

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

27 September 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Dr Gill Anlezark

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

Question 1 (22-130)

In view of Wiltshire Council's failure to obtain any of the millions of pounds available from Active Travel England for active travel (walking and cycling) schemes in Tranche 3, what steps are being taken to ensure that bids for Tranche 4 are more successful?

Response

Officers are in regular liaison with Active Travel England (ATE) and have been since the organisation was formed. The council has developed a draft Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) for Salisbury and a Wiltshire wide LCWIP, and is producing LCWIPs for three more towns (Chippenham, Trowbridge and Devizes). These LCWIPs will enable the council to develop a pipeline of policy compliant schemes.

Question 2 (22-131)

Are Wiltshire Council officers and members being given access to advisers from Active Travel England on how to prepare successful bids, and freedom to do this in accordance with local and national policies without constraints?

Response

Officers are in regular contact with ATE who have informed the council that bidding guidance will be released soon in advance of the formal bid opening announcement for ATF4, which is anticipated to be at the end of September.

Question 3 (22-132)

Is the risk to other streams of DfT funding or major planning applications of not engaging constructively with Active Travel England, or being unsuccessful again, recognised by the Council?

Response

The risks are acknowledged by the council which is why we have actively engaged with ATE since their inception.

Question 4 (22-133)

How does Wiltshire Council propose to implement first class walking and cycling schemes across the county as outlined in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans without access to significant funding?

Response

The DfT and ATE have made it clear that capital investment for walking and cycling infrastructure should be identified through the development of LCWIPs or similar evidence-based processes. The council is developing a set of LCWIPs to enable a pipeline of eligible schemes to be developed. In this way, it is hoped that the council will secure capital funding from the upcoming multi-year bidding round under ATF4.

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Question from: Mr 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

Statement

Having at last after 4 attempts been given the correct answer to my question submitted to Cabinet in July see below in standard font and your answer in italics..

Could you please answer this previously submitted question correctly?

Ref Future Chippenham

Please confirm what has been approved and spent on all the surveys and consultation **since the July 2021 decision** and to whom these payments have been made, this should include counsel's fees, all environmental, archaeological, groundwater and of course highways work.

With regards to spend since the July 2021 decision this is as follows and is based on payments made:

<i>Atkins (external consultant for Road and Masterplan design):</i>	<i>£4,300,399</i>
<i>Internal Salary Costs (circa as pending recharges for April – Jun 22):</i>	<i>£431,089</i>
<i>Legal fees (licenses, landowner costs, compulsory purchase order):</i>	<i>£137,952</i>
<i>RPS (external contractor for road ground investigations):</i>	<i>£197,864</i>
<i>Ringway: (external contractor for road investigations):</i>	<i>£5,080</i>
<i>Cratus (external consultant for communications and engagement):</i>	<i>£22,450</i>
<i>Venue Hire:</i>	<i>£1,544</i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>£5,096,378</i>

We trust this provides the information that you requested.

Question 1 (22-134)

Could you please clarify if this sum of £5,096,378 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

The financial risk to the Council will be subject to discussions with Homes England. However, it should be remembered that the costs involved are attributable to development coming forward so if that does happen in the future, subject to the Local Plan review, the value of that work may be realised.

Question 2 (22-135)

Could you please clarify what the position is currently with Homes England and the GDA?

Response

The Council and Homes England continue to have positive discussions in relation to the GDA, the outcome of which will be reported to Cabinet once discussions are concluded for Cabinet consideration.

Question 3 (22-136)

Will the results of the negotiations with Homes England be available to all parties, and the realistic costs of the Southern distributor road be available prior to the Local Plan consultation, and when can we expect this to be available?

Response

The Council and Homes England continue to have positive discussions in relation to the GDA, the outcome of which will be reported to Cabinet when discussions are concluded for their consideration. It is not appropriate to release the Council's estimated cost of the southern road route into the public domain at this stage due to the Council's commercial interests. The Local Plan review will test viability of development in the light of required infrastructure and will need to be satisfied as to the cost of infrastructure as part of that review.

Question 4 (22-137)

Given the substantial amounts paid out to Atkins (external consultant for Road and Masterplan design) which amount to approximately 75% of the overall Future Chippenham spend. Could you please confirm what has been spent in total by

Wiltshire Council with this outside contractor since 2018 broken down annually and for what?

