

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**24 May 2011**

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**Public Participation  
Statement from Edward Heard, Managing Director –  
*CHIPPENHAM 2020 LLP***

Chippenham 2020 and Barratts are progressing comprehensive mixed use development proposals at East Chippenham to include residential, employment, a neighborhood centre, primary schools and potentially new secondary school provision, an extensive network of green infrastructure and public open spaces along the River Avon corridor, sustainable drainage and on-site renewable energy measures. The development would be delivered on a phased basis, to be agreed with the Council, with up to 1,500 dwellings delivered by 2026. Details of the comprehensive scheme have been previously submitted to the Council.

Chippenham 2020 can already demonstrate its commitment to the regeneration of the Town Centre through its controlling interest in the old Royal Mail Sorting Office which is shortly to be redeveloped to include offices and a Convenience Store with the creation of 70 new jobs. We have also acquired the old Stronghold premises where our office is now established and, after appropriate consultation, we are considering the development of Station Square as a commercial hub around the Railway Station.

Our comments on Tuesday will cover two areas, firstly the technical aspects as to why in our opinion the process as currently drafted is flawed, and secondly we will focus on the extraordinary opportunities for the town and its people.

**1. The Consultation Process.**

It will be recalled that the previous consultation document, entitled Wiltshire 2026 – Planning for Wiltshire’s Future (2009) included the preferred Strategic Site option for 3,450 dwellings at East and North Chippenham and we cannot comprehend why the new proposed Draft Core Policy 7 (the Spatial Strategy) disregards this option all together, despite the clear advantages to the town and its people in almost every way (see 2 below).

It should be noted that pages 92 and 93 of the Core Strategy document clearly outline the “Specific issues that should be addressed in planning for the Chippenham Community Area”. The new South West option does little or nothing to address any of these issues whilst there is potential in the East to satisfactorily address them all.

The Draft Core Policy 7, as drafted, will consult upon only two options, but since both include the same major proposed expansion to the South West, the major

part of the consultation is effectively pre-determined and therefore flawed, and the public and other interested parties will be denied the opportunity of playing their rightful part.

**The Cabinet is respectfully requested to amend the potential development options proposed for Chippenham in the draft document to include a third option with suggested wording as follows:**

**Option 3**

	<b>Employment</b>	<b>No Dwellings</b>	<b>Phase</b>
<b>North Chippenham</b>	<b>2.5 ha</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>
<b>East Chippenham Area of Search</b>	<b>6 ha Up to 24 ha</b>	<b>Up to 1500</b>	<b>Phase 1 Phase 2 Phases 1 and 2</b>

The final two paragraphs of draft Core Policy 7 should be deleted from the consultation Draft Core Strategy as it does not refer to the East Chippenham Area of Search and solely refers to the South West Chippenham Area of Search. This bias suggests that the outcome of the forthcoming consultation is already decided. If the consultation is to be conducted on a level playing field it is essential that this amendment is included now.

Given this is the final public consultation stage, before the preparation of the Pre-Submission Draft Core Strategy in the Autumn, Chippenham 2020 consider that the proposed consultation, as currently drafted, would seriously prejudice fair and open consideration of the East Chippenham development option.

**2. The Opportunity.**

The comprehensive East Chippenham development proposals have a number of benefits which should be set out in the forthcoming consultation document to offer local residents and other consultees a genuine alternative to the South West Chippenham proposal and the opportunity to express their views. We believe that, properly managed, this proposed development has the potential to be an exemplar scheme of national importance. Despite worries to the contrary, the site is deliverable now - the land assembly is complete between ourselves and Barratts with whom we are working closely, and we also have agreement in principal with Network Rail to allow the required road bridge.

Amongst the many benefits it will bring the following three stand out:

- Substantial Highways and Transport improvements through the construction of an eastern link/ring road taking traffic from the A429 from the north directly to the A4 to the east. It is the traffic congestion and lack of easy parking that keeps people and quality shops out of the Town Centre and therefore prevents its regeneration. This new road will

dramatically improve the situation and facilitate the transformation of the High Street.

- “Chippenham Riverside” as the scheme would be called would have the River at its very core and, embracing the adjoining estates of Monkton Park and Hardens Mead, would, by skilful master planning, encourage and draw all residents the short distance along the river corridor right into the Town Centre (see indicative plan attached).
- The sustainable communication aspects of the site are exemplary – the existing network of footpath and cycle routes would be extended and improved to give quick and easy access to the Town Centre, the Railway Station and Wiltshire College, and Abbeyfield School is already within the site. The viability and suitability of a “green energy” Riverbus is also being investigated.

We urge you to test the proposed South West expansion against every one of the above criteria and draw your own conclusions. It totally fails to address the three main concerns of traffic, town centre regeneration and the river. However it has one major political advantage in that it has few neighbours and is therefore likely to lead to few objections!

Please do not subject the people to Chippenham to the same old mistakes of the past. Let us at least engage in a proper debate about how to make the most of this exciting opportunity for the town. Please don't accept average and mundane suburban sprawl when something exceptional is within your grasp. The people who live in and around Chippenham truly deserve better.

Chippenham 2020 would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council and others on the changes required to the proposals for the Chippenham Community Area.