

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

17 September 2024

Agenda Item 5 - Public Participation

Questions from Cllr Derek Walters – Corsham Without Division

To

Cllr Nick Holder – Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Flooding

Statement

Deployment of Speed Indicator Devices

I have been trying to get clarity on conditions that apply to Parish Councils who wish to deploy a Speed Indicator Device(SID).

My local Parish was told that they had to delay deployment following a Speed Limit Reduction for a period of 6 months. They were also told that they had to satisfy criteria in the 'Practice Note' which, amongst other things, requires a metro count showing that the 85th percentile is greater than the enforcement speed. I.e. that 1 in 7 motorists is travelling at a speed at which they would be prosecuted.

My understanding is that this criteria was only put in place if there was expectation of passing the data to the Police. It is also my understanding is that the Police are in favour of Parish Councils deploying SIDs at locations they feel the motorist would benefit from a reminder.

Question (24-54Q)

1. So, I would like to know what the conditions are that apply to Parishes wishing to deploy a SID for informational purposes?
2. I would also like to know whether this has been communicated to Parish Councils and LHFigs?

Response

SID's should be deployed in accordance with the criteria set out in the Practice Note. There is no differentiation made between SIDs being used for educational only purposes or those being used to provide intelligence to the Police. All have to follow the same process.

The availability of the Practice Note was notified to all Parish and Town Councils when updated in April 2023 and a copy is available on the Road Safety pages of the Council's website.

A commitment has recently been made to further review the Practice Note, in conjunction with the Wiltshire & Swindon Road Safety Partnership, in light of a number of suggestions for change having been made.

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Agenda Item 5 - Public Participation

Questions from Margaret Willmot

To

Cllr Nick Holder – Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Flooding

Statement

Following cancellation of the National Highway's scheme for the A303 at Stonehenge can Wiltshire Council confirm what actions they are now taking in the following areas:

Question (24-55 Q)

Will Wiltshire Council be making renewed efforts to improve more sustainable strategic links – e.g. by re-instatement of double track on the Salisbury to Exeter rail route as recommended in previous multi-modal studies such as SWARRMS?

Response

The Government's decision to cancel the A303 Stonehenge scheme is extremely disappointing given the many years of working with our partners and key stakeholders to make the case for A303 improvements. The Chancellor's statement in July did not recognise the huge investment and amount of work that has already taken place to deliver this much needed scheme, to ease traffic congestion, and provide opportunity for significant economic growth along the A303 corridor and within the region. The project is now being closed down by National Highways. Once we have details of this and the implications for the Council, there will be a paper for consideration by Cabinet.

Improvements to sustainable strategic transport networks are already promoted and supported by the Council. For example, through the Wiltshire Local Plan Pre-submission draft 2020-2038 and Wiltshire Local Transport Plan at the local level, and as part of the Western Gateway Strategic Transport Board at the regional level. The Council is working with the rail industry to ensure improvements to the existing network and facilitate enhanced services and facilities, including new stations at Corsham, Devizes and Wootton Bassett and we look forward to the next phase of the Wiltshire Strategic Rail strategy although we also note the recent announcement from the Chancellor cancelling the 'Restoring our Railways' programme. The Council will continually review and consider further opportunities to improve sustainable strategic transport networks working with all partners and key stakeholders.

Question (24-56 Q)

Will Wiltshire Council now be looking at traffic calming, 20mph limits, safety features for pedestrians etc to alleviate the chronic problems of rat-running on unsuitable routes, e.g. through Shrewton?

Response

It is extremely disappointing that the cancellation of the A303 Stonehenge tunnel project also means that local road network improvements, which were part of the wider project to reduce rat-running and improve traffic conditions for local residents, will now not be delivered. We will be considering the next steps to take, both in terms of continuing to press for improvements to the A303 corridor and for local communities, and the potential for alternative solutions to mitigate the impacts of the cancellation of the A303 Stonehenge scheme.

Question (24-57 Q)

Wiltshire Council are parties to the 2015 Stonehenge Management Plan and therefore signed up to policies such as 6c "*Take measures through sustainable transport planning to encourage access to the WHS other than by car*". Such measures would also contribute to the Council's response to the Climate Emergency (item 9 on the agenda for 17/9/2024).

- a) What sustainable transport measures are now being planned?

