

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

26 JUNE 2012

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – ITEM 7: WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

QUESTION FROM BLOOR HOMES

**TO CLLR FLEUR DE RHÉ-PHILLIPE, CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC
DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC PLANNING**

Question 1

To ask the Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning when she will make available the details of objections to the Hunters Moon site as she stated would be published following the meeting of the Environment Select Committee on 11th June, and to indicated what the council's position is on these points?

Question 2

To ask the Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning whether the council has a contingency plan in place to deal with the potential for the housing supply being raised should the Inspector find the numbers or rate of delivery too low at the public examination of the Core Strategy?

Question 3

To ask the Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning whether the council has drawn up a list of preferred reserve sites which could be provided to the examination if the Inspector decides that alternative or additional sites for housing are necessary?

Question 4

To ask the Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning whether the Council will acknowledge the site at Hunters Moon as being the preferred option in Chippenham to accommodate additional housing if it is needed, to avoid the Inspector imposing housing numbers on alternative sites which have previously received strong public opposition?

Response

Question 1:

The details of objections to the Hunters Moon site will be circulated to Members as agreed at the Environment Select Committee prior to the Full Council meeting. All issues raised prior to the Wiltshire Core Strategy Pre-Submission Document (draft

Wiltshire Core Strategy) have been considered as part of the Site Selection Process set out in Topic Paper 12. All representations are already available on the Council's website.

Comments received to the proposals set out in the draft Wiltshire Core Strategy specifically relating to Hunters Moon are summarised in italics below:

- *Hunters Moon should be considered because this site has been long established in local plans, is bounded by the A4; Methuen Park and A350 and is not subject to widespread objections from local residents. Including this site in the plan would relieve pressure on other sites.*
- *The developer promoting the site is of the opinion that the Hunters Moon site represents the most appropriate location to deliver a significant number of new homes for Chippenham in the short term. The developer consider that this has been established for some time and is recorded in the Inspector's findings at the review of the last Local Plan and in the previous draft of the Core Strategy. The developer's concept statement for the Hunters Moon site has been updated to include additional options for the development of the site in light of comments received from officers and to include options to illustrate how an element of employment use could be provided.*
- *Replace the Rawlings Green strategic site with Hunters Moon. The reasons for objecting to the inclusion of Rawlings Farm are:*
 - *the lack of consideration of the impact of an exit from the site to the south, along Cocklebury Road and Station Hill.*
 - *the environmental loss and damage.*
 - *the existence of a site at Hunters Moon, to which there have been very few objections, which already has access to a road, and where environmental damage will be less (no flood risk and no damage to a river corridor). The developer is ready to move on this site, which thus qualifies as deliverable.*
- *Continue to allocate Hunters Moon as an employment site rather than allocating Showell Farm employment site.*

It is considered that there is no evidence to justify that Hunters Moon is a better site than those in the draft Wiltshire Core Strategy. The evidence which underpins the strategic site selection at Chippenham is set out in Topic Paper 12. The views expressed during consultation and evidence collected during the preparation of the Core Strategy have informed the site selection process, with the final site selection been arrived at following a balanced consideration of all the evidence available. The strategic sites identified at Chippenham will help achieve the overall objective of improved self-containment.

Although the Hunters Moon site was considered for inclusion in the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011, national policy has changed since then and sites now included in the Core Strategy are those considered central to achievement of the Core Strategy. Therefore, it is not appropriate for the North Wiltshire Local Plan Inspectors comments to be given

precedence in determining whether the Hunters Moon site should be allocated in the Core Strategy.

The Site Selection Process set out in Topic Paper 12 has assessed all the promoted sites at Chippenham, including Hunters Moon, against a number of factors including the delivery of the overall strategy for the town and for Wiltshire. Part of the site is an outstanding employment allocation in the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011. There haven't been any detailed proposals or planning applications for employment on this site. In 2005 employment provision was promoted as part of a mixed use development. More recently and up until the draft Wiltshire Core Strategy was published, the Hunters Moon site was being promoted for housing only. The employment site was reviewed as part of the Workspace and Employment Review 2011. The report concluded that

"Hunters Moon, Chippenham, is located close to Methuen Business Park. It is unsuitable because it is currently accessed via narrow roads, is sloping and is relatively detached from the town. Even with significant investment on road links and site levelling it is only likely to be seen as a secondary business location which will not generate sale and rental levels to make development viable for employment uses. The site owner has not demonstrated any intention to develop this site for employment use in the last 10-15 years."

The delivery of employment land to enable jobs to be provided is an important part of the strategy for Chippenham. Although the developer promoting Hunters Moon site is now suggesting that the site could deliver some employment land as well as housing, no evidence has been provided to indicate that it is viable and deliverable. Alternative sites now included in the Core Strategy at Chippenham offer better opportunities for employment provision.

Question 2:

The housing requirement within the draft Wiltshire Core Strategy is based on an up to date objective assessment of needs for housing in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and is considered to be robust. The housing trajectory demonstrates how land will be brought forward over the plan period to meet this.

Questions 3 and 4:

The Council will respond appropriately to any matters that are raised by the Inspector during the course of the Examination.