

Wiltshire Council

Council

23 February 2015

Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Jeff Osborn, Trowbridge Grove Division

To Councillor Stuart Wheeler, Cabinet Member for Hubs, Governance, Support Services, Heritage, Arts and Customer Care

Question (16/01)

The transition to individual electoral registration was intended to run until December 2016. Instead the Government has now brought this date forward by a year. It will now run until only December 2015.

According to projections from the Electoral Commission, this rushed process could result in nearly two million persons being removed from the electoral register.

Please could Council be informed of the progress of individual registration in Wiltshire?

Do we have any estimate of the numbers being removed from our register?

Response

Wiltshire Council were one of the first councils to start the transition to Individual Elector Registration (IER) in July 2014.

We have 350,732 local government electors on the new register published on 1 December 2015, an increase of 4,003 from the 1 December 2014 register total of 346,729 local government electors.

Figures for the last three published registers are as follows:

Electors	1 February 2014	1 December 2014	1 December 2015
Local Government	358,017	346,729	350,732
Parliamentary	352,934	342,180	346,725

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Terry Chivers, Melksham Without North Division

To Councillor Richard Tonge, Cabinet Member for Finance

Question (16/02)

I'm sure most local residents of Wiltshire appreciate Wiltshire Council hosting the Rising to the challenge meeting 2016 and beyond.

However like so many of the Councils consultation meetings the 1730 start date means that most local residents that work for a living would find it almost impossible to attend. Would you agree that a later start date would have been more appropriate?

Response

We have tried to be as open as possible with the public about our budget, the scale of the savings we are making, and the need to work differently while continuing to deliver on our main priorities.

The public meetings are an important part of the budget setting process. To ensure as many people as possible were able to attend, we felt it was best to avoid daytime and late evening meetings.

We chose 5.30pm as the best time for these meetings as it meant those in employment may be able to come straight after their working day, particularly those working in the town centres where the meetings were held. The meetings were widely publicised as far in advance as possible to enable people to make arrangements to attend.

There will never be a time that suits everybody for the budget meetings, so we have made our public presentation available on our website and we do, of course, also welcome comments at any time.

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Councillors' Questions

**Question from Councillor Jon Hubbard, Melksham South Division,
To Councillor Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

Question (16/05)

The Government has confirmed it is ceasing the grants paid to 3,000 small schools to help cover the increased costs of providing free school meals.

Could the cabinet member please tell me how many Wiltshire schools are affected by this cut and what the total value of this cut is to schools across the county.

Response

The Universal Infant Free School Meal legislation (UIFSM) came into force from September 2014, placing a requirement on all primary schools to provide infant pupils with a free hot lunch.

Many schools were required to make conversions and adaptations in order to create a catering and dining facility large enough to accommodate the provision of additional school meals.

In order to assist with the transition costs, all small schools (150 pupils or below) were awarded a transitional grant of a flat rate of £3,000 per school plus additional funding on a sliding scale for the 'newly eligible' FSM pupils. The Small Schools Transitional Funding was initially awarded on a one-off basis for the 2014-15 financial year.

In 2014-15, a total of 87 Wiltshire Primary Schools received the small schools transitional funding, totalling £478,320. The individual payments ranged from £3,000 to £14,850.

In 2015-16, the small schools transitional funding was unexpectedly awarded again to small schools, at the reduced flat rate of £2,300 per school. The provisional amount to be awarded to Wiltshire schools for 2015-16 was £200,100. (The final amount is still to be confirmed, based upon the census data).

We are not expecting that there will be any significant impact on Wiltshire's small schools as a result of the central government decision to end the transitional

funding. The LA has emphasised to schools over the past couple of years that the funding would not be recurrent.

Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member for Health (including Public Health) and Adult Social Care

Question (16/06)

What steps are being taken to provide an accurate calculations of the cumulative impact on air quality and NOX levels in Chippenham and Calne of the 6 current large scale development applications (Barrow Farm, Rawlings Green, East Chippenham, Patterdown / South West Chippenham, and Forest Farm) and the two already granted outline permission (Hunters Moon and Hill Corner / North Chippenham)? And to provide that information in time for it to be taken into account in any decisions on the 6 outstanding proposals, and in the Examination in Public?

