

Statement from Ian James Bremhill Parish Council

Bremhill Parish Council welcomes the change of direction taken by Wiltshire Council to exclude development in Calne Rural to the east of Chippenham.

The public, both in Chippenham and the surrounding parishes have been strongly against this development during this EIP process, and the evidence supplied to the Council in a number of reports has vindicated the hard work put in by the residents. Not least that the transport evidence that has been found to be inadequate.

Although Wiltshire Council has excluded development to the east on this occasion there is a fear that this site will be revisited in the future. There are remarks in the content of the Council's new proposal, which indicates that this is just one stage of development for Chippenham.

The parish council is concerned that any future development to the east that may include an Eastern Link Road, and a bridge over the river Avon which will all be in the parish of Bremhill.

The parish has an emerging Neighbourhood Plan which is now 3 years down the road and will be put forward for public consultation on the Council website in the coming weeks. In view of the changes put into the modified CSAP it appears that there will be no conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan. Policies put forward in the plan recommend that there should be no development north of the North Wiltshire Rivers Cycle Route in line with evidence supplied by Wiltshire Council in the 2014 Landscape Survey.

The Council recognized the risks in developing to the east, as did the Planning Inspector Mr. Patrick Whitehead. The deliverability of such a large development which included massive infrastructure costs, the impact on the landscape, and the high risk of flooding in Chippenham Town should such a development overspill flood defences. The risks were too high to mitigate, and will be in future, especially in the light of Climate Change which will see the River Avon rise by as much as 20% in heavy rainfall in the coming years.

The public understands that Chippenham town will need relief from traffic congestion in future years. Has the council asked the public which of the link roads would be most valuable to them, an eastern or southern link road? This must form the first basis of any consultation in the future. The southern link road will take traffic to and from the A4 to A350 quickly and uninterrupted by suburban infrastructure to the commercial south west of Chippenham, and connect quickly the A4 to Bath, Bristol and the M4. This will relieve the inevitable congestion that occurs at the Bridge Centre, Rowden Hill, and the narrow rail tunnel, and the 3 roundabouts on route to the A350.

Finally I would like to thank Mr. Sturgis, Mr. Cunningham, and the planning department for all their hard work in the last few months to produce a plan

which the Inspector will hopefully pass and help the Planning department return to a more stable working environment, rather than a reactive conflict with developers who are very keen to see the destruction of our countryside. I would ask that every emphasis be focused on bringing forward brown field sites in the future. The parish council recognizes the need for additional housing in the Chippenham area, but it must not come at the expense of the valued Avon and Marden valleys. This land is the green lungs of Chippenham, where many enjoy the fresh air and countryside.

Ian James
May 10th 2016