Response

Atkins were awarded the council's Highway Consultancy contract. They provide a wide range of specialist services to the council, including major scheme design and supervision, highway maintenance and resurfacing, street lighting management, traffic engineering, structural engineering and bridges, traffic signal design and management, reviewing developers designs, and specialist economic and planning advice. Annual expenditure:

2018-19	£5,712,517.27
2019-20	£7,203,906.95
2020-21	£8,266,189.90
2021-22	£9,145,850.37

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Question from: Mr 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

Statement

The Cabinet stated at the 12th July Cabinet Meeting that “procurement of road and associated design and investigatory work needs to be commissioned now” and “6. To agree to delegate to the Corporate Director of Resources (Deputy Chief Executive) authority to enter into a revised GDA based on the July 2021 decision and no further financial liability for the Council and a HIF availability period that minimises risk for the Council.”

Since 12th July there has been a deafening silence on Future Chippenham.

Question 1 (22-138)

What is the current position regarding the revised GDA?

Response

The Council and Homes England continue to have positive discussions in relation to the GDA, the outcome of which will be reported to Cabinet when discussions are concluded for Cabinet consideration.

Question 2 (22-139)

Why are the Wiltshire Council taxpayers not being kept informed via the Future Chippenham Newsletter, even in general terms?

Response

As per the July 2022 Cabinet paper, Cabinet resolved to: *‘Agree that design work on the Future Chippenham programme will be paused subject to reaching agreement on the revised GDA.’* As a result of this and the ongoing discussions with Homes England, there is nothing relevant to report at this stage.

Question 3 (22-140)

As there was urgency to “*procurement of road and associated design and investigatory work needs to be commissioned now (12th July)*” can it be assumed that, now the timeline has been passed by some eight weeks, it is too late to meet the defrayment deadline of March 2025 and that Wiltshire Council are now seeking to exit the GDA and abort the Future Chippenham scheme?

Response

Part of the discussions with Homes England include the prospect of securing an extension of the HIF defrayment deadline.

Question 4 (22-141)

By the disposal of the Council owned farms as part of the scheme are the Council seeking to classify their acreage as rewilding to enable the sale of “nitrogen credits” to developers at an estimated price of £3,000 to £7,000 per house as proposed at Roundbarrow Farm, Salisbury?

Response

Once the outcome of the ongoing discussions with Homes England is known, a report will be submitted to Cabinet outlining the potential options.

Question 5 (22-142)

What has Future Chippenham cost from inception to current date (internal and external costs)?

Response

The total cost of Future Chippenham including the Lackham College land purchase is circa £12.956 million

Question 6 (22-143)

Can the Council please supply the expenditure on external fees, for the past 2 years?

The following areas are of interest along with the payees:

- a. Legal fees (other than defence and prosecution fees)
- b. Environmental surveys
- c. Design and investigatory works
- d. Contract staff

Response

The following sums are totals paid from September 2020 to August 2022

Legal fees (licenses, landowner, compulsory purchase order):	£152,870
Environmental surveys (Included in Atkins costs)	
Design and investigatory works	
RPS (Ground investigations):	£407,420
Contract staff	
Atkins (masterplan and road design)	£6,698,030
Cratus:	£83,465
Ringway:	£5,060
TOTAL:	£7,346,845

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Question from: Ms Celia Beckett

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

Question 1 (22-144)

In the absence of an agreed Local Plan to provide the bigger picture what is the Cabinet's view on Wiltshire Council allowing piecemeal developments in contravention of the existing Wiltshire Core Strategy which may erode the overall plan?

Response

It is not the case that the Council does not have an agreed Local Plan, the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015) is currently in place and it is this which is being reviewed as the Wiltshire Local Plan Review.

A local authority is legally required to assess all planning applications against policies within its adopted local plan, taking account of other material considerations such as national planning policy. Where national planning policy is more up to date, this guidance can carry more weight than policies in the local plan when balancing different considerations. We are making good progress with reviewing our local plan and once adopted, this will give us greater certainty for the future about where development may take place.

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Question from: Ms 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

Question 1 (22-145)

I previously asked if Wiltshire Council would be supporting Action on Empty Homes in February 2022, the reply was no but Wiltshire Council would write to long term empty home owners, a freedom of information request said this hadn't been done?

Response

We are not looking to currently engage with Action for Empty Homes. Previous strategies to engage with owners of empty homes has not resulted in those homes being made available as additional affordable social housing. Many of the empty homes in Wiltshire are either MOD properties or second homes.

Question 2 (22-146)

What percentage of long term empty home owners have now been contacted this year by Wiltshire Council to get them back into use?

Response

We have not made contact with owners of empty homes in the past few years as this has not been our strategy. We regularly evaluate our activity and this will be an area we will be reviewing.

