

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

18 October 2022

Item 18 – Members’ Questions

From Councillor Clare Cape, Chippenham Pewsham

To Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet member for Development Control, Strategic Planning, Finance, Procurement and Commissioning and Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Question (22-18)

Please provide a comprehensive updates to Full Council on the following:

- a) Progress to date on the Local Plan; the expected date of publication for Reg 19 consultation; and the expected date that the Local Plan will take effect. Please explain the reasons for the delay and the impact on planning applications during the interim.
- b) Wiltshire Council’s position on the remaining “Half a HIF” (Future Chippenham project). We are aware that the project has been paused awaiting the Homes England decision, what is the reason given for this extended delay? We know that “non-abortive” or sunk costs by Wiltshire Council have been stopped; please report these costs incurred to Full Council for full transparency.
- c) What is the relationship / dependency between the delay to the Local Plan and the delay to the “Half a HIF” (Future Chippenham)?
- d) What work is taking place to address the 5 year land supply issue; and to negotiate down the target housing numbers for Wiltshire which are considered by many to be excessive?

Response:

- a) Good progress is being made on the Local Plan Review and it remains a priority for the Council. The Environment Select Committee on 20 September 2022 received an update on the Local Plan, at which it was reported that a revised timeline would be published this month through an updated Local Development Scheme on the Council’s website. This is likely to push back the start of consultation until summer 2023. The reason for this is to ensure that

the draft Plan is based on a sound and robust evidence base. In the interim, planning applications will continue to be determined against the adopted Local Plan for Wiltshire, which comprises a number of documents, and any relevant made neighbourhood plans.

- b) Discussions have taken place with Homes England regarding the original GDA and the Council's preference to support and promote a scheme to the south of Chippenham and as such a revision of the GDA. The Council's request is being considered by Homes England internal processes and at present there is no timescale as to when a decision will be reached. The Council has published total spend on Future Chippenham in response to a previous question to Cabinet on the 27 September 2022 of circa £ 12.956m as of that date. As stated work on future Chippenham has paused subject to the outcome of discussions with Homes England. It is not possible to report on "non-abortive or sunk cost" until the discussions have been concluded. When discussions are concluded the outcome will be reported to Cabinet to ensure full transparency.
- c) There is no relationship between the two.
- d) Alongside updating the Council's Local Plan, the Council is seeking to improve Wiltshire's five-year housing land supply position by working with developers to bring forward allocated and permitted sites, through approving new planning applications for homes in the right locations and supporting communities to bring forward new sites for housing through their neighbourhood plans. The five-year housing land supply for Wiltshire is assessed against the figure that comes from the Government's standard method, which is set out in national planning policy and guidance. As such, there is no ability to negotiate these down.