

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

14 December 2021

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from: Daniel Kronenberg (Member of Cycling Opportunities Group Salisbury)

To Councillor Dr Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding

Question 1 – (21-353)

Cllr you tweeted in the summer, when observing an empty cycle lane on holiday in Dublin, that you "won't be copying its transport policies in Wiltshire." I'm wondering is this a personal opinion or Wilts Council policy?

Response:

The Council's policy positions are set out in the Core Strategy, Local Transport Plan and more recently offered for consultation in our draft Climate Strategy wherein we confirm our aspirations to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport. Our Local Transport Plan will work out the best mix of solutions to help us achieve zero emissions while ensuring a well-functioning economy and high quality of life for Wiltshire residents.

One of the draft key objectives is: Creating the infrastructure for increased walking, cycling, shared and public transport and use of alternative fuels, including electric vehicle charging points.

At the same time we must be realistic that as a largely rural county, the majority of people will continue to travel by car for the foreseeable future. Improved provision for cyclists – a key goal – should not come at the expense of increased congestion and air pollution on the road network.

Question 2 – (21-354)

Will we fail to see any new cycling infrastructure for the whole county and how does this fit in with the Council declaring a climate emergency and commitment to active travel and encouraging healthy lifestyles and a healthier environment for the county?

Response:

The Council has an extensive programme of walking and cycling improvements which are in various stages of feasibility, detailed design and delivery. We are also preparing Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans (LCWIPs) for our major towns as well as a countywide version. LCWIPs will be the subject of consultation, and are key to accessing future funding from Department for Transport.

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Question from Julie Wheeler (Resident in Chippenham) – Future Chippenham

**To Councillor Richard Clewer Cabinet Member for Economic Development,
Military Civil Integration, Arts, Heritage and Tourism /**

**Councillor Nick Botterill Cabinet Member for Development Management, Strategic
Planning and Climate Change**

Statement

This week we had pop up consultations in town regarding 'Future Chippenham' and we were invited to get involved. So having read your vision for us on the morning of Saturday 4th December at 8.00 I headed down to Borough Parade to give you my opinion. We waited and waited, we walked all round Borough Parade and there was no one there! We checked the time and place on our leaflet. Yes, we were in the right place at the right time. There was definitely no one there! We eventually had to go home as we had an appointment to keep. Later that day we discovered from others that the consultants had actually set themselves up on the town bridge instead.

It has also been reported to me that someone else had gone to the railway station to speak to the 'consultants' They again failed to find them. Later they discovered that they were in the Waiting Room. What busy commuters are going to look in the waiting room on their way in or out of the station?

Then I have looked online to fill in the form. First there is lots and lots and lots of information about what you intend for us in Chippenham and why you think it is a good thing. Then I looked on the form. I was puzzled. Nowhere on the form that I could see, was the opportunity to say what I needed to say. No where that I could say that I do not want the beautiful countryside between Pewsham and the Lacock roundabout to be replaced by a bridge, a distributor road and about 4 thousand houses. Nowhere on the form to say NO.

Question 1 – (21-355)

So my question to you is, was it really your intention to consult us, to properly engage with us here in Chippenham or was it just a tick box exercise for you?

Response:

We are currently engaging with stakeholders and local residents about the potential vision for the Future Chippenham scheme. The feedback received will then feed into the Framework Masterplan that is being developed for the entire site. A full public consultation on the Future Chippenham Framework Masterplan is planned to be held in Spring 2022.

Unfortunately, we had to change the venue to the town bridge as we were unable to secure a permit for Borough Parade within the available timescales. This change was promoted on social media, our residents' newsletter and on our website and Future Chippenham representatives were there from 8am to 4pm.

On the advice of the railway staff the Future Chippenham representatives were at the front and back entrances to Chippenham Railway Station for two sessions on 3 December 2021 - 7am to 9am and 3.30pm to 6pm. They were not located in the waiting room.

The questionnaire is intended to capture people's feedback to help create a vision for Future Chippenham, should the scheme go ahead. The scheme is subject to the outcome of the Local Plan review and agreement with Homes England to forward fund infrastructure for the southern scheme.

As for the consultation form this is an initial consultation to help develop the formal consultation that will take place in 2022 as part of the master plan exercise.

Therefore, although we respect that there will be people who wish to object to any development that is not the purpose of this exercise. There will be an opportunity to object as part of that consultation and the statutory consultation process that would accompany any planning applications for development.