Question 3 (22-147)

We have seen Richard Clewer on TV calling for the MOD to release their approx 1,000 empty homes, are these included or additional to the 3,813 empty homes recorded on WC's website <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-empty-homes?>

Response

The figure does not include homes that are managed by the MoD. The MoD provide an annual summary of the number of their homes in each parish and indicate how many in each parish are occupied and which are empty. They do not specify addresses. Many of these are 'behind the wire' and cannot be let to civilians. Empty MoD homes that are not behind the wire and that could be suitable family accommodation have been identified by the Council and engagement has taken place with the agents, but this is a challenging and on-going process.

The figure for empty homes includes 400 long term empty homes as well as short term that may be empty whilst they are being refurbished. There are usually reasons for a property to be empty. Some empty dwellings are subject to familial dispute or are specialist homes designed for the elderly. These tend to have restrictions attached to their sale and consequently remain empty for longer between owners.

There is no discount or reduction in council tax for an empty property and sometimes owners do not inform us that they have taken up occupation and so our record keeping is not as precise as it was when a discount was available. Our list of empty homes was last reviewed in the summer of 2021.

Question 4 (22-148)

Why weren't private empty homeowners included in this TV request for Ukraine refugees?

Response

Because the discussion was about empty MoD properties.

Question 5 (22-149)

Airbnb offered to help Ukraine refugees, with hundreds of complete buildings in Wiltshire now let out as Airbnbs has Wiltshire Council been in contact with them?

Response

We have not been in touch with Airbnb, Ukrainian refugees are almost all on universal credit and in receipt of housing benefit. The prices of Airbnb are way beyond local housing allowance levels.

Question 6 (22-150)

As an area representative for Action on Empty Homes I urge Wiltshire Council to work with Action on Empty Homes, like 120 other councils to bring houses back into use, across the country we have 237,340 long term empty homes that could be used and over 900,000 empty homes in total <https://www.actiononemptyhomes.org/>.

Response

Our activity relating to empty homes will be reviewed in 2023 but we do not currently have any dedicated officer resource focused on this as in the past this has not resulted in additional housing capacity.

Question 7 (22-151)

How can members of the public call for an investigation into the Sadlers Mead Car Park misuse of tax payers money?

Response

The project received all necessary approvals with regard to funding and planning permissions. Funding and business case was granted by central government. It would be for them to advise.

Question 8 (22-152)

Was Sadlers Mead Car Park built in the wrong place (should have been the other side of the Railway station, email evidence from SWLEP available)?

Response

The physical constraints on the north side of the rail tracks meant that building on the north side of the station was undeliverable.

Question 9 (22-153)

The light pollution from 24/7 lights burning (stairway lights are on sensors but not the car park lights) and tax payers money on electric in a cost of living crisis?

Response

All designed lights on floors and stairwells are on sensors and roof lighting on columns are on daylight control. If sensors have been vandalised, then lights may well stay on. We investigate and remedy this if necessary.

Question 10 (22-154)

Police time wasted on antisocial behaviour, they have said last week they are struggling with 6 other towns to police as well?

Response

The council recognises the issues caused by ASB and the impact it has on all those affected by it. We recognise that enforcing and resolving these issues is challenging and that single agencies cannot tackle ASB alone.

Question 11 (22-155)

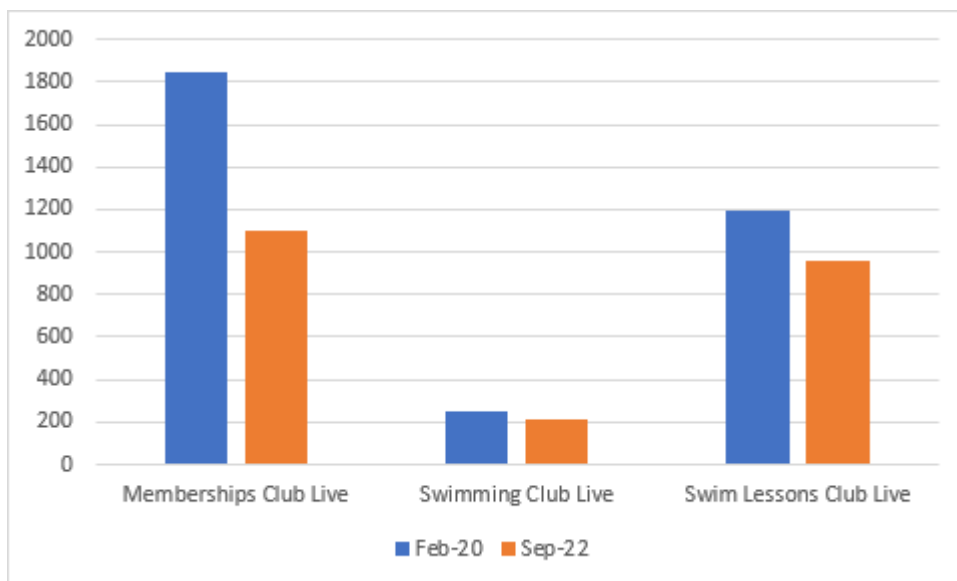
Reduction in people using the Olympiad when the safe outdoor car park was replaced by a multi-storey with enclosed stairways and anti-social behaviour?

