

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

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

**Questions from: Andrew Nicholson**

**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 – Active Travel**

Given that government guidance LTN1/20 refers to area-wide treatments, like the Liveable Neighbourhood and Mini-Holland schemes in London, and states that reducing traffic flow to enable cycling in mixed traffic streets can be achieved through a range of measures involving area-wide treatments across a neighbourhood, and landscaped quiet street environment can be achieved through traffic management measures;

#### **Question 1 (22-257)**

Which of these transport and planning policies do you have in place, to prioritise Active Travel as a sensible, everyday option for short journeys?

- area-wide traffic management schemes that reallocate or filter road space in accordance with LTN1/20
- car parking restrictions (including controlled parking zones and removal of parking spaces)
- development of 15 or 20-minute neighbourhoods
- cargo or freight delivery using active travel modes

#### **Response**

The council's active travel policies will be developed as part of Wiltshire's fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4), and it is anticipated that these will be set out in an active travel strategy. All of the above schemes, along with many others, will be considered during the development of the strategy. These policies will be informed by Active Travel England's Rural Guidance which is expected in 2023.

#### **Question 2 (22-258)**

What and where are any specific Active Travel schemes you have delivered in the past 3 years are in the process of delivering, have consulted on or have plans to consult on, of these types? -

- Area-wide traffic management (e.g. modal filtering using ANPR, bollards, planters or similar)
- Restriction or reduction of car parking availability (e.g. controlled parking zones)

### **Response**

Active travel schemes will generally be identified through the council's LCWIPs and each scheme will be looked at on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the most appropriate facilities are delivered.

In Autumn 2020, the People Friendly Salisbury scheme was implemented which included modal filters. The scheme was suspended indefinitely at the end of November 2020 following feedback from the community and key stakeholders.

The LTN1/20 compliant Hilperton Road, Trowbridge scheme was implemented in May 2022 and involved parking restrictions as well as a segregated cycle facility.

### **Question 3 (22-259)**

What specific high quality schemes and/or reallocation of road space have you made public commitments to? - such as:

- enabling walking and cycling to school through the introduction of more 'school streets' - areas around schools where motor traffic is restricted at pick-up and drop-off times, during term-time
- introducing pedestrian and cycle zones - restricting access for motor vehicles at certain times to specific streets, or networks of streets
- 'modal filters' - closing roads to motor traffic, for example by using planters or large barriers
- changes to junction design to accommodate more cyclists - for example, low-level cycle signals, new forms of signal control such as 'hold the left turn' and two-stage turns.

### **Response**

As set out in Q1, it is envisaged that the council's active travel policies will be developed in an active travel strategy as part of LTP4. In the meantime, active travel schemes will be generated by the council's LCWIPs.

One specific example of a high quality scheme is the Hilperton Road, Trowbridge to Melksham (via Semington) scheme which provides a largely off-road walking and cycling route.

### **Question 4 (22-260)**

How many schemes are currently in preparation in your pipeline of Active Travel schemes?

**Response**

There are over fifty active travel schemes that are in various stages of development. Many more schemes will come forward from the emerging Chippenham, Trowbridge and Devizes LCWIPs.

**Statement – Livestock on Council Land**

Given that ruminants are animals that chew the cud, for example dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats, buffaloes and deer; they all produce methane from digesting their food; methane is a greenhouse gas, 85 times stronger per tonne than carbon dioxide (measured over 20 years); and the UK has committed to reducing its methane emissions by 1/3 by 2030 under the Global Methane Pledge;

**Question 5 (22-261)**

Do you keep either accurate or estimated ongoing records of the numbers of ruminant livestock currently kept on council-owned land?

**Response**

No – we do not hold this information.

**Question 6 (22-262)**

If so, can you give your latest total figures, preferably including the various categories of cattle?

**Response**

No – we do not hold this information.

**Question 7 (22-263)**

If not, what plans do you have to extend your GHG emissions monitoring to livestock methane?

**Response**

No current plans to do so.

**Question 8 (22-264)**

Do you support the UK's Global Methane Pledge commitment?

**Response**

Yes.

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

**Agenda Item 7 - Future Chippenham Update**

**Questions from: Mel Boyle**

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

**Statement – Future Chippenham**

The letter below from Michael Gove takes away many of the issues that were making council's such as Wiltshire over deliver housing by 140% for the last 4 years, including making housing targets advisory only, ceasing the 5 year land supply and taking previous good house building records into account going forward.

The document says there are no public health considerations, please can you consider the fact children cannot get NHS dentists, doctors surgeries cannot even answer the phone let alone supply appointments due to the excessive population growth in Chippenham over the last few years. Also both the RUH and Great Western hospitals, ambulances and police cannot cope with the above average population growth in Wiltshire, 8.4% in Wiltshire compared to 6.3% in England and Wales (Census results). The effects of destroying the countryside residents use to walk to Lacock, across farmland and back along the canal, without the need for cars? The mental and physical health benefits including green prescriptions are evidence based. Walking or cycling through a housing estate of 4,200 is not the same. The mental health issues for existing homes with increased flood risk due to mass concreting over the countryside with Rowden Brook 1,000 homes not yet built already increasing flooding likelihood without another 4.200 more houses in one area.

Thousands of houses are already in the process of being built/not yet started in Chippenham at Rowden Brook (1,000), Hunters Moon (450/511), Birds Marsh (750), Rawlings Green 650), Bluebells (72), the old ambulance site (100), the old college site (100), the old Westinghouse site (330) putting pressure on NHS dentists for children, doctors, sewage systems and schools within walking distance etc.



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
*Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing &  
Communities*  
*Minister for Intergovernmental Relations*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

To: all MPs

5 December 2022

Dear Colleague,

**LEVELLING UP & REGENERATION BILL: PLANNING AND LOCAL CONTROL IN ENGLAND**

I am writing to set out the further changes I will be making to the planning system, alongside the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. They will place local communities at the heart of the planning system.

I will set out the following approach in the upcoming National Planning Policy Framework prospectus, which will be put out for consultation by Christmas.

**COMMUNITY CONTROL**

First, while I will retain a method for calculating local housing need figures, I will consult on changes. I recognise that there is no truly 'objective' way of calculating how many homes are needed in an area, but I do believe that the plan-making process for housing has to *start* with a number. **This number should, however, be an advisory starting point, a guide that is not mandatory.** It will be up to local authorities, working with their communities, to determine how many homes can actually be built, taking into account what should be protected in each area - be that our precious Green Belt or national parks, the character of an area, or heritage assets. It will also be up to them to increase the proportion of affordable housing if they wish.

My changes will instruct the Planning Inspectorate that they should no longer override sensible local decision making, which is sensitive to and reflects local constraints and concerns. Overall this amounts to a rebalancing of the relationship between local councils and the Planning Inspectorate, and will give local communities a greater say in what is built in their neighbourhood. For example, when assessing a local plan, the following will have to be taken into account:

- **Genuine constraints:** local planning authorities will be able to plan for fewer houses if building is constrained by important factors such as national parks, heritage restrictions, and areas of high flood risk.
- **Green Belt:** further clarifying our approach to date in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Localism Act, we will be clear that local planning authorities are not expected to review the Green Belt to deliver housing. This is in line with commitments made by the Prime Minister in the Summer.
- **Character:** local authorities will not be expected to build developments at densities that would be wholly out of character with existing areas or which would lead to a significant change of character, for example, new blocks of high-rise flats which are entirely inappropriate in a low-rise neighbourhood. While more homes are needed in many existing urban areas, we must pursue 'gentle densities' as championed by the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. The Bill's provisions for mandatory design codes, which will have the same legal force as the local plan, will give authorities a powerful tool to guide the forms of development that communities wish to see.



