

Wiltshire Council

Council

29 September

Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham South Division

To Councillor Richard Tonge, Cabinet Member for Finance

Question (15/02)

Could the Cabinet Member please confirm if at any time during the tendering process for the Highways and Streetscene contract any advice was received from officers that in in-house model of provision for many of the services within the contract could be made that would be cheaper and perform better?

Note: This question has been referred to Councillor Tonge as it relates to a decision taken while he was Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

Response

Members of Cabinet *and* members on the Environment Select Committee received three reports from officers covering four options for the highways and street scene services, including an in house option. These options were:

- Option 1. A full in house service provision
- Option 2. Two separate contracts, one for highways and one for street scene services
- Option 3. A single combined contract
- Option 4. Continuation of the mixed model inherited from the district councils at the time of unitary transfer (in house and external)

The report to Cabinet on November 15, 2011 from M Boden, Corporate Director outlined these four options in detail and the process to be followed to select the preferred option.

The report to Environment Select Committee on March 1, 2012 and then to Cabinet on March 20, 2012 from C Brand, Corporate Director (authors P Khansari and M Smith, Service Directors) evaluated each of these options in turn and recommended that members select Option 3 as offering the best combination of price and quality. *The report from officers did not say that Option 1 would be cheaper and would perform better.*

The final report to Cabinet on December 18, 2012 (a part 1 and part 2 report) from P Khansari and M Smith, Service Directors outlined the tenders submitted from five contractors and recommended the selection of contractor A with the best overall assessed score (Balfour Beatty).

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From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

**To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning,
Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste**

Question (15/03)

At a public meeting on 3 September, a representative of Atkins, the Council's traffic consultants, acknowledged that no data on traffic movements in and across Chippenham had been collected since 2007-8. Will you confirm that to be correct?

Response

This is not correct; as was explained at the meeting. A comprehensive set of data, including roadside interviews and number plate surveys at six locations, traffic counts at 34 junctions and 16 other sites, car park counts at eight locations including the rail station and Sadlers Mead, journey time surveys on six routes, and queue length surveys, was collected.

Although there has been no further data collection on this scale, amendments have been made to the model to take account of traffic growth between 2010 and 2015, using factors for Chippenham published by the Department for Transport. Comparisons between 2007/8 traffic flows and current flows have also been made on nine roads using traffic counts undertaken by the Department for Transport which helps to confirm the reliability of the model.

Question (15/04)

At the same meeting, the same person offered to share with the Council the assumptions which lie behind the modelling of Chippenham (and in particular, Monkton Park) traffic flows. Has this happened yet, and if so will you now make those assumptions public?

Response

A query was raised by a meeting attendee regarding the destinations of trips that originate in the Monkton Park area in the model forecast year (2026). The offer related to sharing information on the patterns of movements that are built into the Chippenham Transport Model.

This information can be provided to individuals on request, and shows the destinations of trips that have originated in Monkton Park in the AM (08:00 – 09:00) and PM (17:00 – 18:00) peak hours.

Refs 15/03-15/09

Question (15/05)

Why did the Council not require and examine those assumptions before completing the Chippenham DPD?

Response

The information provided under the response to Q2 (above) is based on the extensive data collection that took place when the Chippenham Transport Model was developed. The patterns of movement identified from this data have been carried forward to the most recent work, with traffic volumes then increased in line with factors published by the Department for Transport.

The assumptions used were in line with recognised practice. Traffic forecasts have been validated through traffic counts.

Question (15/06)

Reference is made in the Council's Flooding Evidence paper to 2007, 2009 and 2011 reports by Scott Wilson flooding consultants. It is now understood that one or more of these reports recommended that no development take place east of the River Avon until hydrological and other flood assessment studies had been carried out over a period of time? Is that correct, and if so, why has this advice been ignored in the Chippenham DPD?