Response

The Car Park works started in January 2020;

The figures below show the decrease in The Olympiad's club live from February 2020 to present day.

	Memberships Club Live	Swimming Club Live	Swim Lessons Club Live	Totals
Feb-20	1846	255	1191	3292
Sep-22	1096	211	960	2267
Totals	-750	-44	-231	-1025
% totals	-40%	-17%	-19%	-31%



Its increasingly difficult to put this down truly to one factor as the following could have influenced since the car park reopened. 8-week Pool closure to remove the flumes, 2 new 'low cost 24hr' competitors open close by and of course Covid (disruptions to service and changes to service)

Question 12 (22-156)

Why has solar not been put on the roof?

Response

Solar panels were not installed due to engineering and financial considerations

Question 13 (22-157)

What measures have Wiltshire Council put in place so projects like this do not happen in the future, grabbing a grant just because it is available, not because it is relevant to the town?

Response

Projects are developed over a number of years and in line with the Council's strategic priorities. Appropriate analysis and scrutiny are undertaken by both officers and elected Members to ensure this is the case. Full engagement and consultation is also undertaken as part a matter of course and as an integral part of the planning process.

Question 14 (22-158)

It was awful last week to see a picture from the Gazette and Herald of the station hill queuing traffic and the headline - 'Utter gridlock' in Chippenham after serious crash on busy route. Every day drivers have pedestrians walking out in front of cars as they won't wait minutes for the lights to go through the sequence, we had a meeting with our MP and Wiltshire Council a year ago and still we see queues of traffic sat idling rather than flowing around the roundabout, the lights could be used for pedestrians only and a fatality avoided, why will Wiltshire Council not resolve this situation?

Response

The collision being referred to took place on the A4 Rowden Hill. The photograph used appears to be a stock one held by the Gazette & Herald that showed the Station Hill junction. This was not the location of the collision. Delays across the whole network in Chippenham occurred as a result of the incident not just the Station Hill junction. Recent monitoring of the Station Hill junction has shown that the junction is working efficiently and that delays to traffic for the majority of the time are significantly reduced and that journey times are now comparable to pre-pandemic levels. The junction is significantly safer for pedestrians to use than the previous arrangement.

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Question from: Mr Andrew Kelly

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

Question 1 (22-159)

Why are the Cabinet and documents such as LCWIPs contradicting official council policy (specifically policy 60 and 64) by prioritising motor vehicles across the county?

Response

Cabinet and documents such as the LCWIPs are not contradicting council policy by prioritising motor vehicles. In making decisions and developing plans, the council reflects the following in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 105):

“...opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”.

Question 2 (22-160)

Does the cabinet think that dramatically increasing the take up of active travel (by investing in infrastructure) will increase the number of motor vehicles using the counties' roads?

Response

No.

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Question 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

Statement

You recently brought into question support for the Salisbury Neighbourhood Plan option to consider the redevelopment of Brown St car park in Salisbury - a plan that has been devised by the Salisbury Neighbourhood Plan steering group including representatives of Salisbury residents.

Brown Street car park is named as a potential development site in Wiltshire Council's own Central Area Framework.

Yet, you have indicated that "Salisbury City Council's proposal to change Brown Street car park into a residential area will "fall flat on its face", as it is not a "viable" plan.

Clearly when P&R was funded there was to be reduction of city centre parking spaces once Park & Ride was fully implemented – a commitment made in Wiltshire Council's first local transport plan - and other measures to encourage modal change as per current Government Policy.

You have indicated that a "detailed parking strategy" is needed before significant changes can be made to parking in the city

Question 1 (22-161)

What do you hope to achieve with this new "detailed parking strategy" that has not been addressed by WC or the Neighbourhood plan steering group previously?

Response

A review of the existing Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) Car Parking Strategy and associated work to better understand local circumstances in Salisbury will

enable the council to work with stakeholders and partners to help achieve relevant economic, social and environmental objectives.

Question 2 (22-162)

If the parking strategy is so important to the development of Salisbury city centre then why has WC not already undertaken such a survey?

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 the 2022 and final guidance in early 2023.

Question 3 (22-163)

Could Cllr Clewer please indicate when the “detailed parking strategy” will be carried out by Wiltshire Council and when the results be available to Salisbury residents?

