

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

9 October 2018

Additional Comments and Questions to the Memorandum and Statement and Questions provided on 3rd October 2018.

Colin Gale - Pewsey Community Area Partnership (PCAP), Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and Pewsey Parish Council (PPC) Comments and Questions on the proposed closure of Everleigh Household Recycling Centre

To Councillor Bridget Wayman – Cabinet member for Highways, Transport and Waste

Question/Comment 1

Memorandum, Paragraph 03:

This paragraph identified the savings that had already been provided by waste management with cuts to the opening hours to the HRC's and especially the savings made on Everleigh HRC which opens for less hours than all of the other sites. No Wiltshire Council response was made.

Response

This was a statement of fact and therefore no response was required.

Question/Comment 2

Memorandum, Paragraph 06:

This paragraph highlighted the level of response to the consultation and the overwhelming public vote to retain Everleigh open and demonstrated the value of the HRC to the local community. No Wiltshire Council response was made.

Response

This was a statement of fact and was reflected in the report to Cabinet for Cabinet to consider as part of its decision making. No further response was required.

Question/Comment 3

Memorandum, Paragraph 07 (Response 5):

The response states that “The consultation did not invite residents to select their preferred option.” I believe it is only reasonable that in the same way that Wiltshire Council identified their preferred option residents would consider that they also should identify their preferred option and the residents response would be properly recognised and considered by Wiltshire Council.

Response

The purpose of the consultation was to invite comments on the proposal to close Everleigh and identify the implications this may have along with any mitigating factors so that they could be considered by Cabinet. These factors were identified in the report and were before Cabinet and formed part of its considerations.

Question/Comment 4

Statement, Question 01 & 02:

The question identifies that from the report despite the significant consultation response that the council were not open to persuasion to keep Everleigh open. The responses gives a clear indication that the closure decision was already made and the council were essentially only examining the consequences of the closure via the consultation exercise.

Response

The proposal consulted on was the possible closure of the site. The council carried out the consultation to ensure that residents’ comments were taken into consideration before any decision was made by Cabinet. It also provided an opportunity to identify the implications the proposed closure may have along with any mitigating factors. These factors were identified in the report and were before Cabinet and formed part of its considerations.

Question/Comment 5

Statement, Question 03:

The response states “The council’s objective is to make savings while impacting the lowest number of residents.” It is evident that the rural communities are an

easy target. Last year there was a requirement to save £500,000 on bus transport. The Pewsey Community Area were hit with the biggest share of that saving, over £300,000 when their local service was cut by 40 percent. I have already identified that savings were also made on Everleigh by not restoring the hours which were restored to other sites. This year the waste management saving appears to be totally targeting Everleigh. Other Wiltshire Council savings for this year are also being sought with the possible closure of Oxenwood.

Response

The council is not targeting the rural community. The council, including the waste service, has challenging financial savings targets to achieve for 2018-19 and beyond and has to make hard decisions that are in the best interests of all of its residents.

Question/Comment 6

Statement, Question 04:

The response states “There is no record of the decision not to install the drainage in accordance with the original drawing.” This response appears to be semantics. At the meeting held on 2nd May between PCAP/CPRE and the Director for Waste and the Cabinet Member for Waste the Director for Waste advised that the drainage system had not been installed in accordance with the original drawings.

Response

The results of the survey carried out on site identified that the drainage system was not installed in accordance with the original design. Despite this the Environment Agency issued an environmental permit for the site at that time. There is no record of any decision not to install the drainage in accordance with the original plan.

Question/Comment 7

Statement, Question 06:

The response does not cover the fact that the council’s statistics do not cover fly tipping on farm land and the MOD Training Area. The Pewsey and Tidworth Community Areas are surrounded by farm land and MOD land where fly tipping is very evident.

Response

The council does record these statistics where fly tipping on private land is reported. The council has recently been working with Landmarc on reducing fly tipping on MoD land and across the county and is aware of the problem that this criminal activity presents to all landowners.

Question/Comment 8

Statement, Question 07:

It is a novel approach to recognise that the PCAP/PPC/CPRE documents were sent by PCAP to the scrutiny chairman and use that as mitigation, however, I do not believe that is how the scrutiny process is meant to work?

Response

This was a statement of fact recognising that, being aware of local opposition to the closure of Everleigh and having decided that no further overview and scrutiny engagement was required, the chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Environment Select Committee were aware of the latest documents submitted.

Question/Comment 9

Statement, Question 08:

The response recognises that the mileage distance of 10 miles to the alternative sites was wrong and was a straight line distance and not a travelled distance. The distance to the alternative sites is over twice that currently for travelling to Everleigh and takes over twice as long. This is not considered to be a minor impact as was portrayed by the consultation.

Response

The fact that residents do not consider the additional travelling distance to be a minor impact is acknowledged in the report. The responses to the comments and questions submitted recognised that the reference to a ten mile radius was based on a straight line distance rather than reflecting the distance travelled.

Question/Comment 10

Statement, Question 10.2:

The response states “It was a consultation and not a referendum.” Previous consultations have used the size of the return and percentage vote as an endorsement to support the council’s proposed change eg the percentage response for the increase in parking charges. It is not reasonable to be selective on how the public’s response is used to suite the council’s agenda.

Response

The results of any consultation are reported as fact to ensure that the decision maker (Cabinet) is fully informed of all relevant issues which form part of Cabinet’s considerations in reaching their final decision and therefore achieve the purposes of the consultation.

Question/Comment 11

The Pewsey & Tidworth Community Area’s have responded in a significant number and demonstrated the value of Everleigh HRC to them. The size of the potential savings are small and no allowance has been made to clear the site if it is closed. Everleigh HRC is in the North Wessex Downs AONB and Salisbury Plain which are protected areas. The site does not represent a monetary return to the council as it is not suitable for development.

Response

The council is seeking savings from all service areas in order to deliver a balanced budget. There are no plans for development of the site.