

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**13 October 2020**

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**Questions from Diana Evans**

**Agenda Item 8 – A350 Melksham Bypass**

**To Cllr Bridget Wayman – Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste**

**Question 1:**

Please justify the huge expense of carrying out “walk over” surveys of acres of farmland at a cost of some £670k.

**Response:**

The cost of the walk over surveys and related work is estimated to be in the region of £50,000, and forms a small element of the extensive investigation and assessment work which needs to be carried out for a scheme of this type. Getting a good understanding of local environmental, ecological and landscape issues in the area is important to inform scheme development.

**Question 2:**

The need for a bypass to bypass a bypass which will require another crossing of the Kennet and Avon Canal, plus two further bridges over Semington Brook and the River Avon. This would appear to be a huge waste of tax payers money. We would like justification for not using the proposed Route C, unanimously approved by Melksham Town Council. As you will know, this will join the A350 near the Milk Churn roundabout which then goes under the very expensive aqua-duct plus two other bridges. This section of the A350 was designed to become a dual carriageway.

**Response:**

A wide variety of options are being looked at, including routes to the west and east of the town, and consultation is being undertaken on these.

There are many factors to consider in connection with appraisal of the options, including emerging guidance on carbon impacts, ecology, public health and road safety, landscape, archaeology, employment and the economy, flood risk and drainage, cost and economic benefit. The preferred option will need to demonstrate that the reduced vehicle operating costs, improved road safety and economic

benefits justify the investment required to construct the scheme, whilst taking into account the environmental factors.

The consultation will provide the opportunity for the public and organisations, including Melksham Town Council, to give their views before the matter is considered further.