Response

Subject to the DfT issuing revised LTP guidance in late 2022/early 2023, it is planned that detailed work on the next Wiltshire LTP (LTP4), including work related to the parking strategy, will be undertaken in early to mid-2023. This will then be subject to public consultation in late 2023 with the final Wiltshire LTP4 being adopted by the council by March 2024.

Question from: Dr Jimmy Walker

To: Cllr Dr Mark McClelland - Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding and Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling - Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management and Operational Assets

Statement

RE: Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) that was put forward by the council and partners to try and rectify the problem outside secondary schools in Laverstock, to introduce a controlled parking zone that would control car parking along Church Road between 2pm and 4pm.

The issues of dangerous driving, delays, and pollution caused by parking on Church Road have been a top priority for local residents for many years and after 18months of consultation the ETRO was about to be implemented.

You were aware that parents and children have been consulted extensively and so has the public at large. The working group involved the local Parish Council, the schools, your own Wiltshire Council experts, the police, residents and the WC Cllr. It was set up and controlled, via Southern Wiltshire Area Board.

WC, including the head of Public Health should be putting the health of our children first and foremost at every decision.

As outlined in the Wiltshire Council Core Policy “traffic management measures will be developed to promote sustainable transport alternatives, reduce reliance on the car, lower the risk of accidents and improve the environment?”

Yet you recently took the opportunity to reject this ETRO saying further consultation is needed and that only after feedback from a consultation could a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) instead be introduced.

By rejecting this ETRO, you will be

- encouraging drivers to park outside the school – which will create a dangerous environment for children walking and cycling to school
- creating congestion - for other motorists leading to delays on Laverstock Road,
- increasing the pollution – to which our children will be exposed
- rejecting the advice of your professional officers – once again going against professional judgement and government policy.

Question 4 (22-164)

What further consultation do you think is necessary and what will this add to the significant weight of support that has already been demonstrated from the schools, the police, WC officers, parents and residents?

Response

I am aware that a public webinar was held which any member of the public could attend to discuss school travel issues in Laverstock. However, this meeting only discussed the principal of introducing additional waiting restrictions into the area. Following that meeting detailed proposals were developed and were subject to limited consultation with local residents living in close proximity to the schools.

I believe that further consultation with parents in the wider Salisbury area is required in view of the potential impact that the proposed changes could have on their daily routines. In my opinion this is best achieved through a standard TRO process.

Question 5 (22-165)

Why do you think it is necessary to further endanger the lives of the children walking and cycling to the Laverstock schools by bringing them into direct conflict with motor vehicles out the schools?

Response

Clearly, nobody wishes to endanger the lives of any road user. However, I believe that it is important to develop proposals in a fair and balanced manner where all local residents and parents of children attending the school have had an opportunity to input into their development.

Question 6 (22-166)

What evidence do you have that these proposals could result in merely moving the problem (which is contrary to other published evidence and data in the public domain) rather than behavioural change?

Response

We do not have any evidence that these specific proposals will either produce behavioural change or displace the parking problems. We hope that the consultation stage of the TRO process will give some indication of likely future behaviour.

Question 7 (22-167)

When will this consultation process take place?

Response

The exact timescale for the consultation process is not known at this stage. The proposals are currently being reviewed and amended before the consultation. It is anticipated that the consultation will take place in November / December of this year.

Question 8 (22-168)

A number of parents are concerned about the ongoing dangers to which their children will now be exposed to outside the school and would like to know if you are personally prepared to take responsibility for any incidents and accidents occurring to the children in the meantime until the TRO is introduced?

Response

As mentioned previously, nobody wishes to endanger the lives of any road user. However, road safety is the responsibility of all, not just the Council. Drivers and pedestrians have to take responsibility for their own actions. The status quo and present parking problems have existed for decades and any solution needs to be properly considered and consulted on, not rushed through.

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Question from: Ms Margaret Willmot

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

Statement

Wiltshire Council's policy framework documents include the adopted Local Transport Plan and the Local Development Framework. [WC Constitution Part 3]

Wiltshire Council's constitution states that "*Once a budget or a policy framework is in place, it will be the responsibility of the Cabinet to implement it.*" [WC Constitution Part 6 Para 1.1].

The adopted Core Strategy, which forms parts of the policy framework, includes the following adopted policies:

Core Policy 60 Sustainable transport

The council will use its planning and transport powers to help reduce the need to travel particularly by private car This will be achieved by:

....

ii. promoting sustainable transport alternatives to the use of the private car

...