We are committed to ensuring that the planning system creates more beautiful and sustainable buildings. Through the Bill we are seeking to introduce a duty for all local councils to produce a design code covering the same area as the local plan, which will set simple clear minimum standards on development in that area – such as height, form and density. This measure will empower communities, working with local councils, to have a say on what their area will look like by setting clear standards for new development. I will announce more details shortly about how the Office for Place – which will be established to champion beautiful, popular and enduring design – will support local authorities and communities in this important work. The input of colleagues in further developing this approach will be most welcome.

As the Prime Minister committed in the Summer, I will also review how the 'soundness' test for reviewing plans at examination is operated by the Planning Inspectorate. I will ensure that plans no longer have to be 'justified', meaning that there will be a lower bar for assessment, and authorities will no longer have to provide disproportionate amounts of evidence to argue their case.

**The effect of these changes will be to make absolutely clear that Local Housing Need should always be a starting point – but no more than that – and importantly, that areas will not be expected to meet this need where they are subject to genuine constraints.** Inspectors will therefore be required to take a more reasonable approach to authorities that have come forward with plans that take account of the concerns of the local community, by taking a more pragmatic approach at examination which fully reflects this updated policy. For those areas that would like to bring forward their own method for assessing housing needs, I will be clear on the exceptional circumstances under which they may do so, for example where a case can be made for unusual demographic and geographic factors. This will be made clear in an updated National Planning Policy Framework and guidance to the Planning Inspector.

## **LOCAL PLANS**

I want to change the system on the rolling five-year land supply. We will end the obligation on local authorities to maintain a rolling five-year supply of land for housing where their plans are up-to-date. Therefore for authorities with a local plan, or where authorities are benefitting from transitional arrangements, the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the 'tilted balance' will typically not apply in relation to issues affecting land supply. I also want to consult on dropping the requirement for a 20% buffer to be added for both plan making and decision making – which otherwise effectively means that local authorities need to identify six years of supply rather than five. In addition, I want to recognise that some areas have historically overdelivered on housing - but they are not rewarded for this. My plan will therefore allow local planning authorities to take this into account when preparing a new local plan, lowering the number of houses they need to plan for.

Places with existing plans will benefit from the changes above, as they will be free of five-year land supply obligations provided that plan is up to date. However, I am aware that those with local plans at an advanced stage of preparation will not benefit from these changes so I will also put in place transitional arrangements. Where authorities are well-advanced in producing a new plan, but the constraints which I have outlined mean that the amount of land to be released needs to be reassessed, I will give those places a two year period to revise their plan against the changes we propose and to get it adopted. And while they are doing this, we will also make sure that these places are less at risk from speculative development, by reducing the amount of land which they need to show is available on a rolling basis (from the current five years to four).

Communities will therefore have a much more powerful incentive to get involved in drawing up local plans. Only four-in-ten local authorities have up to date local plans and I am determined to change this. They can protect the important landscapes they cherish, direct homes to the places they want, and adopt design codes to secure the houses they want to see. Once a plan is in place, these changes mean that they will no longer be exposed to speculative developments on which they have less of a say.

I will increase community protections afforded by a neighbourhood plan against developer appeals – increasing those protections from two years to five years. The power of local and neighbourhood plans will be enhanced by the Bill; and this will be underpinned further through this commitment. Adopting a plan will be the best form of community action - and protection. Furthermore, we will clarify and consult on what areas we propose to be in scope of the new National Development Management Policies, and we will consult on each new Policy before it is brought forward by the Government. National Development Management Policies will also not constrain the ability of local areas to set policies on specific local issues.

To support the delivery of these, and other planning changes, we must ensure that planning departments are properly resourced through a national fee increase. We have announced our intention to increase fees, including doubling fees for retrospective application where breaches of planning have occurred, and we intend to consult on the detailed proposals for such increases in planning fees as soon as possible. In addition to increasing fees we intend to also consult on a new planning performance framework that will monitor local performance across a broader set of measures of planning service delivery, including planning enforcement.

### **BUILD OUT**

We need to hold developers to account so that desperately needed new homes are built, and I already have a significant package of measures in the Bill to do this, including public reporting and declining new planning applications on a site if developers are failing to build out. I will consult on two further measures:

- i) on allowing local planning authorities to refuse planning applications from developers who have built slowly in the past; and
- ii) on making sure that local authorities who permission land are not punished under the housing delivery test when it is developers who are not building.

To make sure we are doing all we can to address this important issue, I will also consult on a new approach to accelerating the speed at which permissions are built out, specifically on a new financial penalty. In the summer, the Prime Minister correctly highlighted the importance of tackling this issue. I believe this new package will do so.

### **CHARACTER OF A DEVELOPER**

I have heard and seen examples of how the planning system is undermined by irresponsible developers and landowners who persistently ignore planning rules and fail to deliver their legal commitments to the community. That is wrong, and to make it worse, this behaviour is then ignored if they seek planning permission again. I therefore propose to consult on the best way of addressing this issue, including looking at a similar approach to tackling the slow build out of permissions, where we will give local authorities the power to stop developers getting permissions.

### **BROWNFIELD FIRST**

The Government is investing to incentivise and enable brownfield development. Homes England, our housing delivery arm, is spending millions on acquiring sites in urban areas to regenerate for new housing. We are also allocating over £800m to mayoral and local authorities to unlock over 60,000 new homes on brownfield land, as part of our wider brownfield and infrastructure funding package.

We have already tilted the playing field in favour of brownfield and cities through our urban uplift and scrapped the 80/20 funding rule that focused investment in Greater London. This means we are instead investing more homes in the North and Midlands to relieve pressure on the South East.



We know urban regeneration is working. City centres that were depopulating in the 1990s are now seeing their populations rise. Manchester city centre, for example, has transformed with new homes and commercial spaces. We will continue to seek further development in towns and cities through our permitted development rights, which allow change from commercial to residential use. This route has provided over 82,000 housing units in the last six years.

But I know we need to do more, and we will do that.

The new Infrastructure Levy will be set locally by local planning authorities. They will be able to set different Levy rates in different areas, for example lower rates on brownfield over greenfield to increase the potential for brownfield development. That will allow them to reflect national policy, which delivers our brownfield first pledge by giving substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land.

As the Prime Minister committed to in the summer, we will also continue to get cities building more new houses, and stop them offloading their responsibilities to provide new housing onto neighbouring green fields by ending the so-called 'duty to co-operate' which has made it easier for urban authorities to impose their housing on suburban and rural communities. The Bill also enables gentle densification through Street Votes and design codes, allowing communities to consent to add storeys to existing dwellings with the increase in value going to local people.

I will consult to see what more we can do in national policy to support development on small sites particularly with respect to affordable housing and I will launch a review into identifying further measures that would prioritise the use of brownfield land. To help make the most of empty premises including those above shops, I am reducing the period after which a council tax premium can be charged so that we can make the most of the space we already have. I will also provide further protection in national policy for our important agricultural land used for food production, making it harder for developers to build on it.

