravention of the Traffic Regulation Order.

### **Question 4 (22-229)**

How many fines/tickets have been issued in the last 12months to drivers in the:

- A. Market square
- B. On Laverstock Road
- C. Outside St. Marks school

## **Response**

We do not enforce Salisbury Market Place as this was an asset transfer to SCC however, we do enforce Blue Boar Row and issued 196 PCNs there.

Laverstock road 0 PCNs issued with 9 logged visits

Somerset Road 1 PCN issued with 33 visits logged.

Blue Boar Row has been included as this is the location where the requestor takes photos of vehicles parked for Twitter. The number of visits has also been included as with all school sites, drivers leave once we appear so very few PCNs are issued.

### **Question 5 (22-230)**

What progress has been made with the TRO for Laverstock (you previously cited this would be delivered in Nov/Dec) and when will this consultation take place to provide a safer environment for our children?

## **Response**

The formal TRO advert period is due to commence on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023. This date has been agreed with the Wiltshire Councillor and the Parish Council to avoid the consultation running over the Christmas and New Year period.

Implementation of the proposals of the ground, and the timescale for doing so, is dependent of the level of response received to the TRO consultation. As such until the consultation has been completed it is not possible to provide further detail in respect of this matter.

### **Question 6 (22-231)**

What progress has been made with the detailed parking strategy that WC were going to undertake in Salisbury?

### **Response**

The parking strategy needs to sit within the context of the wider Wiltshire LTP. While the council would have liked to progress a review of the LTP and parking strategy, unfortunately, the Department for Transport (DfT) has not yet issued its revised LTP guidance and Quantifiable Carbon Reduction guidance. Drafts of these were to have been issued by the DfT in June – we are now anticipating drafts by the end of 2022 and final guidance in early 2023.

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**29 November 2022**

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

##### **Questions from: Cllr Martin Smith**

**To: Cllr Richard Clewer - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing and Cllr Dr Mark McClelland - Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding**

##### **Statement**

###### **Air Quality in Wiltshire**

The recent highly publicised letter from the Leader of the Council to Bath and North East Somerset Council about the implementation of their low emission zone has raised some interesting issues around areas of poor air quality in Wiltshire.

I note that in 2017, the Conservative government directed the council in Bath to reduce levels of nitrogen dioxide in the city in the shortest possible time. It provided all of the funds to do this, and the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) is independently verifying all of the work being done.

Technical work showed that a charging zone for traffic is the only measure that can achieve compliance in the required time frame - effectively deterring the majority of higher emission vehicles from driving in the inner city area by charging them to drive into the zone.

I also note that BANES Council is doing what is needed to improve the quality of air for its citizens as you would expect a responsible council to do.

The data that BANES Council has collected on traffic movements suggest no increase in traffic towards Bradford and other towns in West Wiltshire.

By comparison, in Wiltshire, areas of Bradford on Avon, Calne, Devizes, Marlborough, Westbury and Salisbury are declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) or areas of significant pollution. Bradford and Westbury both received this designation in 2001!

The Wiltshire Council website refers to an Air Quality Action Plan put together in 2005. This action plan sought a by-pass for Westbury, whilst admitting this was something the then County Council and Government needed to sort out and fund. The solutions for Bradford suggested low emission zones, road user charging



(on the bridge) and encouraging more cycling and walking. The effectiveness of each was analysed but may well have changed over the years given technical developments.

The only reference to air quality in Wiltshire Council's update the climate emergency published on 11 October 2022 was as follows:

"To ensure air quality throughout the county can be monitored as effectively as possible, old monitoring stations will be replaced using community infrastructure funding."

### **Question 1 (22-232)**

What is the data on traffic movements in Wiltshire that has triggered the letter to BANES and how was it collected?