Core Policy 64 Demand management

Demand management measures will be promoted where appropriate to reduce reliance on the car and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives. These measures include:

...

ii. traffic management measures – traffic management measures will be developed to promote sustainable transport alternatives, reduce reliance on the car, lower the risk of accidents and improve the environment

The LCWIP currently out for consultation reiterates the hierarchy of transport users mandated in the policy framework:

"As set out in Core Policy 61 of the Core Strategy, transport users should be considered according to the following hierarchy:

a. Visually impaired and other disabled people, b. Pedestrians, c. Cyclists, d. Public transport

e. Goods vehicles, f. Powered two-wheelers, g. Private cars."

[WC LCWIP Active Travel Infrastructure design standards page 4]

Various interventions proposed in the draft LCWIP Infrastructure design standards in the interests of promoting active travel have been caveated with statements such as the following:

“Wiltshire Council is unlikely to support School Streets at existing school sites where this would cause any significant detriment to motor vehicle drivers.” [WC LCWIP Active Travel Infrastructure design standards page 11]

Similar statements are made in respect of Modal Filters and Quiet Lanes. No consideration is given to the needs and safety of other transport users who are above motor vehicles in the adopted hierarchy.

Question 1 (22-169)

In the light of the existing policy framework and the constitutional commitment for Cabinet to implement this policy framework will Wiltshire Council ensure that there are no statements in the LCWIP which contradict its own core policies?

Response

Cabinet and documents such as the LCWIPs are not contradicting council policy by prioritising motor vehicles. In making decisions and developing plans, the council reflects the following in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 105):

“...opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”.

Question 2 (22-170)

Motorists currently dominate the street scene. Some existing interventions, such as the modal filter which has been in place in Salisbury High Street for decades, have been considered a great benefit to the City and to businesses. Will Wiltshire Council acknowledge that, in order to create space and safety for active travel on our roads, it may be necessary to give other transport users priority over motorists and that this is in alignment with the existing policy framework?

Response

Priorities are assessed and established on a case-by-case basis having regard to individual circumstances and policy frameworks.

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Question from: Ms Catherine Read

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

Statement

There is currently a consultation running on a Wiltshire wide LCWIP, which includes the documents Active Travel Infrastructure Designs and Active Travel Parking Standards.

To note, there is published government guidance, The LCWIP, Technical Guidance for Local Authorities 2017 and LTN 1/20 guidance to local authorities on delivering high quality, cycle infrastructure.

I understand that Local councils may want to have their own policy documents to supplement the national guidance, but I would expect that this at minimum would include and build upon national guidance.

On reading the documents, I am dismayed to find that Wiltshire Council appears to be watering down and dismissing a lot of the tools and solutions available that would help to keep those who cycle safe on Wiltshire roads.

Question 1 (22-171)

The phrase '**cause significant detriment to motor vehicle drivers**' has been used frequently. I believe that this vague statement is contrary to the highway code hierarchy, the spirit of Gear Change and the technical aspects of LTN 1/20 as it appears to put the interests of motorist above all other legitimate users of road space.

Can Wiltshire Council supply a definition of 'significant detriment' that can be quantified?

Response

Such a caveat is not intended to apply as a defined 'rule' - individual circumstances will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Question 2 (22-172)

Is it Wiltshire Councils intention to promote drivers to the top of the hierarchy by putting their interests above those who walk & cycle?

Response

Priorities are assessed and established on a case-by-case basis having regard to individual circumstances and policy frameworks.

Question 3 (22-173)

'Wiltshire Council is unlikely to support School Streets at existing school sites where this would cause any significant detriment to motor vehicle drivers' .

Is it Wiltshire Councils intention to put polluting options of transport, which contribute to climate change and increase GHGs, above the safety of our children as this seems to indicate?

Response

School Streets are only one part of the toolkit available to the Council to create a safe culture and environment around schools.

Road safety remains a key priority, and work continues to implement a wide range of education, engineering and enforcement activities.

Question 3 (22-174)

The Prioritisation of schemes section 5, P57 of LCWIP framework plan and interurban route, 2022

Wiltshire Council prioritisation are skewed towards tourism (5 criteria for tourism) and leisure with an arbitrary category of 'direct link to London' .

Why does the prioritisation criteria not consider improvements in road safety, policy objectives, local transport plan, value for money and potential to attract funding?

Response

It is government policy for local authorities to develop LCWIPs to identify their infrastructure requirements for walking and cycling, and the LCWIPs will be adopted as part of Wiltshire's LTP4. The criteria used follow the general guidance provided by the DfT on LCWIPs, although DfT does expect them to be adapted to local situations. The criteria used cover a range of factors relating to both utility and tourism/leisure trips, although utility has a higher weighting given the government's focus on reducing car trips.