## **THE HOUSING MARKET**

Housing plays a key role in the lives of all our constituents and buying a home is one of the most important decisions a family takes – but too many new homes are bought by overseas investors speculating on the housing market, who leave them empty or flip them to holiday rentals.

The Bill takes steps to address that, with council tax measures on empty homes, and we already have additional stamp duty rates on non-resident buyers.

Specifically, I intend to table an amendment at Commons Report to enable a registration scheme for short term lets in England, which would be discretionary for local authorities. The details of how the scheme would be administered will be consulted on before summer recess, with a view to the scheme being up and running as soon as possible thereafter. I will also consult on going further still and reviewing the Use Classes Order so that it enables places such as Devon, Cornwall, and the Lake District to better control changes of use to short term lets if they wish.

I have asked the Competition and Markets Authority to consider undertaking a market study. I believe the case is clear for them to take this forward, but respect their independence as they come to a decision.

No planning reforms will ever be perfect, but I judge that the Bill, alongside the broader policy changes that I am proposing above, will leave us with a significantly improved planning system than the status quo. These reforms will help to deliver enough of the right homes in the right places and will do that by promoting development that is beautiful, that comes with the right infrastructure, that is done democratically with local communities rather than to them, that protects and improves our environment, and that leaves us with better neighbourhoods than before.

A Written Ministerial Statement regarding all of these changes will be made in Parliament tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities  
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

**Question 1 (22-265)**

Is this the right time in a climate emergency with food shortages to destroy farmland for housing over Government allocations?

**Response**

The Local Plan Review, which is in preparation, is considering the level of new homes that need to be planned for across Wiltshire, including Chippenham. There is insufficient brownfield land to allow for all development needs to be met without the use of greenfield sites. In developing allocations for the draft plan, consideration is being given to the need to avoid the best and most versatile agricultural land.

The letter to all MPs from Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities refers to further changes to the planning system alongside the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

The detail of these changes including the number of homes for local plans is due to be set out in an upcoming National Planning Policy Framework prospectus, which is expected to be published by government for consultation by Christmas. We will review these and consider our response in due course.

**Question 2 (22-266)**

Is putting 20% of the housing for the whole of Wiltshire in Chippenham sustainable?

**Response**

The overall level of new homes for Wiltshire and its distribution (including to Chippenham) are being considered through the Local Plan Review. Plan preparation involves the use of sustainability appraisal as a tool to help understand the environmental impact of policies and allocations.

**Question 3 (22-267)**

We have had such a volatile couple of years with so much wasted money through the HIF and ongoing global issues that this doesn't seem the right time to enter into agreements with other land owners and spend more money?

**Response**

It is premature to say that the Council will enter into agreements with other landowners and any agreement would be subject to consideration by cabinet. At this time it is recommended Future Chippenham works with other landowners to seek to influence development that comes forward so that quality development with appropriate infrastructure is delivered in the South of Chippenham subject to the Local Plan review and the statutory planning process.

**Question 4 (22-268)**

The area to the South of Chippenham is part of a flood area, photos available if required. Currently Chippenham by the Weir floods to about 6 foot of water blocking access to the town centre, Reybridge and the main bridge through Lacock also already flood. With the area in between suggested for housing providing flood areas and habitat for migrating birds in winter. Wessex Water are in the process of setting up a 2 year pilot in Chippenham with money to invest and this site with public footpaths around the flood plains would be excellent for investment in natural solutions to protect against flooding and the need for sewage overflows so regularly and providing biodiversity habitats. Will Wiltshire Council consider working with Wessex Water on this?

### **Response**

Any development proposals that come forward subject to the Local Plan review will be subject to consultation with Wessex Water as a statutory consultee. Future Chippenham and other landowners will wish to work with Wessex Water to improve the prospects of allocations under the Local Plan review.

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

**Agenda Item 7 - Future Chippenham Update**

**Questions from: Owen Inskip**

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

**Statement – Future Chippenham**

From around 2016/2017 Wiltshire Council Leader, Jane Scott, (and subsequently Philip Whitehead) overtly promoted a long term infrastructure led plan to meet Chippenham's likely housing needs in a planned way for the next several decades, as is required by NPPF Clause 22. They had understandably heard enough of the ongoing arguments between the eastern and southern NIMBYs as why the option furthest from them was the right one for the town.

This culminated in the successful HIF bid for £75m to fund the entire road ie both the Eastern (EDR) and Southern (SDR) Distributor Roads which would unlock enough (mostly Council owned) land for c.7,500 homes over 30+ years and they asked us, and other landowners, to support them. We did as asked, as documented in the Memorandum of Understanding (attached) signed by both parties in March 2019. All the evidence has consistently shown that the eastern site and the accompanying EDR is the most sustainable and the most advantageous in terms of non-car connectivity with the town centre, railway station and Wiltshire College and generally in encouraging town centre footfall, such that Chippenham centre is more likely to survive and thrive.

This is underlined by a new piece of traffic modelling commissioned by Chippenham Riverside, but undertaken by the Wiltshire Council Highways team and their chosen consultants, Atkins at a cost of £21,000. We asked them to model the impact on town centre congestion in 2036 as a direct consequence of building 4,200 homes south of Pewsham with a SDR (ie south of the A4) or 4,200 homes east of Monkton Park and (the soon to be built) Rawlings Green with an EDR (ie north of the A4). They did this by modelling the impact on the four key town centre junctions and the results clearly demonstrate that the SDR will result in far greater congestion than the EDR. The results for the Little George junction by Hathaways retail park are particularly shocking showing an increase 598 cars passing through the junction per hour in the AM peak period and 584 in the PM, as a direct result of choosing the SDR instead of the EDR.

I believe that the Chippenham Chamber of Commerce intend to express their concern and the private sector partners on the Chippenham Town Centre Partnership Board will be doing likewise. I understand that all both bodies want is a proper understanding of the rationale behind WC's determination, as landowner, to



favour the south over the other reasonable alternatives. If this can be satisfactorily explained then I am sure that all parties (including me) will want to support the Council.

### **Question 1 (22-269)**

Planning for Wiltshire's Future ("Wiltshire 2026") published in 2009 described the opportunity to develop the east in combination with Rawlings Green and Birds Marsh as:- "it provides one main coherent urban extension to the east and north of Chippenham that would provide a mix of housing and employment, within close proximity of the town centre and the railway station. It would also enable the development of an eastern distributor road" (EDR). The first section at Birds Marsh is now built and open and the second section at Rawlings Green is consented with a signed section 106 Agreement. The main reason for delay has been protracted negotiations between the developer and WC over commercial terms allowing access over WC land but these are reaching a conclusion and covered under Proposal 8 in Agenda item 7.

What has changed, since the above report, that now leads WC, as landowner, to abandon the third section of this road (across the river and on to the A4 near Abbeyfield School and Stanley Park) and instead start from scratch on a SDR instead?

### **Response**

The decisions concerning the sites which will be favoured with allocations under the Local Plan Review will be made taking account of a number of factors by the Local Planning Authority and it is not appropriate to second guess or pre-empt the outcome of the Local Plan Review.