### **Response**

The recent letter to B&NES was triggered by B&NES' proposal to charge Euro 6 HGVs for entering their Clean Air Zone in Bath. B&NES Cabinet (10<sup>th</sup> November – item 7) contained a report recommending a consultation on varying the Bath CAZ Charging Order 2021 to introduce a charge for Euro VI diesel HGVs exceeding 12 tonnes (see [HERE](#)).

### **Question 2 (22-233)**

When is the data going to be published?

### **Response**

No detailed information on forecast impacts of such a change has been made available to date. The onus is on B&NES to produce forecast data to assess the implications of their proposal.

### **Question 3 (22-234)**

Have Cabinet revisited the 2005 plan for reducing air pollution in Bradford?

### **Response**

Actions to address air quality issues in Bradford on Avon are contained in the Council's Air quality Action Plan (AQAP) [AAction Planning \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/Action-Planning)

A revised version of the Air Quality Action Plan is currently in draft form and will be subject to public consultation early in 2023.

**Question 4 (22-235)**

When will the action plan for air pollution reduction, in all at the towns with declared AQMAs, be published, along with plans for consultations with the appropriate Area Boards and residents?

**Response**

The existing AQAP for Wiltshire was published in 2015. [Action Planning \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

A revised version of the Air Quality Action Plan is currently in draft form and will be subject to public consultation early in 2023.

**Question 5 (22-236)**

What assessment has been done on the air quality problems for Westbury in the light of the dualling of the A350 south of Chippenham (which will funnel increasing traffic volumes through Westbury) and when will that assessment be published?

**Response**

The Chippenham Bypass dualling is currently being designed and further air quality assessments will be included in the Full Business Case which is likely to be completed towards the end of next year.

**Question 6 (22-237)**

What recent communications has Wiltshire Council had with Government on air quality in Wiltshire and when will you publish those communications?

**Response**

The Council is required to submit an Air Quality Status Report to DEFRA each year. Copies of those reports can be found on the Council's website at [Air quality annual reports - Wiltshire Council](#)

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**29 November 2022**

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

**Questions from: Cllr Ian Thorn**

**To: Cllr Dr Mark McClelland - Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding**

#### **Question 1 (22-238)**

Do you agree with Wiltshire Council's statement on equality?

#### **Response**

Yes

#### **Question 2 (22-239)**

Was an equality analysis carried into the proposal to charge Blue Holders?

#### **Response**

Yes – Please see [Decision - HTW-17-22: Off Street Parking Traffic Regulation Orders for Wiltshire | Wiltshire Council](#)

#### **Question 3 (22-240)**

In making your decision, did you comply with the Equality Act 2010 and how?

#### **Response**

The Council reviewed the detailed guidance available from the Department for Transport – Inclusive Mobility which contains recommendations for Local Authorities in respect of off-street parking – and guidance for where blue badge holders are required to pay. This quotes “If Blue Badge holders are required to pay to park, *there should be signs that clearly state this. Preferably, there should be a variety of payment options available (such as contactless or pre-payment). However, if there is no alternative, then at least one ‘pay & display’ machine should be located near to the designated accessible spaces and be clearly visible from them.*”

Whilst there is no express provision dealing with the provision of parking under the *Equality Act 2010*, it is standard practice for the Council to evaluate any proposed change to ensure there is no discrimination on the basis of ‘protected characteristics’.

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in February 2022 detailing the Council's considerations of the potential impacts of the proposals on the 'protected characteristics'.

The Council's car parks are designed to be compliant with the equality's guidelines for parking bay design, location and layout. The revised charges proposals made no change to the layout of the Council's car parks. Any historic issues with access from the designated bays have been addressed and the Council had no known issues at the time of the decision.

With regard to payments the Council's Service meets the current guidance. The Council uses the MiPermit App Scheme, which allows payment for parking from any location and users to extend stays without having to go back to their car or car park. Every parking machine accepts cash. Contactless payments are currently being introduced across the county. All machines are specified to be DDA compliant. Machines are located near blue badge bays and exits/ entrances. The Council reviewed the location of all payment machines and has made temporary arrangements to ensure accessible to all. However, if there are any machine access issues brought to the attention of the Council reasonable adjustments will be made. More permanent arrangements are being implemented as part of a wider investment programme in 2024 with the parking machine replacement scheme.

