

Wiltshire Council

Council

12 July 2016

Questions from Mr Lance Allan, Trowbridge Town Clerk, on behalf of Trowbridge Town Council

Question 1 (Ref P16/07)

At the November Full Council meeting Councillor Alan Hill spoke very eloquently about the need for the Wiltshire councillors to be presented with the evidence in order for them to be able to make decisions on this important matter affecting the future of Wiltshire.

In doing so, Councillor Hill made a very simple argument in favour of the decision which was then made at that meeting; that the Community Governance Review Working Party should give further consideration to a number of the proposed boundary changes. Councillor Hill and other Wiltshire Councillors as well as those of us also interested in this issue have waited eagerly for the evidence to be presented, for the evidence to be analysed and assessed and for the arguments in favour and against to be weighed up and a conclusion drawn from the evidence.

How can the Working Group believe that the Community Governance Review (Pending Schemes) report before the Council for consideration today presents the evidence in a clear, coherent and consistent way, supporting the conclusions which have been made in the recommendations contained in the report, in a way which Councillor Hill and others expected and in a way that such a report to the council should be presented, if it is to be taken at all seriously?

Question 2 (Ref P16/08)

With regard to the recommendation at paragraph 8.31, let's consider the evidence and see how clear, coherent and consistent it is.

Two pieces of evidence are cited in the report.

The first is the detailed submission from Trowbridge Town Council, (which presents the case for the proposals).

The second is the recognition by the Working Group that the area consists of '*a mixture of areas where development had already been built out, areas that had allocations in the Core Strategy . . . and areas currently utilised for local employment.*' In paragraph 6, the report states that; '*The Working Group has therefore taken into account any significant development including unimplemented planning permissions and any relevant allocations in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.*' This reflects the government guidance.

In addition the Working Group comments that; '*Schemes 27 and 28 were natural progressions of the urban extension of Trowbridge from scheme 26 where the housing had already been built.*'

Therefore all of evidence presented in the report supports the proposal.

On what clear, coherent and consistent basis does the Working Group justify ignoring the evidence to reach the conclusion that no action is taken?

Question 3 (Ref P16/09)

With regard to the recommendations at paragraph 8.32 and 8.33/8.34, let's consider the evidence and see how clear, coherent and consistent they are.

Three pieces of evidence are cited in paragraph 8.32 of the report.

The first is *'that the response to the consultation showed the majority of respondents disagreed with the proposal.'*

The second looks at access to the area and notes; *'that the only access to this area was from Trowbridge'*

The third looks at improving the boundary and notes *'that the existing boundary was out of date and anomalous.'*

Three pieces of evidence are cited in paragraph 8.33 of the report.

The first looks at access to the area and notes; *'that access to this area of land was only possible via Trowbridge'*

The second looks at improving the boundary and notes; *'that the proposed boundary would be an improvement.'*

The third is *'that the response to the consultation was mixed'*

On what clear, coherent and consistent basis does the working group justify ignoring the evidence from the consultation (in an area with 28 residential properties), giving significantly greater weight to access and improving boundaries in paragraph 8.32, yet at the same time ignoring the evidence relating to access and improving boundaries, giving significantly greater weight to the consultation (in an area with only three residential properties) in paragraph 8.33/8.34?

Question 4 (Ref P16/10)

With regard to the recommendations at paragraph 8.35 to 8.38 and 8.39/8.40, let's consider the evidence and see how clear, coherent and consistent they are.

Two pieces of evidence are cited in paragraphs 8.35 to 8.38 of the report.

The first is the improved boundary; *'Scheme 22 reflected a more easily identifiable boundary'*

The second is the response to the consultation at paragraph 8.36.

Only one piece of evidence is cited in paragraphs 8.39/8.40 of the report.

This is the outcome of the consultation, which was '*strongly in favour of the proposal*'.

On what clear, coherent and consistent basis does the working group justify ignoring the evidence relating to improving boundaries, giving significantly greater weight to the consultation in paragraph 8.35 to 8.38, yet at the same time ignoring the evidence from the consultation, in paragraph 8.39/8.40?

Question 5 (Ref P16/11)

With regard to the recommendation at paragraph 8.45 to 8.48, let's consider the evidence and see how clear, coherent and consistent it is.

Only one piece of evidence is cited in paragraphs 8.45 to 8.48 of the report.

This is the outcome of the consultation, '*the majority of responses came from outside the area and were therefore less influential*'.

In addition the report at paragraph 8.47 includes a statement from the parish council, with no balancing statement from the town council.

On what clear, coherent and consistent basis does the working group justify ignoring the only evidence they cite in paragraph 8.45 to 8.48, on the basis that the consultation is less influential because responses come from outside the area, when for Schemes 21, 23 and 103 they have completely ignored the views of respondents who live in the areas concerned? How does the Working Group justify the inclusion of statements from one side, statements which could be made equally about both alternative proposals? Surely the only conclusion to be drawn from the inconsistency, incoherence and lack of clarity is that the Working Group has yet again failed to provide evidence to justify its conclusions?