

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

19 May 2020

Question from Colin Gale (Pewsey Community Area Partnership)

Agenda Item 7 – Capital Programme - Transport

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

Statement:

The report requests approval for resource funding to progress 3 successful bids which will help 'Growing the Economy – Transport Infrastructure'. Shortfalls are identified in the report in the North-South connectivity across Wiltshire. However, the report fails to recognise that Wiltshire no longer has a 'Freight Management Strategy' since the previous strategy was cancelled approximately a year ago and the county currently operates on a 'free-for-all'. The Pewsey Community Area has continuously raised concerns over the last 10 years plus about the level and size of freight using the A342 and A345 (Drovers Trails) which are used by hauliers as North-South routes. Pewsey CATG has outstanding issues on hold pending a new Freight Strategy and these concerns have been raised with the Cabinet Member.

Question 1:

Please advise how Wiltshire Council can develop a Transport Infrastructure without an agreed 'Freight Management Strategy'?

Response:

The Council is currently developing its 4th Local Transport Plan – LTP4 - (largely shadowing the Local Plan Review). LTP4 will comprise a core strategy document supported by a number of daughter documents including a Freight Management Strategy.

Supplemental Question:

Please advise the timeline for LTP4 and all its associated documents including the Freight Management Strategy so that the Pewsey CATG can plan when it can expect to progress the 2 issues currently held pending a new FMS?

Response

Timetables for the Review of the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan are both affected by the current pandemic due to the difficulties associated with consultation. The working assumption for the Local Transport Plan (and associated Freight Strategy) is that there will be drafts to share in Autumn 2021.

Question 2:

If the A350 is going to be Wiltshire Councils designated North-South route how is Wiltshire Council going to manage that route with the freight hauliers and reduce the level of freight on the A342 and A345?

Note, if this is not achievable it will be pointless spending tax payer's money on an unenforceable infrastructure and the money would be better spent on improving the North-South routes actually used.

Response:

In March 2020, the Secretary of State for Transport announced DfT's second five year Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) for investment in and management of the strategic road network from April 2020 to March 2025. As part of his RIS 2 announcement in March, the Secretary of State confirmed: There are few north-south connections across the South West of England. The present strategic road for this area is a mixture of the A36 and A46, via Bath, Warminster and Salisbury. Local authorities in the area have suggested that there is a strategic case for adopting an alternative corridor – the A350 – as the main strategic route for the area; and then beginning a coordinated programme of upgrades to provide a high-quality route linking the M4 to the Dorset Coast including Bournemouth and Poole, with its economically-important port facilities. This raises a number of related questions, which are best considered together as part of a strategic study. We expect that this study will identify which corridor provides the main strategic route for the area; may recommend the trunking and detrunking of key routes; and may identify priority investments in the area that can be taken forward after the dualling of the A303/A358 is complete. Highways England will now commission that work – it is a significant opportunity for freight management issues across the south of England to be properly addressed.

Supplemental Question:

*The question was specific to Wiltshire Council, "how is Wiltshire Council going to manage that route with the freight hauliers and reduce the level of freight on the A342 and A345?". The response is a quotation from an announcement made by the Secretary of State and identifies further work that Highways England will commission. This does not answer "how is **Wiltshire Council** going to manage that route with the freight hauliers and reduce the level of freight on the A342 and A345?"*

Response

The review of the Council's Freight Strategy referred to earlier will set the framework at a local level, however the RIS2 Strategic Study will have a fundamental role in securing the efficient distribution of goods and services, tackling capacity, technical and environmental constraints across a much wider geography.