One applicant has apparently taken recent readings on the A350 / Malmesbury Road roundabout, producing a reading 50% in excess of EU limits. Given that traffic on an Eastern Link Road would exit north and west via that roundabout, why has the Council not yet established a baseline reading for it, so as to enable air quality calculations to be made for developments in Rawlings Green and east Chippenham?

Response

The Core Strategy requires that housing growth at Chippenham should be for at least 4,510 homes over the period 2006 to 2026. However, the proposals currently before the Council cumulatively are substantially in excess of this and would be considered contrary to the Plan. Therefore it is not necessary to look at the cumulative impact of this level of growth.

The traffic modelling informing the submitted Chippenham Site Allocations Plan showed reduced queuing and congestion across the local network and therefore no concerns were raised relating to air quality.

In terms of decision making prior to the conclusion of the examination, as with any planning applications the Council, as Local Planning Authority, has a statutory duty to process applications within a specified time frame. Any failure could result in an appeal against the Council for non-determination. As such, each application will be considered on its merits through Strategic Planning Committee at the appropriate

time. Applicants for significant planning applications at Chippenham are expected to provide information on air quality. This information will form part of the consideration of any application.

In respect to the provision of accurate calculations of cumulative impact it is the responsibility of developers to provide accurate data and modelling in their air quality assessments. The issue of cumulative impact is referred to in the emerging Wiltshire Council Supplementary Planning Document on air quality which gives further guidance to developers on this issue.

With regard to the applicant's monitoring at the Malmesbury Road roundabout on the A350, the Council is now establishing a monitoring site in order to identify a baseline in that location.

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Terry Chivers, Melksham Without North Division

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Question (16/03)

Wiltshire Council are spending £1 million pounds installing traffic lights on the Wiltshire Farmers Roundabout on Western Way, Melksham.

A scheme that has very little support locally, the cost of one million pounds, does this include drawing up the plans for the un-wanted scheme, if not how much extra will this add to total cost?

Response

The scheme to reduce peak hour delays and improve safety between A350 Farmer's roundabout and A365 Bath Road by installing a series of linked and co-ordinated traffic signals was due to commence in Spring 2016

The scheme has not yet been out to competitive tender, therefore a fixed cost of the works is not yet known.

Detailed plans have already been prepared, and therefore no additional design costs will be incurred

We do not now expect work on the scheme to take place until the latter part of the 16/17 financial year.

That deferral will offer an opportunity for the benefits of the scheme to be better communicated and understood.

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

**To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning,
Development Management, Strategic Housing, Operational Property and Waste**

And

**Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member for Health (including Public
Health) and Adult Social Care**

Question (16/07)

Council officers have been supplied with an estimate of an additional 36000 vehicle movements a day from the proposed developments, including over 1300 additional HGV movements a day (email from Mr Toogood to Alistair Cunningham, 29 January). Do you accept these calculations as broadly correct, or if not, what are your own calculations? How is the cumulative traffic and air quality effect of these numbers to be taken into account in planning future development around Chippenham?

Response

This question draws from Mr Toogood's email dated 29th January in which he refers to 9 development proposals at Chippenham relating to employment and housing that collectively would deliver 5,350 homes and 36.5ha of employment land if approved.

Mr Toogood then forecasts the cumulative impact of all these proposals in terms of the traffic likely to be generated.

The first part of Cllr Caswill's question looks for acceptance or otherwise of Mr Toogood's forecast traffic flows. If one worked on the basis that all the proposals were delivered and based on a very rough calculation using standard trip rates (but only at the point of access for each individual site) the numbers could be considered to be broadly reasonable, However, in reality, most car journeys are multi-purpose, and therefore it should not be assumed that there will be that number of additional movements on the network. For example, in his calculations residential trips have been calculated separate to employment trips, although many will involve leaving one to go to the other, and therefore Mr Toogood's estimate includes double counting. However, as stated in the previous answer, this level of growth would be considered contrary to the Plan.

Establishing cumulative transport impacts is of course important for the Council, and we have shown in evidence and in public the detailed modelling techniques that we use to model new trips across the network, taking into account the linked trips referred to above.

Consultants have been appointed to assess cumulative air quality impacts as part of the traffic modelling work being undertaken to address the concerns of the Inspector on the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan.

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

**To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning,
Development Management, Strategic Housing, Operational Property and Waste**

Question (16/08)

When and by whom will decisions be taken as to whether the Council will determine the development applications for Rawlings Green and East Chippenham / Chippenham Riverside in advance of the conclusion of the Chippenham Examination in Public?