### **Question 2 (22-270)**

The Cabinet Briefing Paper for 21st July 2021 states in Clauses 1.4 and 4.7 that:- "Those sites that offer the greatest prospects of delivering sustainable new communities and support integration with existing settlements, encourage walking and cycling, and with ready access to local neighbourhood facilities should be favoured over less well connected alternatives. The rationale for Future Chippenham has always been developed around these principles and time will be given, as requested by members, to do the necessary work to achieve these key objectives". As stated above all the evidence points to the east as the most sustainable and connected option and you only need to look at a map to see how badly connected the south is. The east even has a pre-existing Sustrans route running through the heart of it with one branch following the river to the town centre and the other branch following the old Calne railway to the Station and Wiltshire College.

Referring explicitly to the aspirations within this WC statement, please explain clearly why WC as landowner, is so determined to favour a south only option?

### **Response**

As a landowner the Council believes that its land holdings to the South of Chippenham have the greatest prospects of deliverability and achieving quality masterplanned development within the next Local Plan period if promoted with adjoining landowners.

### **Question 3 (22-271)**

Wiltshire Council's own Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027 (Aug 2021) states:- "locating and designing new developments to reduce the need to travel and provide more opportunities for people to travel by zero or low carbon transport modes".

When comparing the southern option with the reasonable alternatives on offer (including the eastern option) how does WC, as landowner, and as a LA which has declared a Climate Emergency, explain its strong preference to develop to the south of Pewsham?

### **Response**

The Council as landowner working with other landowners to the South of Chippenham will need to convince the Local Planning Authority and the Government appointed Planning Inspector of the merits of their proposals addressing climate emergency considerations and plan requirements to achieve allocations of sites under the Local Plan review. It is premature to make those arguments at this time and in response to this question.

### **Question 4 (22-272)**

The Site Selection Report for Chippenham (Jan 2021) forming part of the LPR process shows a table of Sustainability Performance on page 30 which scores Site 1 (east) 1st with minus 2 and Site 2 (south) =4th with minus 5. Clause 60 states:- "Site 1 (east) is considered the most sustainable site when assessed against the 12 SA objectives and when compared against all other sites". Clause 67 on page 43 concludes:- "Site 1 will enable an EDR to be developed linking the A4 with the A350. Evidence suggests that this road is required to help tackle congestion in the town centre. Hence why it is a Place Shaping priority. However, Sites 2 and 3 are selected as well to ensure that further land is available to deliver enough land to meet housing and employment requirements, and if a SDR linking the A4 with the A350 at the Lackham roundabout is also required alongside an EDR".

With such a strong statement from the Council's LPA, and explicitly referencing sustainability, why is WC, as landowner, ignoring this and so determined to favour a south only option?

### **Response**

The Council as landowner working with other landowners to the South of Chippenham will need to convince the Local Planning Authority and the Government appointed Planning Inspector of the merits of their proposals addressing climate emergency considerations and plan requirements to achieve allocations of sites

under the Local Plan review. It is premature to make those arguments at this time and in response to this question.

### **Question 5 (22-273)**

The WC Transport and Accessibility Assessment (2015) states:- “An Eastern Link Road is therefore taken to be the key piece of Highway infrastructure that is required to unlock the development potential of the town”, and the Wiltshire Local Plan Transport Review 2021 repeated in the Baseline Report (2022) for the Town Centre Partnership Board states:- “the road network is congested with bottlenecks in and around the town centre. Previous work has shown that any meaningful growth would require a new EDR connecting the east the town to the A350 to the north”. It goes on to say that meaningful growth will “trigger the need for the new road. Without this access, it is expected there would be considerable congestion and delay through the town centre. The study shows that with the prospective LPR growth there would be significant increases in congestion. The CSAP identified a preferred arrangement would be for the EDR to follow a route from the A4 east of Pewsham to the A350 Malmesbury Road roundabout to the north of the town”. This is all backed up and confirmed by the latest traffic modelling referred to earlier. Specifically relating to town centre traffic congestion please will WC, as landowner, explain exactly why they think it is beneficial for the town to favour the south only option?

### **Response**

The Council as landowner working with other landowners to the South of Chippenham will need to convince the Local Planning Authority and the Government appointed Planning Inspector of the merits of their proposals addressing climate emergency considerations and plan requirements to achieve allocations of sites under the Local Plan review. It is premature to make those arguments at this time and in response to this question.

### **Question 6 (22-274)**

WC’s HIF Business Case clearly states:- “the preferred reduced funding option is the northern half of the distributor road (ie the EDR) between the A4 and the railway line boundary of the Rawlings Green/Summix site”. As a direct result of WC’s decision to throw away £75m of HIF funding we face not just a “reduced funding option” but a no funding option. Furthermore WC state in the Future Chippenham Update to Cabinet (para 60) that the SDR estimated costs now exceed £75m. The SDR is considerably longer and involves a more complicated river bridge, making it far more expensive to build than the EDR. Also the EDR is already partially completed (see above) and the estimated cost of the final section is below £40m.

Faced with these figures and mindful of the WC’s stated intentions in the HIF Business Case, why does WC, as landowner, believe that the southern option is the better option?

### **Response**

The Council is one of a number of landowners to the South of Chippenham who will share infrastructure costs should the Local Plan review conclude that allocations should be made to the South of Chippenham. Moreover, lack of a guaranteed timeline for the bridge over the railway line impacts on deliverability of an eastern section distributor road.

### **Question 7 (22-275)**

Para 33 of the Future Chippenham Update paper suggests that if WC continues with the current GDA then “land assembly and construction constraints” may create problems relating to the HIF timetable. Whilst we would strongly advocate that no such problems exist, the fact that WC are withdrawing from the GDA suggests that any HIF related timetable problems will also disappear. That removes WC’s only stated reason to favour the southern option in the first place.

So would WC, as landowner, explain exactly why they feel it is appropriate (having already lost c.£3m) to borrow a further £500,000 specifically in order to promote the case for southern option to the (supposedly independent) LPA through the LPR process, whilst ignoring the most sustainable, viable, and deliverable option to the east where WC also own 500+ acres and, which in collaboration with WC (see MoU attached) we had been strongly promoting together from 2016 to July 2021 when the Cabinet’s decision put a stop to it?

### **Response**

It is premature to conclude which sites around Chippenham will receive allocations under the Local Plan review. Subject to Cabinet’s consideration, Future Chippenham along with other landowners will provide arguments to promote its sites together but that will happen in due course as part of the Local Plan review.

### **Question 8 (22-276)**

It is highly likely that the Cabinet’s decision in July 2021 to favour the least sustainable and least viable option led to Homes England’s decision not to back the Council’s choice. As a direct consequence, in these times of extreme austerity for many people, the Cabinet has not only foregone £75m of much needed infrastructure grant but has squandered c.£12m of public money, albeit three quarters subsidized by central Government. Before spending another £500,000 of public money would it not be prudent to carry out a review of the reasonable alternative sites now that HIF timing constraints no longer apply? Indeed are not the Council under a legal obligation to treat all sites (and adjoining owners) equally and to explore all options such that they can be seen to optimise the return for the Council?

Therefore, why does the Option Appraisal outlined in paras 9 – 24 of the Future Chippenham Update paper not consider the other reasonable alternative sites that are known to be sustainable, available, deliverable, and viable?

