

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**19 May 2020**

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**Question from Margaret Willmot on behalf of Cycling Opportunities Group for Salisbury (COGS)**

**Agenda Item 6 – Council Response to COVID-19 - Update**

**To Councillor Philip Whitehead – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development**

**Statement**

COGS share with others in Wiltshire concern over the current COVID-19 lockdown situation and the impact this will have on the economic vitality of our county.

However, this ‘restart’ period may provide an opportunity, in the words of Grant Shapps, to “build a better country with greener travel habits, cleaner air and healthier communities.”

It was already an aspiration of Salisbury’s Central Area Framework to create more people-friendly streets in Salisbury. However, Salisbury has some specific issues with narrow streets and pavements which will not allow for safe ‘social distancing’ as the restart of commercial activities gets underway. COGS were heartened to hear that this issue has been recognised by central Government who published statutory guidance for reallocating road space in response to COVID-19 on May 9th.

The published guidance instructs local authorities that “Measures should be taken as swiftly as possible, and in any event within weeks, given the urgent need to change travel habits before the restart takes full effect”.

COGS have produced a paper (attached, or [at this link](#)) suggesting some measures which could be taken to create more space for safe cycling and walking in Salisbury and would like to ask:

**Question 1**

What steps are Wiltshire Council taking to implement the recent Government guidance and ensure safe social distancing in our streets as we enter the restart phase?

**Response**

The Council is mobilising a large number of staff to deliver the recommendations as a priority. We will be working on a community area basis, identifying locations for re-allocation of space, and implementing temporary solutions. There will be support from public health, comms, etc and as well as implementing schemes, we will be providing advice to schools, employers and businesses and towns and parishes.

**Question 2**

Will Wiltshire Council be applying for a share of the £250 million emergency active travel fund which we understand has been set up to improve safety & provide more space for walkers and cyclists?

**Response**

The Council has not received any information regarding allocation of the fund, but hopes that the fund will be allocated to Councils on a formula basis

**Question 3**

Will Wiltshire Council be working with local stakeholders, including COGS & Salisbury's Walking for Health group, to identify the most cost-effective ways in the short term of making streets safer for walkers and cyclists and allowing for social distancing?

**Response**

Local knowledge will be extremely valuable in identifying problems and opportunities.