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Question from Mel Boyle – Future Chippenham

**To Councillor Richard Clewer Cabinet Member for Economic Development,
Military Civil Integration, Arts, Heritage and Tourism /**

**Councillor Nick Botterill Cabinet Member for Development Management,
Strategic Planning and Climate Change**

Statement

I attended the Future Chippenham pop up event and the team didn't seem to understand the planning process, they said it wasn't their job to do so but the information they were giving out was misleading for this reason. As were the signs.

Question 1 – (21-356)

20% of the housing for the whole of Wiltshire in Chippenham, is not sustainable without guaranteed employment for current residents who have to out commute and the new residents. The jobs available that are above the living wage are in Melksham, Devizes and Corsham not Chippenham. The Future Chippenham team said this would be sorted out but didn't know how. If you are consulting and promising it on posters where is the evidence for Scrutiny?

Response:

The Future Chippenham master planning exercise will include proposals for homes and commercial development for jobs. There will be an opportunity to scrutinize and contribute to that process.

Question 2 – (21-357)

Where is the evidence of Chippenham's housing need until 2036, how was this calculated to be put on a poster and used on a consultation. All across Wiltshire we can see houses being built on greenfield sites but when we ask for the updated figures for the houses built we are told there are no figures since April 2019, if you don't know what has been built how can you know what is required, not just in Chippenham but all across Wiltshire?

Response:

The leaflet made available with the consultations makes reference to over 40,000 homes for Wiltshire to 2036. This draws on the published information including a need assessment accompanying the Wiltshire Local Plan Review consultation that took place earlier this year, which can be found on the Council's website at [Local Plan Review consultation - Wiltshire Council](#).

The latest published information on housing land supply uses a base date of 1 April 2019. The Council is currently working on a new housing land supply statement that will update the housing land supply position using a base date of 1 April 2021, this will also set out information on homes built and commitments that are in the pipeline, including allocated sites and sites already with planning permission.

Housing need (the number of new homes needed over a period of time) is calculated using the Government's standard methodology to a set formula which is used by all local authorities. This does not use house building statistics. However, to determine how much need might be left to plan for it is normal practice to take off the number of homes built since the base date of the housing need period and any committed housing in plans or with planning permission already that will be built by the end of the period. This then indicates how many new homes, over and above what we already know about, need to be provided for on new sites.

Statement

CPRE say you have built 40% more houses than needed, Government policy will not change until 2025 so the majority of these rushed through houses will have to be retrofitted at the expenses of the purchasers and have high energy bills, Future Chippenham said the developers would do the right thing and didn't know about policy update being required again misleading residents.

Question 3 – (21-358)

Putting up posters and saying to students at a College event that they would have an affordable eco home with employment and all facilities within 15 minutes walk has distorted the consultation. Who wouldn't agree to that fairytale?

Response:

We are currently engaging with stakeholders and local residents about the potential vision for the Future Chippenham scheme. As part of this process we have referred to Garden Communities principles. Future Chippenham can help to create 15-minute neighbourhoods with all facilities and services within a 15-minute walk or cycle.

The feedback received from this round of engagement will then feed into the Framework Masterplan that is being developed for the entire site. A full public consultation on the Future Chippenham Framework Masterplan is planned to be held in Spring 2022.

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**Question from Cllr David Vigar Councillor for Trowbridge Grove – Updates to
NPPF**

**To Councillor Nick Botterill Cabinet Member for Development Management, Strategic
Planning and Climate Change**

Question 1 – (21-359)

As the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to update annually their “supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing”, and as the last Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement was published in December 2020, will the Council be publishing an updated land supply statement this month as required by the NPPF?

Response:

We are currently working on a new housing land supply statement that will update the housing land supply position using a base date of 1 April 2021. This will be published as soon as it is available early next year.

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**Statement/Question from Colin Gale (Chairman of Rushall Parish Council) –
Upavon Primary School**

**To Councillor Phil Alford Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for
Housing, Strategic Assets, Asset Transfer**

Statement

Upavon Primary School was initially closed and mothballed for various reasons including demand based on future pupil numbers partly due to some perceived uncertainty regarding Upavon Military Camp.

Upavon children have subsequently travelled to neighbouring primary schools ie Rushall, Woodborough etc. Although Upavon and Rushall have adjoining parish boundaries there is no public footpath joining the two villages and the volume and size of traffic prohibits safe non carbon passage to Rushall Primary School.