### **Response**

The high-level option appraisal included in the report is based on the existing cabinet decision to focus on southern sites. This does not preclude other Council sites being considered in the future, or other sites around Chippenham being considered by the Local Planning Authority as part of the Local Plan review.



**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

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

**Questions from: Anne Henshaw**

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

**Question 1 (22-277)**

The draft Local Plan was consulted on with the public in the Spring of 2021, Reg 18 stage. It is going out of date and did not contain all the necessary evidence, was not based on a locally appropriate housing target supported by up to date data and provided no justification that the level of growth proposed was viable.

**Response**

See response to Question 2.

**Question 2 (22-278)**

Given the long delay now proposed and the considerable changes, politically, economically and socially, currently under way, do the Council propose the next round of consultations to contain a re-write of the previous SHLAA driven housing allocation sites and numbers and will these be subjected to a full and comprehensive set of alternatives and proposals? Is further engagement with communities and stakeholders to form a 'preferred option' envisaged? Will a new and different approach, reflecting the clear public feedback during the 2021 consultation, based on realistic household growth and environmental constraints, be developed?

**Response**

We are working towards producing a draft Plan with accompanying evidence for consultation commencing Q3 2023, rather than at the end of Q4 this year. This is set out in the report and will ensure the plan is underpinned by sound and robust evidence. In preparing the draft Plan we are taking into consideration the range of comments made through previous consultations and as agreed at Cabinet on 29 June 2021, have committed to reviewing the evidence on housing need for the county and its spatial distribution. Environmental constraints, alongside social and economic considerations are being looked at in identifying allocations for the draft Plan.

There will be no public consultation undertaken ahead of the full public consultation that will be undertaken on the draft Plan next year, which will clarify the options that have been considered in identifying site allocation proposals.

**Question 3 (22-279)**

The new timetable shows the final stages of the Plan progress taking place at the time of preparation for a General Election and potentially a new government. How will this affect the Plan creation?

**Response**

The date of the next general election has not yet been announced. Parliament could automatically dissolve on 17 December 2024, at which point a general election would take place shortly after or could be called sooner by the current Government.

We will need to consider any implications at the time an election is announced.

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

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

**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**

Scarlett McNally, a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at East Sussex Healthcare NHS who has to deal with the aftermath of road accidents recently published in The British Medical Journal (BMJ 2022: McNally: Prioritising the health of our children by reducing road traffic deaths) that 27, 450 people were killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads.

Sixteen vulnerable young children are killed or seriously injured in road crashes every week on their way to or from school.

I have been corresponding with you since March 2022 concerning the illegal parking endangering children outside St Marks School. Only recently there was a "near miss" when a driver had to make an emergency stop to prevent a child being killed or seriously injured.

As previously reported to you drivers are continuing to park on the zig zags and double yellow lines on a daily basis.

When parents and residents bring this to the attention of drivers they are faced with a torrent of verbal abuse from the drivers who take no responsibility for the children on their way to or from school.

Even the lollipop lady receives regular abuse and recently received a death threat from a driver.

As an employer and portfolio holder for Transport in Wiltshire you have a duty of care towards your employees and to the vulnerable children attending this school.

Yet despite this duty of care and the powers that you hold through your civil enforcements officers there was only 1 PCN issued on Somerset Road with 33 visits logged, despite the daily parking on the zig zags and double yellow lines.

**Question 1 (22-280)**

What additional measures are you going to take to tackle issues of dangerous parking outside of St. Marks school?

**Response**

The Council enforces the highway Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). A TRO is a legal order. It allows the Council to put temporary or permanent restrictions on the highway. These are enforced by a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO). Where there are relevant parking TROs, for example parking on double yellow lines in contravention of a TRO, when identified by a CEO a fine will be issued.

Immediate safety and obstruction issues are a police matter who will enforce these offences.

The Council's Parking Team will arrange for inspections of the area.

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

**Agenda Item 7 – Future Chippenham Update**

**Questions from: Nick Parry**

**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**

When the agenda for this meeting was published the details for agenda item 9 Future Chippenham were not published on time, given that your answers to many of the questions asked by the public at the previous meeting were:-

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

Therefore it would be expected that this report would be available for public scrutiny and comments prior to the 13th Dec meeting.

Of course this no show was to be expected given the amount of public monies being wasted on this, with little or no regard for the community where it impacts.

And now 18 hours later we have the report and what a mess. Still you want to plough on blindly destroying county farms, livelihoods and opportunities for young farmers building housing with little to no infrastructure and using yet more public money, £13 million to date with Wiltshire residents bearing in excess of £3 million.

Enough is enough not a penny more should be spent on this ill conceived Future Chippenham project that the majority of the Chippenham residents who responded to your consultation were opposed to and should have been abandoned in July 2021.

Option 1 is the only acceptable approach please note we as taxpayers do not expect our councillors to act as greedy land agents or for those employed by us the taxpayer to cosy up to said other greedy land agents listed on the report as landowners!

**Question 1 (22-281)**

Could you please clarify if this sum of £4.14million is at risk to council taxpayers, following your somewhat bizarre decision to proceed with a Southern route in July 2021 choosing to ignore all the feedback and rejection by Chippenham Town Council and the majority of the public to any of the Future Chippenham Plans. As



documented in both the consultation for Future Chippenham and the Local plan consultation carried out at the same time?

**Response**

As stated in the report the Council is at risk of abortive costs of £1.848m if at any point in time the Future Chippenham scheme does not proceed.

**Question 2 (22-282)**

Could you please clarify what the position is currently with Homes England and the GDA has notice been given?

**Response**

As stated in the report a mutually agreed exit from the GDA has been agreed with Homes England.

**Question 3 (22-283)**

Will the results of the plans and realistic costs of the Southern distributor road be available prior to the Local Plan consultation which is delayed until quarter 3 of 2023. and will this road be a condition of any development?

**Response**

Southern landowners together with the Council as landowner will be required to provide the Local Planning Authority evidence of deliverability of sites so as to justify allocations in the Local Plan review. This is the case for all land being promoted by landowners to the Local Planning Authority for allocation in the Local Plan as part of the statutory planning process.

**Question 4 (22-284)**

Should development in the South take place, what is planned if no distributor road is built?

**Response**

The Local Planning Authority will determine whether sites are allocated and on what basis, including required infrastructure.

**Question 5 (22-285)**

Is this delay to the local plan so that the council can accommodate the flawed Southern scheme and spend yet more taxpayers money?

## **Response**

The Council as landowner cannot comment on the Local Plan review timetable, although it will respond to the revised timetable. The Council's role as a statutory planning authority is entirely separate from its role as a landowner and promoter of the southern scheme.

## **Question 6 (22-286)**

Para 37 states that the £1.848m will be financed by future receipts however this is dependent on the Local plan outcome and this cannot be guaranteed therefore this is questionable given the abject forecast previously made how can you be sure this statement is believable and why add a further £.5 million?

## **Response**

The report makes clear that an option available to the Council is to dispose of its southern sites so as to generate capital receipts.

## **Question 7 (22-287)**

Para's 45, 46, & 47 Having clearly stated in the past that the £1.3m payment to Lackham was recoverable should the HIF not be progressed, why therefore in all these options is this not recommended?

## **Response**

The recovery of the land acquisition price will be through its disposal should the southern land not be allocated.