Response

None of the work commissioned from Scott Wilson recommended that no development take place east of the River Avon. Their work contained a number of recommendations for the whole of Wiltshire, none of which have been ignored. The most pertinent recommendation involving Chippenham was made in 2009 and it suggested:

"...to mitigate against the anticipated effects of climate change further information through additional hydraulic modelling may be required to inform potential flood alleviation options within existing urban areas of Chippenham, Salisbury and Malmesbury."

Scott Wilson then prepared a Surface Water Management Plan - Focussed on Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury, which was published in 2011, carried out further modelling and produced a number of observations mainly addressing issues in the urban area.

It did also refer to potential developments located in greenfield areas and commented:

"These are not served by the public sewer system and flow paths associated with ordinary watercourses (ditches, mainly) are likely to convey water to the River Avon. Surface water management should be considered during the master planning

phases to direct development away from potential flow routes and to provide green open space. Site level investigation should be undertaken to identify the suitability of infiltration SuDS due to the presence in some areas of River Terrace Deposits and Alluvial Deposits.”

The draft Chippenham Site Allocations Plan follows this approach.

Hydraulic modelling is carried out periodically by the Environment Agency to update its flood risk maps. Such work is being carried out currently for the River Avon at Chippenham but the Agency indicate there are only likely to be very minor changes to current flood risk areas. These do not affect proposals of the draft Chippenham Site Allocations Plan. In terms of planning for development detailed site level investigation and hydraulic modelling is carried out as part of Flood Risk Assessments required for planning applications over one hectare and these are used to inform sustainable drainage measures.

Question (15/07)

Are the Scott Wilson reports publicly available, and if so, where?

Response

All three reports from Scott Wilson were published on Council websites (2007 work was commissioned by the former North Wiltshire District Council.) They continue to remain available to view on the following links:

Wiltshire Surface Water Management Plan – Focussed on Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury, Phase I & II - Final Report 2011

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment/planningpolicy/planningpolicyevidencebase/planningpolicysurfacewatermanagementplan.htm>

Wiltshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment High Level Executive Summary, published in June 2009:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment/planningpolicy/planningpolicyevidencebase/strategicfloodriskassessment.htm>

North Wiltshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level One 2007:

http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment/planningpolicy/planningpolicyevidencebase/evidencebasenorth.htm#SFRA_Level_One

Question (15/08)

The risk of increased flooding from green field developments around Chippenham, including the Rawlings Farm and East Chippenham sites is dealt with by requiring each site not to increase water runoff above current levels. Is it correct that measurement of current and future run off will depend entirely on calculations made by developers? And that the Council will also rely on the management and assessment of the necessary urban drainage systems being undertaken by the developers?

Response

The assessment of current and future surface water runoff will not depend entirely on calculations by developers. A flood risk assessment will be required as part of any planning submission; and this will need to include relevant information on ground conditions, existing flows and supporting calculations. This information will be reviewed by the Council as part of the planning process. Detailed or complex computer modelling will be checked by independent consultants if necessary.

The responsibility for management of drainage is set out within the Flood and Water Management Act. This could be by the Council, sewerage undertaker, management company, householders or named persons. In the event of the relevant organisation ceasing to trade ownership/maintenance responsibility would be expected to fall to the Council. It is important that any new drainage systems are suitable and effective, and the Council is keen to ensure that is the case with any future development around Chippenham.

Question (15/9)

It was also stated at the 3 September public meeting that the necessary urban drainage systems must be located within Flood Zones 1, the areas of lowest flood risk, and that systems which rely on infiltration will not be acceptable in the clay soil. Will you confirm this to be correct and that the Council will absolutely and without exception require this?

Response

In accordance with guidance any attenuation or sustainable drainage systems would need to be in Flood Zone 1 areas. The area does have clay soils which are unlikely to be effective for infiltration, and it is considered that other sustainable drainage techniques would be required. The exact arrangements would require careful consideration by the developer in order to be able to demonstrate an effective drainage system is in place to conform to current standards.

The risk of flooding to our communities is understood, and the distress and disturbance caused by flooding is appreciated, especially following the major flooding last year. It is important that new development does not add to or create additional flood risk. This is taken forward by the proposals in the draft Plan.