For the introduction of the revised charges the council decided to introduce additional signage on charging and this remains in place. The council updated its Parking Website information to ensure all were informed. An extensive communication plan was produced. Consultation was undertaken at the time of the budget setting process and through the formal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process. All comments received were considered at those times. The comments captured from the TRO were published in the associated Cabinet Member report with officer considerations recorded and Member approval reasons.

The Council reviewed the time of stays, this was considered at the time of the EIA. Whilst not a deciding factor, the Council did consider other council actions, such as by BANES, where charges had been introduced and their actions in charging. Wiltshire Council's processes for charging blue badge holders the standard charge in 'off street' car parks, with no 'on-street charges' and that of BANES are identical, ensuring the harmonisation of processes between the two neighbouring authorities.

Considerations included the Council's location of blue badge bays and payment machines with the impact on the required time of stays. Wiltshire Council bays and machines are located at the most accessible points to city/town centre destinations. It was also a decision to continue the provision of parking on-street free of charge for blue badge holders, which usually are closer to destination points and this combined with the parking allowed on yellow lines and loading bays etc. ensures close access to destination points without a charge.

#### **Question 4 (22-241)**

What consideration did you give to the results of the consultation and how did the results affect your decision?

## **Response**

I considered and recognised that the Council must ensure that its parking arrangements must meet equality requirements.

The Decision - HTW-17-22: Off Street Parking Traffic Regulation Orders for Wiltshire | Wiltshire Council details the comments made and my considerations and conclusions.

The council, as a parking operator, has taken reasonable steps when introducing these charges to ensure that parking is available to blue badge holders and it fully complies with the Equalities Act and has made reasonable adjustments.

## **Question 5 (22-242)**

Will you agree to a review of this policy. It's impact on people with disabilities and the revenue it generates?

## **Response**

The Council has committed to maintaining the charges detailed in the Decision - HTW-17-22: Off Street Parking Traffic Regulation Orders for Wiltshire | Wiltshire Council for four years. With the considerable cost increases with maintaining its parking arrangements this is a major commitment. The Council will review all charges and undertake a further full statutory consultation exercise after that time.

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**29 November 2022**

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

**Questions from: Cllr David Vigar**

**To: Cllr Richard Clewer - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing**

#### **Question 1 (22-243)**

Other councils have raised the level of the £350 per month thank you payments made to hosts under the Homes for Ukraine programme. The aim is to encourage current hosts to continue and new ones to come forward. For example, Dorset is providing £250 extra per host as well as a winter payment of £1,000. Somerset is doubling payments to £700. Hampshire and Oxfordshire are increasing payments by £200 per month. Why is Wiltshire not doing this?

#### **Question 2 (22-244)**

Wiltshire Council has announced its intention to use the government funding provided for Ukrainian refugees to help secure homes for Ukrainians via the Stone Circle Housing Company “where host families can no longer provide a home for them and all other options have been explored”. Can the Leader give an indication of how many such purchases are envisaged? Is the likely total 1-10; 10-20; or more than 20?

#### **Question 3 (22-245)**

Regarding the purchases referred to above, are they intended only to provide an alternative to emergency accommodation for Ukrainians who become homeless? Or will they be offered to Ukrainians who are not becoming homeless as an alternative to hosting, rentals or purchase?

#### **Question 4 (22-246)**

At the last published count, Wiltshire had welcomed 944 Ukrainian guests. Once all of the government tariff payments of £10,500 per refugee have been paid, Wiltshire Council will have received more than £9.9 million from central Government to support those refugees. 341 other Ukrainians have been matched with sponsors, raising the prospect of a further £3.6m of tariff funding. The Council has stated that around £1.1m of the tariff funding has already been spent. Of the remaining funds of £8.8m and potentially £12.4m, can the Leader indicate how much might be spent by Stone Circle on buying property: less than £1m; £1-2m; £2-5m; or more than £5m?