## **Question 8 (22-288)**

Para 9 Given the failure to believe the Future Chippenham planning team what independent opinions were sought to produce the table and subsequent narrative?

## **Response**

The table and narrative was not subject to independent verification.

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

**Agenda Item 7- Future Chippenham Update**

**Questions from: Richard Curr**

**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**

It is pleasing to note that the Council has finally realised that Wiltshire should withdraw from the HIF Programme.

However it is noted that little or no importance has been placed on the 6000+ objections to the Future Chippenham plan, Solving the traffic problems within Chippenham, and that the proposed housing development will be in the wrong place.

Wiltshire Council appears to be only interested in divesting itself of the land holding for maximum short term financial gain which is akin to “selling the family silver” and ignoring the fact that once valuable assets are gone they are gone forever limiting any future need.

**Question 1 (22-289)**

In paragraph 3 it indicates that the public consultation was totally in favour of the Southern section but will the Council now admit that the objections were against the whole of the Future Chippenham scheme and accordingly money was wasted on the Council preferred Southern section?

**Response**

Paragraph 3 does not conclude the “public consultation was totally in favour of the southern section”, it states following public consultation and taking into account the responses a decision was made to proceed with the southern only scheme.

**Question 2 (22-290)**

In the absence of a plan in the report can the Council state which sites have “potential access” by the land acquired from Lackham without major capital expenditure to make it a viable asset?

## **Response**

The land acquired from the College adjoins the Council's landholdings to the South of Pewsham Way so access to the Lackham roundabout could be achieved without crossing land in third party ownership

## **Question 3 (22-291)**

Can the Council supply the calculations and overall figures that determine the option rankings as they appear to be arbitrary just to make the case for proposing Option 4 when the most preferable is Option 1.

## **Response**

The high-level ranking in the table has been established by looking at the anticipated implications of each scenario at this point in time. The overall score balanced three different criteria to come to a recommendation.

## **Question 4 (22-292)**

Given that the 5 year land supply has not be definitively determined how can Wiltshire Council promote Option 4 which appears to be a "cookie cutter" development?

## **Response**

Option 4 provides the Council with a reasonable amount of influence on future development to the South of Chippenham.

## **Question 5 (22-293)**

As Chippenham has a traffic flow problem, with high levels of pollution, currently has Wiltshire Council taken into account that this will be exacerbated by any development on the south of Chippenham sites?

## **Response**

The Local Planning Authority will consider all relevant matters in arriving at its decision as to which sites to allocate for development. The Council as landowner and other southern landowners will need to demonstrate mitigation of the impact of development for a number of factors including traffic.

## **Statement**

Paragraph 2 of the report states the Business Plan is to "deliver vibrant well connected communities" but the report solely deals with the isolated south scheme ignoring other potentially better options around Chippenham.

**Question 6 (22-294)**

Will Wiltshire Council now reconsider development adjacent to the A350, where major expenditure is planned instead of the southern site proposed development which will ease future traffic problems?

**Response**

The Local Planning Authority will consider all relevant matters in arriving at its decision as to which sites to allocate for development. This will be subject to examination by a government appointed Inspector before the Local Plan is adopted.

**Question 7 (22-295)**

Will Wiltshire Council “think outside of the box” and treat the area as a whole and consider promoting “parkway-type” railway station adjacent to the A350, where there is already major development and infrastructure, to cover Corsham and Chippenham west saving the cost of a separate Corsham Station and reducing travel across town to Chippenham station?

**Response**

The recently completed Corsham Station Strategic Outline Case (available from <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/transport-public-transport-train>) includes in section 2.8.4 consideration of four potential new station locations with the locations at Thingley West and Thingley East being identified as potential parkway-type stations. The SOC concluded, however, that a station located in Corsham itself is the best option.

**Question 8 (22-296)**

Will Wiltshire Council adopt a grading system where projects are reviewed from inception to fruition at annual intervals so that “pie in the sky” projects like Future Chippenham can be stopped at an early stage before any significant expenditure is made rather than following blindly past decisions that were made in totally different economic and social situations?

**Response**

The Council adopts an approach to project management that is appropriate to size and nature of projects including gateway reviews at appropriate stages before agreeing to projects proceeding.

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

**Agenda Item 5 – Active Travel**

**Questions from: Margaret Willmot**

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

**Question 1 (22-297)**

In a previous response to a Cabinet question from Dr Gill Anlezark it was stated that LCWIPs would be adopted as part of Wiltshire 4th Local Transport Plan (LTP4). When is LTP4 scheduled to be adopted?

**Response**

The council is currently awaiting the Department for Transport's (DfT's) revised Local Transport Plan (LTP) guidance. This guidance was originally expected in consultation draft form in June 2022 and then by the end of 2022. We have very recently been informed that the DfT's formal consultation on the LTP guidance will now be in the new year. The DfT has previously advised that the target date for updated LTPs to be in place is spring 2024.

**Question 2 (22-298)**

The response which Wiltshire Council submitted to Active Travel England (ATE) at the end of August 2022 indicated (in answer to Q22) that "cycling and walking are an important part of Wiltshire Local Transport Plan".

In LTP3 it was stated in the Strategy document (March 2011) that "Further details on the council's approach to walking will be included in a walking strategy to be consulted on and published in 2011/12". (LTP3 Strategy para 5.32). However a walking strategy has not so far been published. Will Wiltshire Council be revising their submission to ATE to reflect the lack of importance which this omission shows to walking?

**Response**

The council will not be revising its submission to Active Travel England as walking forms an important part of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011 –2026 Strategy. This is demonstrated through the ongoing development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for Wiltshire's principal settlements and market towns, and the routes between them.

### **Question 3 (22-299)**

The response which Wiltshire Council submitted to Active Travel England (ATE) at the end of August 2022 indicated (in answer to Q17) that “members (including leader and transport portfolio lead) in my authority are committed to increasing active travel in line with the government vision set out in Gear Change.”

- In Gear Change it is stated in relation to cycle routes “The routes must be direct..... If it is necessary to reallocate roadspace from parking or motoring to achieve this, it should be done.” (Gear Change, Theme 1, p.16)
- The leader of Wiltshire Council expressed a view in an email to WC officers dated 1/9/2021 that “we need to come up with ... dedicated, segregated cycle/walking routes and not through taking space away from cars”

Have Wiltshire Council had a Damascene conversion to the Gear Change vision between Sept 2021 and Aug 2022? Or will they be revising their submission to ATE to tell them what parts of the Gear Change vision they are not in fact committed to?

### **Response**

The council scored itself at Level 1 under Active Travel England’s multi-faceted self-assessment process. Active Travel England also undertook their own assessment of Wiltshire’s record on active travel and concurred with that score. It is likely that ATE will undertake the self-assessment process on an annual basis and the council aims to improve its score over time.

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

**Agenda Item 7- Future Chippenham Update**

**Questions from: Stewart Roberts**

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

**Question 1 (22-300)**

Can you advise if the development of the land around Rawlings Green farm is conditional to road access development over the railway?