In terms of Value for Money (VfM), it is not possible to realistically assess VfM for schemes at the conceptual stage where the route alignments are not set, there are no robust cost estimates, and where anticipated benefits can only be assessed at a very high level. However, it is accepted that routes that will be used for both utility and tourist trips will achieve higher levels of usage and consequently provide a greater VfM, which in turn will increase the council's chances of securing funding. Safety is also a difficult thing to gauge at the conceptual level where the nature and alignment of the route is not known, and it is not necessarily clear which roads the scheme would be a substitute route for.

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27 September 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Mr 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

Question 1 (22-175)

Please confirm what has been approved and spent on all the surveys and consultation since the July 2021 decision and to whom these payments have been made, this should include counsel's fees, all environmental, archaeological, groundwater and of course highways work.

Response

Expenditure since the July 2021 decision is as follows and is based on payments made:

Atkins (external consultant for Road and Masterplan design, includes survey work): £4,300,399

Internal Salary Costs (circa as pending recharges for April – Jun 22): £431,089

Legal fees (licenses, landowner costs, compulsory purchase order): £137,952

RPS (external contractor for road ground investigations): £197,864

Ringway: (external contractor for road investigations): £5,080

Cratus (external consultant for communications and engagement): £22,450

Venue Hire: £1,544

Total: £5,096,378

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27 September 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Mr Tom Styles

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 (22-176)

I wish to raise the issue of support for Ukrainian refugees following the initial six month period on the homes for Ukraine scheme. We need to know what the council will do about rehoming people - this is absolutely time critical and we need a response to prevent people becoming homeless in the next few weeks.

Response

The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched by the government on 14 March 2022. This scheme allows people living in the UK to sponsor a named Ukrainian national or family to live in the UK with them, providing they have suitable accommodation to offer. The scheme is uncapped, and guest and sponsor relationships are established outside of the remit of the Local Authority.

The sponsor is required to offer accommodation for a minimum of 6 months under the scheme, but this can be extended. Each sponsor will receive £350 as a thank you payment, paid monthly to the sponsor directly for 12 months. Ukrainian nationals under the scheme can remain living in the UK with leave to remain for up to 3 years and they are entitled to various benefits, including Universal Credit consisting of a housing element, to help with rent.

The Refugee, Resettlement and Migration team support guests and sponsors under this scheme with advice and support around meeting their future housing needs once the scheme ends or if there is a breakdown in relationships between the sponsor and the guest. Under these circumstances the team will try to rematch guests with sponsors in the local area.

The team have met with and will continue to meet with the local community support hubs to provide advice and guidance around sourcing private and social housing should we not be able to rematch individuals under these circumstances. Where we can provide support to the sponsor/guest relationship and avoid a breakdown in relationships we will continue to do so.

Many sponsors and guests will require advice and support from our housing team on next steps and we provide sponsors and guests with a regular briefing in English and Ukrainian. It is important to note that Wiltshire Council's Housing Register has risen significantly and as result there will be a delay in guests being able to source a property through the Council housing stock

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Mr Andrew Nicolson

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

Question 1 (22-177)

Thank you for extending the consultations on cycling and walking plans to 26 September.

What were the reasons why six of the nine schemes in Wiltshire's bid for Department for Transport Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 were withdrawn?

Response

The six schemes were at an early stage of development and the full impacts and benefits of those schemes had not been sufficiently considered to demonstrate the value of the schemes. Therefore, the six bids were withdrawn in order to focus available resources on the three bids that had been developed further.

Question 2 (22-178)

What are the prospects now for people in those specific areas, who within a year or so could have been encouraged by those schemes, to be travelling more safely and conveniently on foot or by bicycle and perhaps leaving their cars at home more often - will the schemes come back into the pipeline, or be replaced by other designs, or just be dropped?

Response

Those schemes are still under consideration and are being joined by others as we progress with the development of our LCWIPs. We are currently awaiting ATE's guidance on bidding for Active Travel Fund 4 (ATF4). Once received we will put together a bid that will give us the best chance of securing funding.

Question 3 (22-179)

Active Travel England recently said it was asking Highway Authorities to self-assess their Active Travel performance.

What "grade" did Wiltshire Council give itself, and why?

Response

Active Travel England's self-assessment process was extensive and involved answering a large number of evidence-based questions. The result of completing ATE's form was that Wiltshire Council assessed itself as Level 1. In the meantime, ATE undertook its own assessment of our Active Travel performance and agreed that we were indeed at Level 1. The majority of Councils in England were scored as either Level 1 or Level 2. Securing Level 1 ensures that the council will receive funding under the forthcoming Capability and Ambition Fund and is eligible to bid for further funding under the Active Travel Fund 4 programme.

Question 4 (22-180)

What target "grade" would the Council like to be at by 2025, and what main steps will you be taking to get there?

