

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

1 December 2020

From Adrian Temple Brown

To Councillor Philip Whitehead, Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications

Item 5 – Public Participation

Statement

I have serious concerns about the massive and unsustainable housebuilding in all of Wiltshire which is being planned and supported by Cabinet members. There is no recognition by the personnel in cabinet that there will be destruction of natural assets, closure of council farms, generation of extra traffic, immense carbon emissions and carnage of the lifeforms that currently live in the soils which cabinet members actively condone digging up and concreting over.

The set of documents for the Chippenham eastern expansion, which have been released under Freedom of Information (or by appeal) to date are available in the following public folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hJuQS9EmTVOG3nktKgnT-8iUzwujeo_E?usp=sharing

Within this folder, the Atkins document “*Chippenham Urban Expansion Environmental TAG Report Wiltshire Council 07-February 2018*”, listed as Appendix 33 of the HIF Bid has one single section related to the impact of Greenhouse Gas emissions from this WC Cabinet project, as follows:

4.3. Greenhouse gases

4.3.1. Assessment

The scheme will introduce a new source of greenhouse gas emissions from road transport. It may also serve to change journey distances due to traffic rerouting via the distributor road rather than through central Chippenham. The proposed scheme may also affect average vehicle speeds on existing and proposed routes.

Construction of the scheme would include additional embedded carbon emissions.

4.3.2. Impacts

The potential impact of the scheme on greenhouse gases is anticipated to be slight adverse.

Cabinet is aware that I would particularly like to spotlight the huge amount of environmental damage and the immense quantity of GHG emissions that will occur from the site preparation and construction associated with this 6.5million m² of countryside being turned into a housing and industrial estate. The above Atkins document considers GHG emissions from the extra vehicle journeys which this Countryside Expansion will bring in *excruciating* detail, but it does *not* consider the CO₂ emissions from it's construction in any detail at all.

In the concluding GHG "Impacts statement" presented by Atkins to Cabinet (copied above), the phrase "slight adverse" is:

- a. not defined,
and is:
- b. utterly meaningless, when used alongside the other words in the impact statement.

Significant emissions will occur from the following sources which are not detailed by Atkins in this document:

- CO₂ and CH₄ emissions from the removal and the compost of (incineration of) trees, shrubs, vegetation, insects and soil bio-matter prior to site clearance
- Inorganic Carbon CO₂ Soil emissions from site levelling
- Inorganic Carbon CO₂ Soil emissions from excavation of foundations
- CO₂ and NO_x emissions from all on-site construction equipment through the clearance, build and finishing phases
- CO₂ emissions from all personnel through the project and fuel for their transport to and from site during the project
- Carbon footprint of concrete and steel materials used in foundations and utility channels
- Carbon footprint of all construction materials for houses and industrial units built to current HMG planning regulation standards
- Carbon footprint of all construction materials for roads, pavements and street furniture

- Carbon footprint of all internal finishes for new houses and industrial units
- CO₂ and NO_x emissions from all transport of personnel and materials to and from the site through the duration of the project

The arguments that “cabinet is just following orders”, that “there is a housing crisis”, that “there is no money”, that “new houses will be sustainable”, that “we can’t we don’t have any detail” have all been repeatedly trotted out as justification for cabinet members not needing to accept personal responsibility for these emissions and this ecological destruction. It is clear from the HIF application documentation that this development is about money and jobs and there is no quantification or consideration of Emissions and Ecological destruction from it’s construction. It’s obvious to all why extracting *any* detailed information from cabinet about this project has been like pulling teeth - totally obvious.

Since each cabinet member is individually responsible for driving forward green-belt housing/industrial/road development by voting this project through both in public and in secret, each cabinet member really must be aware of the immense damage that they are personally planning to do to the environment and to the atmosphere. You need to take your heads out of the sand and open your eyes **NOW** to this damage - at the *outset* of the project - rather than when you’ve gotten Wiltshire Council fully pregnant with it. The information which quantifies this damage in terms that cabinet members can understand is completely missing from the documentation set for the Chippenham Eastern Expansion – so in the context of the Climate and Ecological crisis which you purport to understand, how can you possibly proceed without requesting this information ?

There is no Wiltshire Council Policy that forces Carbon and Ecological budgeting for building projects in Wiltshire and Cabinet currently has no plan at all, nor any intent to put such a policy in place. It is therefore unclear if the lack of detailed GHG emissions data in the Atkins documentation set is due to incompetence, ignorance or deliberate suppression.

Cabinet members cannot possibly balance the economic and social gain of this project against Climate Damage and Environmental Loss because you don’t have the key information to weigh up the pros and cons and make an informed decision. It’s obvious that you don’t even want to see it.

I often ask myself how long you guys will string out doing nothing about stopping huge destructive infrastructure projects, whilst fiddling around with the little green projects - despite having declared a Climate Emergency *18 months ago!*

So I have a few of questions for the *people* – parents, grandparents, great-grandparents - who make up cabinet, on the documentation associated with the Chippenham Eastern Expansion project, questions that are relevant to documentation for any and all proposed new building within Wiltshire:

Question 1

Is Section 4.3 of Appendix 33 of the 1000s of pages associated with the HIF Bid the only place where CO₂, CH₄ and NO_x emissions are considered and an impact statement about GHG is made ?

Response

The question would require a full review of all of the HIF bid documentation in order to provide an answer to the question and resource capacity is not available at this immediate time to undertake that exercise. The Council intends to publish HIF bid in the near future where members of the public will be able to review the document.

Question 2

If the answer to 1. Above is 'No', could you list all HIF-bid document references that consider GHG emissions – and release the [redacted] documents (or relevant sections), if required, so that the full detail and calculations which drive the 15-word impact assessment in "Section 4.3.2" can be reviewed by the public?

Response

As previously stated , the Council has confirmed that it intends to release the HIF bid documentation once it has been fully reviewed and the appropriate areas redacted.

Question 3

Considering the existing peaceful countryside *today* vs the proposed Chippenham Urban Expansion *when finished*, what is the reasonable worst case figure for the number of extra vehicle journeys in Wiltshire brought about by this project [document reference for this figure much appreciated] ?

Response

The road route option has yet to be consulted on and therefore it is premature at this stage in the project to ascertain the information requested