

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**2 February 2021**

**Agenda Item 5 – Public Questions**

**Statement and Questions from Amy Davis**

**To Councillor Richard Clewer, Deputy Leader of the Council and  
Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism,  
Housing and Communities**

**Statement 1**

I have recently attended the online Local Plan Review Consultation introduction event for Chippenham. At this meeting, the word 'sustainable' was used to describe the large expansion project proposed for the river valley and countryside to the east and south of Chippenham.

**Question 1 (21-51)**

Given that most people are now to some extent aware that 'sustainability' is an important consideration in any future development - but may not be aware of what the **most** sustainable alternatives would look like, or the extent and impact of carbon emissions and ecological damage that this expansion will cause - does the Cabinet agree that informing the public that such schemes are 'sustainable' is misleading and will prejudice consultees towards more favourable responses to them?

**Response:**

In preparing the Local Plan we must take into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF definition of sustainable development is not exclusively about protecting the environment. The NPPF says achieving sustainable development has three overarching objectives - economic, social and environmental. These are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

The 'Emerging Spatial Strategy', 'Planning for Chippenham' and supporting documents, which form part of the Local Plan consultation explain the reasons behind the proposals. The consultation allows people to put forward their views on these and to challenge the Council's thinking.

**Statement 2**

I want to ask this question at this juncture as I believe that a misappropriation of concepts like 'sustainability' in attempts to secure growth projects signals a clear lack of appropriately grave awareness of the seriousness and urgency of the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Furthermore, if the Council uses what I believe can be described as greenwash in this way, it cannot expect the public to fully understand and engage

with its climate ambitions, which will be crucial in achieving them.

**Question 2 (21-52)**

How can Wiltshire Council destroy this when there are so many brownfield sites?

**Response:**

See response to Question 1.

The 'Emerging Spatial Strategy' and 'Planning for Chippenham' documents, which form part of the Local Plan consultation say that needs for development should be met as far as possible on brownfield sites in order to help minimize the loss of greenfield sites. The Council suggests a target of 240 homes for Chippenham on brownfield sites over the next 10 years. This is far lower than the indicative residual housing requirement of 5100 homes identified for the town, hence why greenfield sites have been identified. The consultation asks whether there should be a brownfield target and if so, should it be higher or lower?