Response

In terms of decision making prior to the conclusion of the examination, as with any planning applications, if valid applications are submitted then the Council, as Local Planning Authority, has a statutory duty to process those applications within a specified time frame. Any failure could result in an appeal against the Council for non-determination. Once the consultation period on planning applications have concluded the Council can proceed to determine a planning application. All the applications referred to will be considered by the Strategic Planning Committee when they are ready for determination.

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Operational Property and Waste

Question (16/09)

At a recent Cabinet meeting, you undertook to provide information about your diary commitments for Tuesday 10 and the morning of Wednesday 11th November, which prevented you from attending the opening three sessions of the Chippenham Examination in Public. Could you now please do so?

Response

On the 10 November, there was a Cabinet Meeting at County Hall which required my attendance.

On the 11 November it was unfortunate that this clashed with an important personal engagement. As the Cabinet member responsible, I had intended to attend sessions of the Examination whenever my diary allowed.

As explained at Cabinet, the Examination in Public is led by expert officers. Cabinet Members can have no active role in the proceedings, and therefore we must prioritise our attendance at the Examination in Public against other duties. As the other diary commitments on the 10 and 11 required my active involvement and given the nature of the business discussed, it was decided to prioritise these alternate meetings on the dates in question.

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, Leader of the Council

Question (16/10)

As Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), please advise what steps have been taken within the HWB to assess and promote the financial viability of the three hospitals on which most Wiltshire residents depend, the RUH, the GWH and Salisbury Hospital?

Response

The merger of Monitor and the Trust Development Authority into NHS Improvement means that there will be a new national organisation responsible for ensuring that foundation trusts are well led, in terms of quality and finances. Health and Wellbeing Boards are tasked with encouraging joined up working locally across health and social care.

As Chair of Wiltshire's Health and Wellbeing Board I meet regularly with the Chairmen and Chief Executives of each of the Foundation Trusts to consider a range of issues, including financial viability.

It is worth noting that unlike many Health and Wellbeing Boards, Wiltshire includes key NHS providers as non-voting members on the board. The presence of providers on the HWB has given partners a better and more direct understanding of the whole system and the role of providers in delivering change, and in turn, providers are very positive about the opportunity the HWB gives them to engage with a 'single commissioning role'. This direct involvement enables them to exert influence and align their own strategies.

Wiltshire's HWB has received regular updates on the delivery of Wiltshire's Systems Resilience and Operational Capacity Plan, which considers risks across the local health and social care system. Wiltshire's System Resilience Group (SRG) has allocated funds to providers to support their operational performance and process changes in service delivery.

Locally, a significant piece of work is also now beginning, with our partners in Bath and NE Somerset and in Swindon, to develop a [Sustainability and Transformation Plan](#) (STP) to cover the next five years. The STP is a requirement of recently issued

NHS Shared Planning Guidance and will become the single application and approval process for being accepted onto programmes with transformational funding for 2017/18 onwards. This plan will clearly set out how our local area will meet the finance and efficiency challenges that the local health and social care system faces and ensure financial sustainability.

Allied to the STP, the CCG's and providers' Operational Plans for 2016/17 will demonstrate how they intend to reconcile finance with activity (and where a deficit exists, set out clear plans to return this to balance). These will be published in March. Also currently under development is the Better Care Plan for 2016/17, which oversees £30m of funding under the aegis of the HWB, with the aim of delivering significant savings across the health and social care system through improvements to intermediate care.

NHS Wiltshire CCG's recent letting of the Adult Community Health Services contract has also been considered at the Health and Wellbeing Board (see [update](#) at the last meeting). The preferred bidder has now been identified as Wiltshire Health and Care (WHC). This new provider was selected by a procurement panel involving colleagues from Wiltshire CCG and Wiltshire Council. WHC is a joint venture organisation focused solely on community services in Wiltshire. The organisation is a partnership between Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust. Delivered through integrated community teams across the county, Wiltshire Health and Care will help us to meet the challenges of an ageing population and enhance partner working across the health economy to provide a health service fit for tomorrow.

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Councillors' Questions

Questions from Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, Leader of the Council

Question (16/11)

In the same capacity, what was the value and length of the recently awarded contract to Virgin Care? When the contract was awarded to Virgin Care, was it understood that Virgin Care have a publicly stated policy of achieving an 8% profit margin?