Response

Please see the response to (24-55 Q). Improvements to sustainable strategic transport networks are already promoted and supported by the Council. The Council will continually review and consider further opportunities to improve sustainable strategic transport networks working with partners and key stakeholders.

- b) Will Wiltshire Council be reviewing with some urgency the current lack of safe walking and cycling routes from Amesbury to the World Heritage Site (WHS) and liaising with local stakeholders regarding possible routes?

Response

The A303 Stonehenge project is now being closed down by National Highways. Once we have details of this and the implications for the Council, there will be a paper for consideration by Cabinet. We will be considering the next steps to take, both in terms of continuing to press for improvements to the A303 corridor and for local communities, and the potential for alternative solutions to mitigate the impacts of the cancellation of the A303 Stonehenge scheme.

- c) The only safe option to reach public rights of way in the WHS currently involved a proposed toucan crossing of Countess Road, which would have been funded by

Active Travel England. This has now been delayed by Wiltshire Council due to the tunnel cancellation: are there plans to resume development of this crossing and, if not, what are the plans for accessing the WHS on foot or by bicycle?

Response

It is extremely disappointing that the cancellation of the A303 Stonehenge tunnel project has also meant that the works to provide a new cycleway and crossing on Countess Road, as part of the Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, will now not go ahead due to the lack of funding available. The progression of this project, or other alternative schemes to improve access for non-motorised users is dependent on the availability of funding in the future.

- d) For many years the only bus service accessing the Stonehenge WHS from Salisbury has been the Stonehenge tourist bus (current cost for an adult £19.50, bus only, no concessions). There have been some changes to Salisbury Reds route 2 so that there are now a few stops by the X2 service at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre on weekdays and Saturdays which is a welcome improvement. Will Wiltshire Council's sustainable transport planning include working with bus operators to provide more affordable, regular and direct services to the WHS from Salisbury, Amesbury, Devizes and Swindon (via Avebury)?

Response

The Council is continually working with bus operators to identify improvements to services. The vision for bus services is set out in Wiltshire Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (2024) which was produced in partnership with, and supported by, the bus operators.

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Agenda Item 5 - Public Participation

Questions from Cllr Ian Thorn – Calne Central Division

To

Cllr Richard Clewer – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Health and Wellbeing, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism;

Question (24-58 Q)

What is Wiltshire Council's policy on the government's proposals for devolution of power. What discussions have taken place, with whom, and what have been their outcomes?

Response

Wiltshire Council continues to hold discussions with neighbouring councils and has been asked to submit an expression of interest to government by 30 September, stating our preferred geography and governance for devolution. An update on the expression of interest submitted will be provided to Cabinet for the meeting on 8 October.

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Agenda Item 5 - Public Participation

Questions from Cllr Ian Thorn – Calne Central Division

To

Cllr Nick Botterill – Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning

Question (24-59 Q)

What effect will the government's proposals for a revised NPPF and housing targets have on the Wiltshire Council draft Local Plan?

Response

The Government's consultation on 'Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system' does not close until 24 September. It proposes transitional arrangements for emerging plans in preparation.

Paragraph 226(c) of the proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) allows for those plans that have been submitted for examination within one month of the publication of the revised NPPF to be examined under the previous version of the NPPF.

Depending on the outcome of the consultation, the plan could benefit from this transitional arrangement and any higher housing targets would need to be addressed through the preparation of a subsequent local plan at the earliest opportunity.

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**Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation /
Agenda Item 9 – Update on the Council’s Response to the Climate Emergency**

Questions from Andrew Nicolson – Wiltshire Climate Alliance

To

**Cllr Dominic Muns – Cabinet Member for Waste and Environment /
Cllr Tamara Reay – Cabinet Member for Transport and Assets**

Statement

We congratulate the Climate Team on a detailed and broadly well-produced set of documents. One omission is that we are now halfway from your two February 2019 Climate resolutions to the New Year of 2030.

Yet you are still just starting to work towards understanding the very large sources of GHG emissions represented by your supply chain, and indeed your workforce (Scope 3 emissions). The report can only be as good as the progress made by all other branches of the Council.

And the Strategy and Delivery Plan targets, even for the Council, let alone the County, do not represent a complete path to Net Zero by 2030. Meanwhile the global climate emergency has worsened since 2019, progress has fallen short, and the effects on Wiltshire and its citizens become more serious.

