

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

24 May 2011

Public Participation From Patrick Kinnersly – Secretary, White Horse Alliance Wiltshire Core Strategy

Question

We note that the majority of new housing and employment areas proposed in the draft Wiltshire Core Strategy would be located on sites remote from the major settlements and having no connections to public transport or rail-freight facilities.

Has the Council modelled the resulting increases in car and commercial vehicle traffic over the plan period? What increases over present traffic levels are predicted over the next five, ten and fifteen years on the A350, A36 and other routes through West Wiltshire? How does the Council plan to deal with these increases and prevent a steady worsening of congestion and delays on the road network?

In view of the Government's announcement on 21 May that it will halve carbon emissions within Wiltshire's current plan period to 2026, what changes will the Council now make to the draft Core Strategy to ensure that Wiltshire can achieve the reduction in road traffic needed to meet this legally binding cut in emissions?

Will the Council move the emphasis of its spatial strategy away from out-of-town locations to brown-field sites closer to town centres?

Will the Council transfer transport investment from road to rail, bus, cycling and walking? Will it commit capital from the Infrastructure Levy to funding of the TransWilts rail service between Salisbury and Swindon via Melksham and the other key settlements in what it so revealingly calls 'The A350 Growth Corridor'?

Response

The proposed Settlement Strategy focuses the majority of new employment areas and new homes towards the main settlements in Wiltshire (defined as the Market Towns and Principal Settlements of Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge) which provide the best opportunities to promote self containment (people living and working locally) and access by public transport. The Strategy can only promote rail freight facilities where they are viable, currently limited opportunities exist within Wiltshire.

Forecasting background growth on the wider network is carried out by the Department for Transport, and considers factors such as population, employment and car ownership amongst others. A revised dataset has just been issued by the Department in draft form, and we are advised that it will become definitive in July. The Council would be happy to share some of the headline forecasts with Mr

Kinnersley once they become available. The Council's policy relating to network management is set out in the Local Transport Plan and Core Strategy.

The proposed Consultation Document proposes a strong framework within which to tackle carbon emissions. It supports the delivery of sustainable patterns of development including access by alternative modes of travel to the private car and seeks to address out-commuting through focusing on job growth locally and identifying an appropriate number of new homes.

The most up to date information indicates that within Wiltshire, only 27% of the carbon emissions come from road traffic (Department for Energy and Climate Change, 2008). Transportation is therefore only part of the solution.

The proposed Strategy supports the reuse of brownland for alternative uses. This will not be sufficient to meet the needs of the town in providing for new homes.

The budget for transport investment is set year on year, and the Council already commits a substantial amount of funding towards supporting public transport, together with schemes that encourage cycling and walking. It is far too early to confidently predict the content of a future CIL charging schedule, however station interchange improvements have been cited as a good candidate for inclusion.

This is an additional stage of consultation, which is proposed to open on 13 June 2011 and as such I would encourage you to submit your comments in full through the formal process.