

PRIORITY FOR PEOPLE: MELKSHAM 2021 — January-July 2021

1. Following adoption of the ‘Melksham Town 2020-2036’ report at the end of 2019, commissioned by Melksham Town Council from Townswork, the Town council agreed that it would pursue three of the ‘Next Steps’ outlined at the end of the report, including a movement exercise. This was set out as an initial study, consultation and workshops leading to a broad brush movement strategy for the future of the town. This is movement of people, goods, vehicles throughout the town and will prepare for a future over the next 15 years in line with the needs of the climate emergency.
2. It was agreed by Melksham Town Council that this needs to be an exercise involving the Community Area as a whole. Melksham Town Council provides resource and leadership, but in partnership with the Community Area Board and the Parish Councils – in other words the town and its hinterland. Relevant members of the community (such as those involved in climate change and different age groups) as well as local authority officers and representatives from local businesses (ranging from Trans Wilts Rail to local business groups) will be also be invited to participate in the second stage. It was agreed to brand the exercise as **PRIORITY FOR PEOPLE: MELKSHAM 2021**.
3. This exercise is also being initiated in full liaison with Wiltshire Highways. As part of the Business Case for the proposed bypass for the town, the Highways team are exploring how a bypass will release road space and capacity on the existing A350 corridor and within the town centre, providing opportunities for walking and cycling improvements. Our thinking is aligned, with the current bypass consultation highlighting the same opportunities for a people friendly town centre, better access to the railway station and better quality walking and cycling connections. Following earlier discussions, the current Wiltshire Highways consultation is deliberately low-key, in order to avoid duplication. It was agreed that both teams would liaise closely in order to ensure maximum benefit to both sides – and it was hoped that this should continue through the months and years ahead.
4. It has been agreed by Melksham Town Council that Stage 1 of the exercise extends through to April — holding the consultation and then preparing a report and commentary. This fits well with Wiltshire Highways’ own deadline — for autumn delivery of the bypass Outline Business Case to the Government. It also concludes prior to the assumed date of the local elections. Stage two follow the elections – and includes workshops and public meetings, concluding with a final report in July providing a summary of ideas and projects to be taken further by relevant bodies/groups. This report will be presented at a final public meeting.
5. **BUDGET.** There are two phases of cost:
 - 5.1. **STAGE ONE** — January to April — Preparation of the background brief, liaison with the Community Area Board and Parish Councils. Preparation of the household survey, preparation of website, writing/design/ preparation of printed survey, publicity, results of survey, initial report, and detailed final report and commentary. Cost including survey, print etc – £6,000.
 - 5.2. **STAGE TWO** — May to July — Movement Group workshop(s), leading to one or more public meetings, and the preparation and production of a final report. Cost including expenses – £6,500.
6. **CONCLUSION.** The ‘Melksham Town 2020-2036’ report was a review of the opportunities, challenges and drivers facing Melksham over the next couple of decades. *Priority for People: Melksham 2021* is an exciting opportunity to involve people across the town and villages in a positive and constructive initiative. It addresses people’s new-found enthusiasm for walking and cycling, it could provide a strong pillar in the fight to rebuild the town’s economy post-COVID, and it might lead to real progress in dealing with the climate emergency.

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Townswork.
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