Question (24-60 Q)

(a) As many actions are on track, meaning a lack of enough challenge, are Cabinet Members across the board now willing to "up their game" revise their plans and increase the urgency and pace of their actions, so that the Council meets its targets early and exceeds them significantly by 2030?

Response

The council is currently revising the climate delivery plans and this an opportunity to review actions, targets and priorities within the context of the evidence base, including the modelling of the council’s potential pathways to carbon neutral, carried out by consultants Anthesis. Whilst the council is on track for carbon neutral by 2030 in Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and continues to be a forerunner among local authorities in tackling Scope 3 emissions of suppliers, the county’s emissions are not on track to be carbon neutral. We aim to work increasingly with partner organisations, residents and community groups throughout Wiltshire to decrease their emissions to help to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral, and the new delivery plans will set out what the council can do to support and influence this important area.

(b) On Scope 3 emissions, with Council procurement in focus, how soon can you do better than "starting to work" with suppliers, "towards measuring and reducing" their emissions, and actually imposing concrete and demanding targets on them to make and carry out Net Zero plans?

Response

The report includes examples of the work the council is undertaking to work with our suppliers to understand, monitor and reduce their carbon emissions in relation to our contracts. We are forerunners among local authorities in relation to our work on Scope 3 emissions and procurement. We have recently been nominated as a finalist for the Edie Net Zero awards in the category of Supply Chain Decarbonisation Project of the Year. This is due to the foresight and collaboration of the highways, climate and procurement teams to incorporate specifications within the tender process, and requirements within the Highways Maintenance contract to monitor, report and reduce carbon emissions and prepare for impacts of climate change. Milestone Infrastructure have been able to put net zero central to their contract, as a result of this contract. Experience and learning from this contract is already being incorporated into more contracts as they come up for renewal, such as the community care contract and waste service. For existing contracts, where it is not possible to significantly change the requirements of the contract during its lifetime, we are engaging with suppliers and finding that they are already committed to net zero, and we are able to share this learning, for example through the Care Provider Forum, the Highways Sustainability Showcase held in November 2023, and the regular collaboration meeting of the Highways Environment Forum. The new delivery plans will provide more detail about the plans for reducing Scope 3 emissions going forward.

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Agenda Item 5 - Public Participation

Questions from Andrew Nicolson – Wiltshire Climate Alliance

To

Cllr Tamara Reay – Cabinet Member for Transport and Assets

Statement

On Transport, you have committed to a reviewed set of transport policies (LTP3) that will meet your climate commitments. It is now accepted in the UK that the transition to EVs will not be enough, and that there will be power grid constraints on EV uptake in Wiltshire

Questions (24-61 Q)

(a) Does this mean that LTP3 will aim to achieve road traffic and congestion reductions, broadly as set out in detail in the High Ambition pathway in the 2023 Atkins Local Plan Review Transport Evidence Base, using a full range of available tools and measures, including further measures to manage the amount of urban traffic and the reallocation of road space to buses and active travel modes?

Response

The council is in the process of developing and consulting on the LTP4. Further details can be found with the LTP4 Cabinet paper and appendices. The vision proposes a low carbon, safe and connected transport system which provides future resilience, supports sustainable economic growth across Wiltshire's communities and protects the county's unique built, natural and historic environment, making this accessible for all. The LTP4 will cover the period 2025-2038 and will cover all areas of transport, including highways and network management, parking, buses, rail, active travel, road safety, freight, electric vehicles and more. LTP4 is place-led, which allows us to take into account each place's unique circumstance and means we can access more funding aligned to the emerging Local Plan. The Local Plan Review Transport Evidence Base also sets out to demonstrate those measures that may be brought forward through development intervention and aligns those with a broader scope with the emerging LTP4. The development of the LTP4 will continue to consider a range of interventions that will seek to meet the Councils climate targets and these may reflect those suggested in the Local Plan should they be deliverable following technical scrutiny.

(b) Are you willing to share these transport carbon reduction targets, and what they may imply for the forecasts and Business Cases for your A350 road schemes, with central government, inviting them to re-evaluate those schemes?

Response

A number of measures are included within the LTP4 to help meet the Councils overall Carbon reduction targets. These are based on the broad impact of measures rather than specific schemes such as the A350 corridor. The A350 schemes are being considered for their environmental and carbon implications in accordance with DfT guidelines, and this is being carried out in isolation from the LTP development in consultation with DfT.