Response

We wish to move through the levels as fast as we can. We will continue our programme of developing LCWIPs for all our towns and will continue to submit credible bids to the Capability and Ambition Fund and the Active Travel Fund to secure the funding that will allow us to develop and implement the infrastructure needed to increase walking and cycling in the county.

Question 5 (22-181)

A National Highways study team is looking at strategic routes between the M4 and the Dorset Coast. Soon they may (or may not) recommend upgrades to the A350 north-south route or else the A36 Bath-Southampton trunk road and primary route.

Will those outcomes affect, either way, the Business Cases for such schemes as Chippenham Bypass Dualling and Yarnbrook-West Ashton Relief Road - or will they be irrelevant?

Response

The findings and wider implications of National Highway's strategic study will not be confirmed until publication of Government's third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) – ie their five year strategy for investment in and management of the strategic road network from April 2025 to March 2030.

Publication is currently anticipated early 2025.

The Council is aware that some early findings of the study may be shared shortly, but it is too early to anticipate whether there are any immediate implications for schemes currently being developed.

Question 6 (22-182)

Does the Council agree that making the A350 a primary route (or not) will affect Wiltshire's road transport carbon emissions budget, and what options do you have to mitigate for any resulting extra emissions?

Response

The A350 is already a National Primary Route.

Any significant change to the status to the A350 would require an assessment of carbon impact.

Question 7 (22-183)

The railway network in Wiltshire has lines that broadly run along the county's A350 and A36 corridors. Wiltshire Council money has paid for two thorough Rail Strategy studies, by the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP and the Western Gateway Subnational Transport Body. These recommend service and infrastructure improvements on those and other routes.

What work has the Council done on analysing and taking these forward (as whole strategies, not just selected proposals), since they were published?

Response

The Council played a substantial role in work undertaken by the LEP, and more recently by the STB.

The role of Rail in developing a low carbon, safe and connected transport system in Wiltshire will be assessed as part of the Councils review of its Local Transport Plan (LTP4), which will incorporate a review of the Public Transport Strategy.

That work (guided by the studies undertaken by the LEP and STB) is under.

Question 8 (22-184)

Is railway development, guided by these Strategies, going to form a central plank in the Council's LTP4 Local Transport Plan, and feed into the Local Plan Review as a factor in the locations of new development?

Response

The extent to which Rail can affect connectivity is being examined as part of the Local Plan Review,

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Terry Danter

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

Question 1 (22-185)

Car Park Location, Car park has been known as "Bath Road Car Park" for last 30 years at least. Reason ; Main pedestrain exit to carpark leads ionto Bath Road near the local and national bus stops, near to town bridge also, 2nd Exit leads onto Foghampshire which leads onto High Street.

Vehicle entrance and exit is via "Bridge Center Roundabout", Bridge Centre building were demoplished by council a number of years ago and area is now a "mess", spavce is used by Council employees only for car parking, used to be a Youth Centre which was closed and not replaced.

All 3 machines have been faulty for over 6 months now, at different times leaving only 1 working machine at many times. Why is this ? We have a council who claim they can manage the infrastructure for an additional 7500 houses. But currently cannot manage 3 parking machines. Can the council please explain.

Response

The council has just agreed a parking machine replacement programme at a cost of £0.38m.

This is in recognition that machines are old and need updating.

The new machines will address the faults of power supply (which was one fault on week commencing the 12th September) by being solar. The battery life issue, which was another, is being addressed. As well as the new machines improving reliability, they will also all accept contactless payment. People can also continue to pay via the mobile app MiPermit. This reduces the need to send vehicles around the county daily to repair machines and infrastructure, collect coins, mend machines after vandalism and coin jams etc.

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Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Cllr Derek Walters

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

Question 1 (22-186)

What processes are in place to oversee Atkins SLAs and to ensure DfT Guidance is applied?

Response

It is assumed that SLA refers to Speed Limit Review rather than any other definition of this acronym. As a professionally recognized and competent engineering consultancy, Atkins are suitably experienced and qualified to undertake speed limit reviews in accordance with DfT guidance. The Council's professional Highway Engineers oversee, challenge and review all recommendations before they are published.

Question 2 (22-187)

Where an Area Board does not agree the assessment what means of appeal are there?

Response

Whilst there is no formal means of appeal, it is recognized that in some cases some degree of interpretation of the Guidance may be required and a recommendation could be revisited in exceptional circumstances.

Question 3 (22-188)

In the last 5 years how many SLAs have been issued and how many have WC Highways overruled?

Response

There have been 22 speed limit reviews undertaken by Atkins in the last 5 years. All the reviews have been subject to discussion and considered by officers, and all of the reviews were agreed.