**Response**

Road access across the railway for Rawlings Green development is conditioned by condition 24 of planning application 15/12351. The condition reads as follows, with the relevant sections highlighted:

24 No development shall commence until a site phasing plan has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The phasing plan shall include, inter alia, the timing of the delivery of: -

- (a) a junction improvement at Station Hill and New Road in accordance with WSP drawing no 5609/SK/006/B,
- (b) a new road link into the site through an alteration and extension of Darcy Close in accordance with WSP drawing no 5609/SK/006/B, and including a junction alteration on Cocklebury Road in accordance with WSP drawing no 5609/SK/005/A,
- (c) the delivery of a new road over railway bridge to connect the site to Parsonage Way, and to include a completed link road between Cocklebury Road and Parsonage Way via the site,
- (d) the completion of an internal distributor road with the identification of a potential route for its future expansion via a river bridge, and
- (e) provision of footpath and cycletrack links between the site and existing local pedestrian/cycle routes.

For the avoidance of doubt, the phasing plan shall include provision for: -



- (a) the second road connection serving the site to be completed, linking Parsonage Way to Cocklebury Road (the Cocklebury Link), and its availability for public use prior to the occupation of more than 200 dwellings on the site, and
- (b) no more than 200 dwellings being served solely from Parsonage Way before the North Chippenham distributor road (connecting B4069 and A350) has been opened for use by public traffic or before a set of comprehensive transport improvement measures of equivalent benefit, and to be agreed by the local planning authority, is in place .

Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan.

REASON: To ensure that adequate transport infrastructure is provided at appropriate stages of the development and to mitigate severe impacts on traffic conditions in the town centre.

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

### **Agenda Item 7- Future Chippenham Update**

**Questions from: Helen Stride**

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

#### **Statement**

Cabinet is being asked to authorise the withdrawal from its agreement with Homes England regarding the southern route of the abridged HIF. The total costs incurred will have been £11.984m. £9.136m of costs will be funded by Homes England. £2.848m of costs will be met by WC either through borrowing or future capital receipts. £9m has been spent with Atkins alone.

Therefore, nearly £12m of public money has been wasted on a road which Chippenham Town Council had unanimously opposed, which nearly 80% of residents objected to during the consultation and which was subject to a Judicial Review.

#### **Question 1 (22-301)**

Given this fiasco, why does WC believe that it has the competence, authority or credibility 'to continue working with landowners adjoining the Council's land holdings to achieve site allocations as part of a master-planned approach for the forthcoming Local Plan review' at a further cost to taxpayers of £500,000?

#### **Response**

Future Chippenham can work with other landowners to influence the quality of a masterplanned development that will come forward in the South of Chippenham subject to the Local Plan review. The Council as landowner deciding it does not wish to work with other landowners does not necessarily mean that other landowners will not wish to promote their sites for development as part of the Local Plan review.

#### **Statement**

Atkins's traffic model has recently been used in a study by a developer with land to the east of Chippenham to show that it would have been an eastern route not a southern route that would have resulted in less congestion.

### **Question 2 (22-302)**

Can I ask WC to confirm that it knew nothing of this study before it appeared in the Gazette and Herald?

### **Response**

Wiltshire Council provides access to the county's Strategic Transport model for all requests, subject to all costs being met. Utilising a single model base allows for comparison of proposals and avoids competing model assessment which may undermine the validity of the county model and all those projects which rely upon it. Wiltshire Council were therefore fully aware of the study being carried out and commissioned the transport consultant on behalf of the third party with costs being fully met.

### **Statement**

At the High Court hearing on May 26th, WC stated that 'the requisite agreement with a third party landowner necessary to deliver a vital road bridge (to the east) was not forthcoming and had little prospect of being so in the future...'

### **Question 3 (22-303)**

Can you confirm that there is still little prospect of delivering this vital road bridge and thus of developing land to the east of Chippenham?

### **Response**

This question should be directed to the third party landowner.

### **Statement**

According to the Housing Needs Assessment for Chippenham in the Neighbourhood Plan the demographic need for Chippenham in the current planning period (2016-2036) will be 1,844 houses.

<https://chippenhamneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/.../Chippenham...>

Approximately 3500 houses have been built already or are in the process of being built in the current planning period, nearly twice the number that Chippenham will need.

In the Local Plan review, Reg 18, WC was planning to build 20,000 houses or 170% more than Wiltshire needs, arguing that it was meeting Government targets.

### **Question 4 (22-304)**

Now that these targets have been removed by Michael Gove (see attached), will WC ensure that in the delayed Local Plan review (Reg 19) it submits housing plans that align with local need?

## **Response**

The requirement to consider local need is already part of the existing planning process. The detail of the changes being proposed by government, as set out in the letter to all MPs of 5 December 2022, is due to be set out "*in the upcoming National Planning Policy Framework prospectus, which will be put out for consultation by Christmas*". We will review these and consider our response in due course.

## **Question 5 (22-305)**

Given that WC is planning to spend £238m on a Melksham Bypass to reduce congestion along the A350 near Beanacre, why is it proposing to dual the A350 from Bumpers Farm to Lackham roundabout at which point 4 lanes of traffic will become 2, no doubt considerably adding the congestion that WC is trying to reduce?

## **Response**

The A350 is the key north-south route serving the communities and businesses in western Wiltshire. At Chippenham some sections of the route already have dual carriageways. The proposal is to dual the remaining sections to Lackham Roundabout, including changes at that roundabout. The scheme will increase capacity to accommodate future traffic flows, improve road safety and reduce delays especially for traffic using the important employment area at Bumpers Farm Industrial Estate.

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

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

**Questions from: Cllr Ernie Clark**

**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 – Active Travel**

It has been reported that the government's Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill will be amended so that 'housing targets' will become advisory. Councils will be able to set a lower level of home building if complying would 'significantly change the character of an area'.

The suggested housing development north-east of Hilperton in the draft Local Plan Review would obviously be a significant change to the character of the area (from open countryside to an urban housing development) and also cause a significant loss of rural area.

#### **Question 1 (22-306)**

In the circumstances, what consideration will Wiltshire Council give to the forthcoming legislation when it publishes the next version of the Local Plan Review next year?

#### **Response**

The Statement made on 6 December 2022 by Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities refers to further changes to the planning system alongside the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

The detail of these changes including housing numbers in plan-making is due to be set out in an upcoming National Planning Policy Framework prospectus, which we have been advised will be put out for consultation by Christmas.

We will review these and consider our response in due course.

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**13 December 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 (22-307)**

Can you provide an indication of the number of properties that you intend Stone Circle Housing Company to buy for use by Ukrainian refugees?

#### **Response**

The Council has asked Stone Circle to accelerate its acquisition programme above the 50 acquisitions in their business plan. The Council is awaiting a response from Stone Circle as to what would be possible and what would be required to achieve the acceleration.

#### **Question 2 (22-308)**

The capital report to last week's Cabinet shows that the Stone Circle Housing Company has only bought 51 properties since 2019. Does Stone Circle have the capacity to buy properties at the required scale?

#### **Response**

The Council awaits a response from Stone Circle housing company to say what they believe is required to accelerate acquisition. This will inevitably include a review of acquisition parameters, review of availability of properties on the market and the resources required to undertake the acquisition process.

#### **Question 3 (22-309)**

What is the planning assumption for the number of years that Ukrainian refugees will remain in Wiltshire at approximately the current level of approaching 1,000?

#### **Response**

Factors that impact on planning for the future number of Ukrainian families change daily and include evidence of those families who have already left Wiltshire, the daily news of the war in Ukraine, and lastly the leave to remain that Ukrainian families

have been offered by the Government. Understandably, longer term planning is difficult, and the immediate issues are the current focus.