#### **Question 5 (22-247)**

I welcome the Council's decisions to employ a caseworker to help Ukrainians into private sector accommodation, as well as its offers of deposit guarantees and a month's rent in advance in suitable cases. Will the Leader acknowledge that using the central Government tariff in such ways and others to support rentals, for example by paying advance rents or by subsidizing rent payments, would support many more refugees than using the same amount of funding to buy property to accommodate them? For example, £160,000 spent to buy a home could support a single household of three or four Ukrainians indefinitely, but the same £160,000 could support hundreds of refugees in the private rented sector, such as by paying 160 advance rents of £1,000 per month, or by offering 40 rent subsidies averaging £4,000 per annum to enable 40 refugee households to live independently for one year by making up the difference between what they can afford and the market rate?

### **Question 6 (22-248)**

The Council Leader has stated that: "We are going to use the government funding in an innovative way to purchase homes that can be used for Ukraine nationals now and for wider use into the future." If funding from the central Government tariff payments of £10,500 per Ukrainian is spent on buying homes that Stone Circle can hold indefinitely, does the Leader acknowledge that, assuming the refugees return home at some point, the purchases will ultimately benefit non-Ukrainians as well as Ukrainians, and Stone Circle will make a profit from them once cumulative rent income exceeds the purchase price and maintenance costs? The Government's guidance on the use of the tariff states that "The Government is providing funding at a rate of £10,500 per person to Councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities." Should money provided on that basis not be used to benefit Ukrainians and Ukrainians alone, and to benefit as many as possible, rather than to buy assets that will generate profits for Wiltshire Council's subsidiary, while only benefitting a minority of refugees?

### **Question 7 (22-249)**

One of the priorities of many Ukrainians is to maximise their income and build sustainable livelihoods by finding jobs or forming businesses that utilise the skills they have developed in Ukraine. Some have already done this and moved into private accommodation. Others have strong CVs and business experience but face barriers due to language and lack of UK credentials. Would the Council consider employing one or more caseworkers to work with Ukrainians to enable them to fulfil their economic potential and thus be able to live independently without, or with minimal, council or host support?

### **Response to Questions 22-243 to 22-249**

As you are aware Wiltshire Council is currently working through long term solutions to the challenges we face in supporting Ukrainian guests when their sponsorship arrangements end. We are aiming to find a solution which will ensure we are not simply delaying the problem but are able to resolve the issue by using our funding through Stone Circle (a subsidiary of Wiltshire Council that was set up to provide

quality affordable housing across Wiltshire.) to acquire housing to re home our Ukrainian residents going forward.

As a Council we currently do not offer thank you payments or other financial incentives but we are exploring these options.

In terms of support to find employment for Ukrainian guests we have a strong working relationship with DWP who attend our multi agency partnership meeting and we already work across the partnership to support local Hub's and the wider voluntary and community sector organisations to help them signpost guests in how to access the most appropriate support available to them. Wiltshire Council's Family and Community Learning (FaCL) are also running ESOL courses, at a variety of levels, which all have embedded employability skills. Our beginners ESOL course is delivered face-to-face and includes a final session with staff from the Wiltshire Council Building Bridges team to support the development of English language skills for work. Learners can then sign up for one-to-one support to get into work with the Building Bridges Development Officers. In conjunction with learners and partners, we have developed a new Higher ESOL online course which is aimed at supporting learners to access suitable employment at the level of their prior skills and qualifications; this course has a strong employability focus and supports learners to build the language skills they need for work. FaCL tutors provide individual information, advice and guidance to all learners; some learners have been able to progress directly from the support of their course into work, and some are signposted on to caseworker support such as with Building Bridges. Building Bridges have also been running group sessions for Ukrainian guests in some areas on topics such as CV writing.