Due to increased pupil numbers at Rushall Primary School a temporary classroom was added to the school site with an initial planning approval expectancy of 5 years. Prior to the five year planning approval lapse the need for the additional provision need was reviewed by Wiltshire Council and an extension granted due to the uncertainties in requirement that would result from Army Re-Basing.

Since the mothballing of the school the future of the Military Camp and the significant number of residence living behind the wire has become more certain and there is a significant housing development nearing completion in Upavon.

For over 10 years Rushall has been engaged in a 'Safe Pedestrian Access Scheme' within the village so that residents can walk within the village and the children can walk to school. The access scheme is currently looking for a WC highways substantive funding grant to progress the footpath closer to Rushall Drove but there is at least one further phase to achieve that goal.

The housing development at Upavon Whistledown included a footpath that just fell short of reaching Rushall Drove. The original plans for this footpath/cycleway were intended to link with the next phase of the Rushall footpath but Wiltshire planners allowed the developers to cut short the original footpath plan. Rushall did not receive any infrastructure funding from the Whistledown development and are continuously funding the footpath development that will benefit both villages from the Rushall precept and Pewsey CATG funds.

Sale of the Former Primary School:

There was no local consultation with respect to Wiltshire Councils plan to dispose of the Upavon Primary School site. Rushall Parish Council only became aware of the Wiltshire Council proposal on the 23rd November 2021 when reading the Cabinet Meeting Agenda.

The sale of the Upavon Primary School site does not appear to be consistent with pupil provision need in the area while Army Re-Basing is not fully complete and there is still a temporary classroom provision at Rushall Primary School.

If the sale of the site proceeds it will probably be to a developer for further housing which will lead again to adequate pupil provision debates. The rationale for the disposal of this site does not seem to be clear and transparent to the local residents in the area.

If Wiltshire Council proceed with the disposal of the Upavon Former Primary School site after justifying adequate pupil provision in the Pewsey Area, then a non-carbon provision should be included as part of the site sale decision to facilitate Upavon children to be able to safely walk to Rushall Primary School.

Wiltshire Council Response of 30th Nov 21:

Rather than seeking authority to dispose of the former school, the paper seeks to declare the site surplus and available for review. After Cabinet there will be consultation both internally and externally, through local elected members and relevant town/parish councils, to consider options for the site before any decision to dispose of the site is made. The process is set out in Appendix One of the report.

Statements further to Cabinet Meeting Response of 30th November 21 (21-360)

Rushall Parish Council Response:

The Executive Summary requests that the 4 sites be declared as surplus but the Proposals which are what the Cabinet will vote on quite clearly states:

“That Members confirm that freehold interest of the 4 assets can be sold by the Council.”

The Members are clearly being asked to note the position in respect of disposal and are being asked to agree the freehold sale. The Members are not being asked to agree consultation to consider options for the site before any decision of the site is made.

Colin Gale (Chairman Rushall Parish Council):

I had read the process and looked at the flow diagram which I do not find very impressive. The Cabinet Member latched onto a single element in the statement and did not address the overall issues raised. The Cabinet Member response advises that consultation will happen after the approval to declare the site as surplus. In reading the flow diagram the only real place for public consultation is at 'Site appraisal and option review' which is before it goes to the 'Asset Gateway Group'. Post the ASG it is all about disposal ie sale which is exactly what the proposal states. The proposal did not contain a single element about public consultation.

The Cabinet Member has not addressed the issues raised in the statement. It is not simply about the sale of the site it is about the future impact on the wider community and the infrastructure.

Response

The Proposal to dispose of the freehold of the site has been made by Cabinet as constitutionally it is required to do so, but the process sets out that all options for the site will be reviewed before the officer group (Asset Gateway Group) determines the best option for the site. To arrive at the best option, the respective town or parish council and local elected members are consulted, as are internal departments such as education. All comments received through the consultation are presented to Asset Gateway Group, where alternate service use and disposal are considered.

The authority enables disposal of the freehold to take place without the need to return to Cabinet, although does not oblige the Council to sell the freehold. A decision to dispose is made after consultation.

The Council has a statutory obligation under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to obtain best consideration when disposing of assets. If the Council does decide to dispose of the site the future use will be controlled by the Local Planning Authority if there is a change in use and as such there will be all necessary statutory consultation if that takes place.