**Question 4 (22-310)**

Over what timeframe do you expect the homes for Ukrainians to be acquired?

**Response**

We await the response from Stone Circle housing company to say how the acquisition programme can be accelerated and over what timescale. Subject to the response, it may take the Stone Circle business plan outside the original timespan.

**Question 5 (22-311)**

Will the purchase of homes for Ukrainians be a separate exercise that has no impact on Stone Circle's core business, or will it slow down the process of purchasing homes for Wiltshire residents?

**Response**

The nomination agreement the Council has with Stone Circle housing company allows it to make nominations of households within set time parameters. Therefore, any property the company acquires can be considered to be offered to a suitable Ukrainian family if they present with a housing need. As such the request for Stone Circle to accelerate its acquisition programme will not impact on core Stone Circle housing company business.

**Question 6 (22-312)**

Stone Circle is in the process of buying 22 homes. Is any of the Ukrainian tariff funding being used, and if so, how much?

**Response**

The 22 properties are properties Stone Circle either have in the conveyancing process or have offers accepted now and those properties are part of this years business plan. Although not formally agreed yet, there is the potential for the Council to apply Ukrainian funding to support the financing of these planned acquisitions.

**Question 7 (22-313)**

Do you agree that buying homes will benefit fewer Ukrainians than supporting them with rent through deposits, advance rentals or subsidies? A £200,000 home, for example, will benefit one household at a time whereas the same funds could provide 200 £1,000 deposits or 40 £5,000 per annum rent subsidies.

**Response**

We believe our approach is the most sustainable option to support those Ukrainians who need support, as their needs differ and one size does not fit all.

### **Question 8 (22-314)**

Do you agree that buying homes runs the risk that the majority of the tariff funds will be spent on a minority of refugees when the majority of refugees may also have needs that need to be met and can be met with much smaller outlay?

### **Response**

We do not agree.

### **Question 9 (22-315)**

The government guidance on use of the tariff says: “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 this money therefore not be spent on Ukrainians and Ukrainians alone?

### **Response**

Each local authority is utilising the funding provided by central government differently to address the challenges in their local authority area.

The £10,500 funding is paid to Wiltshire Council quarterly in arrears for each guest. There is a reconciliation process at the end of the financial year for any guest who has left the scheme, with no guarantee of the full tariff amount. It is therefore not possible to provide a detailed summary of how the individual tariff is being spent, and the financial picture is constantly changing with new arrivals and departures in Wiltshire.

The pooled funding is used in all the following areas:

ESOL Teaching staff

Room hire for ESOL

Training

Payments and support to schools

School allocation support

Transport to school costs

DBS checks & Fraud checks

Emergency payments

Breakdown placement support including rematching costs and temporary housing costs

Staffing

Data analysis

Translation support

Information sharing/ support for guests and hosts – communications/ newsletters/ webpages

Support to voluntary and community sector

Host support – safeguarding sessions



Wiltshire Citizens Advice support  
Administration costs (£350 payments/ voucher codes/ invoices/ budget monitoring/ payment requests etc.)  
Rematch pool building costs (DBS/ housing check/ staffing costs)  
Resilience planning & future demand planning  
Increased Refugee & Resettlement Team staffing by 20 FTE plus staffing in other teams, including business support staff, school admissions, finance and family learning.

The funding is being used to support Ukrainians as required.

**Question 10 (22-316)**

Would it not be regretful to look back in 25 years on a process that had by then led to the Council and non-Ukrainians profiting from homes bought with funds specifically earmarked to support a group of refugees who were here for a brief time and derived little benefit from the money that was supposed to support them during that time?

**Response**

The Council is determined to meet its obligations to accommodate Ukrainian families and at the same time lock in funding to provide longer terms benefit for the people of Wiltshire. We will continue to seek innovative ways in which we can use the resources available to the Council to ensure we meet the needs of the Ukrainian families and other families in Wiltshire ever mindful of the need to ensure value for money, avoiding distorting housing markets and delivering the best return for the Council Taxpayers in Wiltshire.

**Question 11 (22-317)**

Is one possibility a 'mixed economy' where a proportion of the tariff is used for purchase of a limited number of homes as emergency accommodation, but in such a way that refugees are guaranteed the full benefit of the funds spent, while more of the tariff is used for rent support and the other statutory tasks required?

**Response**

As detailed above the funding is being used in many different ways.

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 December 2022**

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

**Questions from: Cllr Clare Cape**

**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**

**Question 1 (22-318)**

I note the absence of the update on the “half a HIF” (Future Chippenham) decision from Homes England in the agenda papers as at 06.12.22 which has made a specific question on this impossible before the deadline. Would the Cabinet member please explain why this information was not provided?

**Response**

There was a slight delay in the publication of the report.

**Question 2 (22-319)**

Given the Government’s U-turn on housing targets announced in early December, will the Cabinet member give assurance that in future, the Chippenham community will be fully and actively involved in decision making regarding housing numbers and locations in the area? Nobody in wants to be “done to” as has sadly been the case to date with the Future Chippenham Project, where an undemocratic decision behind closed doors led to bitterness and argument.

**Response**

Public consultation has been undertaken on the Local Plan Review and further consultation is planned on a draft Plan next year, which will include proposals for Chippenham.

The Statement made on 6 December 2022 by Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities refers to further changes to the planning system alongside the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

The detail of these changes including housing numbers in plan-making is due to be set out in an upcoming National Planning Policy Framework prospectus, which government has advised will be put out for consultation by Christmas.

We will review these and consider our response in due course.

**Question 3 (22-320)**

Will the Cabinet member ensure that the current site allocations across the County will be fully reviewed for the next Local Plan? We all want to see Wiltshire Council proactively making best use of available brownfield, protecting our valued countryside for well-being, heritage, agriculture for food security, and providing renewable energy.

**Response**

The current Local Plan already considers opportunities for development on brownfield sites. It also enables windfall development on previously developed land to come forward as and when opportunities arise. There is insufficient brownfield land available within Wiltshire to avoid the need to develop greenfield sites to meet the needs of our growing communities, whether this is for new affordable homes or land for employment. The retention of current site allocations, many of which have now been built or in the process of being brought forward, help ensure that sufficient land is available in the future and minimises the need for additional new sites to be identified through the Local Plan Review. Where possible, brownfield land will be identified for allocation to minimise the use of greenfield sites.

**Question 4 (22-321)**

Will Wiltshire Council urgently review its policies and plans so that homes are planned and built only where there is evidenced need for local people - with relevant transport and active travel provided; and ensuring that “social infrastructure” facilities (for education, health and care, and local retail and recreation) are reliably delivered?

**Response**

The Local Plan Review is in preparation and involves a review of the policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Its policies will be underpinned by evidence on the need for new homes and are being developed to help ensure appropriate infrastructure is delivered to support Wiltshire’s growing communities.

**Question 5 (22-322)**

And will Wiltshire Council take this opportunity to design and deliver the needed affordable and sustainable homes for Wiltshire residents in innovative ways without endlessly spreading out and out from our town centres and concreting over our countryside?

**Response**

As set out in the response to Question 3, it is not possible to limit the development of our communities to brownfield sites. However, we can ensure that the delivery of

new affordable homes is maximised and set policies to improve the sustainability of new homes.