Response

The value of the contract awarded to Virgin Care is £12.8 million per year for 5 years with the potential to extend the contract for a further 2 years. The decision to award a contract for children's community health services to Virgin Care is the result of a joint commissioning project between the Council, NHS Wiltshire CCG and NHS England. During the procurement process, commissioners checked the financial modelling put forward by Virgin Care for the duration of the contract. This does not include any profit margin.

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, Leader of the Council

Question (16/12)

The Chippenham Area Board regrettably took the decision in early 2014 to proceed with a planning application for a skate facility in Monkton Park. Two years later, (a) how much has been spent on external consultancy for that planning application and (b) what is the value of the officer time that has also been committed to the preparation of the application?

Which members and substitute members of the Northern Area Planning Committee have been consulted and / or informed as part of the preparation of the application and / or in any pre-application discussions?

Response

- A)** In February 2015 the Council appointed the contractor Wheelscape to design the Chippenham Skate Park and submit the planning application. To date £5,000 has been spent on the planning application.
- B)** Officer time has not been quantified in respect of this as the onus, through contract, has been on the contractor to prepare the application. Officer time has been spent facilitating meeting e.g. with Skate Park users via the Local youth Network.
- C)** No formal consultation has been undertaken with the Members of the Northern Area Planning Committee. Updates have been provided via the Area Board. Cllr Peter Hutton, who has been involved in the original Skate Park task group, attended the 2 meetings held with skate park users. This was in his capacity as chair of the Local Youth Network.

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From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Question (16/13)

In June last year, the Council carried out a formal consultation on additional on-street parking restrictions in Chippenham, many of which are very important to residents in the area I represent. Apparently it has not been possible for you to take any decisions on the consulted proposals because the relevant Council officer has been redeployed on other work, and there is no one to take his place. Did you approve this redeployment, and if not who did? Will you take this opportunity (a) to apologise to the people of Chippenham for the delay and (b) to provide the timelines in which decisions will be taken and will be implemented?

Response

Staff shortages and retention problems have affected the Highways Network Management Team and it has been necessary to reprioritise work. The team deals with 90,000 streetworks notices annually, of which about 16,000 have excavations and reinstatements, and the team has recently been busy with the additional carriageway resurfacing and repair work being undertaken by the Council in connection with the Local Highways Investment Fund 2014 – 2020. It has been important to deal with these works in order to reduce traffic delays and ensure these vital works are carried out safely.

The reviews of parking restrictions have consequently had to be delayed. The staff shortage is being addressed by recruitment and the Council's proposed budget for next year includes additional funding for further streetworks posts. This will release staff to progress the parking reviews. Some progress has already been made with the West Wiltshire area, and the Chippenham review should be considered shortly. The timescale for implementation will depend on consideration of the response to the proposals.

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Question (16/14)

I have been recently informed by a Council officer that *"At present we are in a position, both financially and with the impending change of highway contractor, that we are not submitting any requests for refreshing or installing of white lines."* Is this a decision which applies publicly across the whole of the County? Was it taken with your approval, and what consideration has been given to the road safety implications?

Response

If there are serious safety issues requiring lining work these are dealt with as priorities. The highways teams are busy making arrangements with the contractor for the new highways contract which starts in April. The winter is not a good time of year for doing lining and road marking works as the weather can be wet, and salt on the road can cause problems. It is therefore usual for the majority of lining works to be carried out when the weather is better.

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Councillors' Questions

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Tony Trotman, Chairman of the Northern Area Planning Committee

Question (16/15)

When it was decided to move meetings of the Northern Area Planning Committee to afternoons from early evenings, I recall that you promised a review of the decision in response to concerns expressed by myself and other Councillors. Has this review been undertaken or started? Or if not, when will you get it underway?

Response

No formal review has been undertaken but officers were asked to inform the Chairman & Vice Chairman of any complaints received from local residents. Whilst a few complaints were received (and responded to) when the change to the timing of the meeting was first made, no further complaints have since been received. Though there have been a few occasions when a member of the public and ward members have been unable to attend, the ability to submit a written late item or ask for a statement to be read out on their behalf by another local residents or the Chair of the Committee allows for them to present their points to members of the committee.

Officers and the Chairman have been informally monitoring attendance by local residents at committee and though there has been no significant change, the number of people attending the meetings has marginally increased.

As the new arrangements for the Northern Area Planning Committee are working well, there is no reason for the start time to be altered.