Our case workers continue to provide a level of wrap around support to Ukrainian guests as per the guidelines and we have recently advertised for a specialist case worker to join our housing team, we continue to explore news ways of working and adapt our offer according to the needs of our guests and can share details around these options as they progress.

In terms of top-ups and tax implications, I haven't had any through yet – we have a meeting shortly so will check in then. Sarah, is this true for you too? I have not had anything official referencing top ups and there has been no update to the income tax exemption of payments made to sponsors paper [Income Tax and Corporation Tax exemption of payments made to sponsors - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612122/Income_Tax_and_Corporation_Tax_exemption_of_payments_made_to_sponsors_-_GOV.UK.pdf) However our DLUHC rep who attends our multi-agency meeting confirmed verbally that top ups would not be taxable and other local authorities, such as Plymouth who have recently increased their thank you payments by £150 a month (to those hosting 6 months+), have announced publicly... "The increase will also be funded by the Government Homes for Ukraine grant. Payments are tax-free and can be either a single long staying guest, or multiple groups." [Homes for Ukraine monthly 'Thank you' payment increased to £500 a month | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](https://plymouth.gov.uk/news/2022/05/24/homes-for-ukraine-monthly-thank-you-payment-increased-to-500-a-month/)



## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**29 November 2022**

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

##### **Questions from: Cllr Dr Nick Murry**

**To: Cllr Richard Clewer - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing, Cllr Nick Botterill - Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning and Cllr Dr Mark McClelland - Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding**

##### **Statement**

A recent front page newspaper article refers to a “Wiltshire Council traffic study”, which it claims a developer commissioned Wiltshire Council to carry out, giving the impression that the Council is behind its poorly evidenced conclusion that development to the East of Chippenham would reduce traffic congestion in the town, in spite of evidence to the contrary. (ref. Gazette and Herald Thurs. 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022 edition)

As we know, Wiltshire Council removed the East of Chippenham scheme from its future plans in 2020. A large majority of the town's residents objected to it in the last Local Plan consultation and the Town Council voted unanimously against it in the previous administration and then again (unanimously) in the Council that took office in 2021. It is, and remains, an environmentally destructive scheme that would increase commuting, car dependency, congestion and carbon emissions and bring little or no benefit to Chippenham.

##### **Question 1 (22-250)**

Would you therefore confirm that Wiltshire Council did not carry out this ‘traffic study’ and is not working with a developer to make a case for a previously rejected scheme, particularly at this sensitive stage in the Local Plan review when site options are being developed?

##### **Response**

[Answer as per 22-196] Wiltshire Council has provided access to the Council’s Strategic Transport model to assess development transport impacts. This access includes the commissioning of the Council’s term contractor Atkins to provide outputs from the model and no advice or decision making is given; all costs to the authority have been reimbursed. Access to the model is provided to all developers upon request subject to them meeting the Council’s costs. Restricting access to the model

for some parties would be considered prejudicial and would undermine the unfettered and unbiased 'Sustainability Appraisal' of sites proposed for the Local Plan review.

### **Question 2 (22-251)**

Would Cllr Clewer also comment on the potential conflict of interest in Wiltshire Council's consultants Atkins working with a developer to promote a scheme that Wiltshire Council has rejected, thereby seemingly undermining the Council's position?

### **Response**

Wiltshire Council's consultant Atkins have been engaged in providing an evidence base from Wiltshire's Strategic Transport Model and have not provided advice or decision making. The model is made available to those that request it and hence access to its use is non-prejudicial and unbiased. Restricting access to an individual party may result in the development of competing models, which may undermine the use and validity of the Wiltshire Strategic Transport Model, thereby undermining all decision making that rely upon it. Furthermore, the assessment of competing schemes within the same evidence base allows for comparable assessment of proposals, with direct confirmation of the better scheme.

### **Question 3 (22-252)**

I am sure Cllr Clewer will agree that the Climate Emergency should be at the top of all our agendas. In this regard, Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy acknowledges the importance of renewable energy generation, reforestation and sustainable, low-carbon food and farming systems as part of the solution.

What is the Council planning on its own farms and landholdings (including the County farms) to meet this ambition? Please would you provide information on the following:

- The total area of farms/ other landholdings (area/ ALC grade if known);
- The quantity of renewable energy currently generated on the above estate (area/ MWh);
- Plans for renewable energy generation on the above estate (area/ MWh)
- The amount of tree coverage on the estate (area);
- Plans for tree planting on the estate (area);
- Measures to improve sustainable farming practices on the estate;
- Any planned or anticipated purchase or sales of land and for what purpose (area/ location);
- Future plans for its County Farms, and in particular, Hardens Farm, near Chippenham.

### **Response**

These questions will be addressed as part of the Council's Environmental Mitigation Land Asset Management Framework which will be presented for consideration by Cabinet at its December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Statement**

Putting in place infrastructure for active travel is a key element in transitioning to more sustainable, low carbon transport system and a priority for Government and Wiltshire Council. The national Net Zero Strategy has the objective for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030.

In this regard, Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy states that "Quick progress is essential, so we will need to act across all areas of focus simultaneously - reducing trips, shifting to active travel, using public transport and zero carbon vehicles."

It states that the Council will: "Develop an active travel network that is inclusive, safe and enjoyable to use, meets the latest design guidance where feasible and embraces new modes such as e-bikes, non-standard cycles, e-scooters and cargo bikes."

As we know, Wiltshire Council received no funding under Tranche 3 of the Active Travel Scheme, whilst neighbouring authorities such as Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire were each awarded over £10 million. LCWIPs are now in place or close to being so for a number of the County's large settlements, including Salisbury, Trowbridge, Chippenham and Devizes. Tranche 4 funding is scheduled to be awarded in early 2024.

### **Question 4 (22-253)**

Would you please confirm that it is Wiltshire Council's intention to take full advantage of the available Government funding in bidding for active travel schemes in the county?

### **Response**

Yes, most certainly.

### **Question 5 (22-254)**

When might other large settlements such as Royal Wootton Bassett have their LCWIPs (without which applications for ATE funding are unlikely to succeed) prepared for their towns?

### **Response**

As set out in the draft Wiltshire LCWIP, the aim is to develop and publish LCWIPs for all of Wiltshire's 15 towns by 2025.

### **Question 6 (22-255)**

Would you also confirm that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding can legitimately be used for investing in active travel infrastructure in the county, where this has already happened and where there are plans for doing so going forward?

### **Response**

Yes, at Cabinet on 26 April 2022 the allocation of up to £400,000 of the council's Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Fund was made to the Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Group (LHFIG) programme for spending on projects that relate to pedestrian and cycle improvements. There are currently no further plans.

### **Question 7 (22-256)**

Finally, I would be grateful if you would outline the process for having CIL infrastructure funding requests considered for funding and how the decisions to allocate CIL around the County are made.

### **Response**

Across the county investment in infrastructure through use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can be both by the council through use of its Strategic CIL Fund and by the Parish and Town Councils through the CIL funding passed directly to them.

The funding that is allocated to Parish and Town Councils is 15% of CIL receipts generated in their area (capped at £100 per Council tax dwelling per annum in parish area) rising to 25% (uncapped) where neighbourhood plans have been made. How this is used locally is a matter for the councils in receipt of the funding.

For the council's Strategic CIL Fund, there is a set prioritisation process with Cabinet making the decision on the allocation of funds. Updates to the process were approved by Cabinet on [27 September 2021](#) (Item 64) and Appendix 1 of the report summarises this together with the allocation criteria, which are used to assess proposals.