

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**28 March 2023**

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors**

**Questions from: Lucie Castleman – Representative from Hilperton Area Action Group**

**To: Cllr Nick Botterill - Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning**

#### **Question 1 (23-01)**

Can you please confirm that you would not introduce any additional housing or alternative school sites to the Trowbridge Local Plan without undertaking a further Regulation 18 consultation which would allow interested parties to put in representations on the principle of development?

#### **Response**

The Council has undertaken consultations on the Local Plan Review in line with Regulation 18, which has sought comment on levels of housing growth and potential sites at Trowbridge, in particular the consultation undertaken in 2021. An important part of developing any plan is ensuring that alongside new homes adequate infrastructure, including schools, is provided.

The 2021 consultation has provided the Council with views from the community and other stakeholders that are being taken into consideration as the draft Plan is prepared, including those made by the local community in and around Trowbridge. In line with the Council's published [Local Development Scheme](#) we are now working towards publication of the draft Plan later this year (known as the Regulation 19 stage).

#### **Question 2 (23-02)**

If a site has been ruled out in the site selections process and you were to consider including it in the Local Plan, would there also be a Regulation 18 consultation, so that interested parties can be consulted and put in representations?

This question applies to the following sites: site 6; site 677a and 677b ; site 731 and 732 where development has been promoted.

#### **Response**

As set out in the response to Question 1, the next step is to proceed to the Regulation 19 consultation. The reasons behind the proposed allocations will be set out in the evidence supporting the draft Plan including the findings of the site selection process.

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**Questions from: Dr Jimmy Walker**

**To: Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding**

#### **Statement 1**

I was delighted to hear from Cllr Clewer that WC has submitted 11 cycle projects for Tranche 4 of the Active Travel England (ATE) funding and we thank Cllr Clewer for forwarding us the list of projects.

Clearly ATE have some major ambitions in terms of walking and cycling as follows:

1. 50% of short urban trips in England to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030
2. increase active travel from 41% in 2018 to 46% of short urban trips by 2025
3. increase walking to 365 stages per person per year by 2025
4. increase cycling from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025
5. 55% of primary school-aged children to walk to school by 2025

However, I am extremely concerned that:

a) the majority of the projects proposed by WC are on the whole for shared use paths in rural areas creating constant conflict between pedestrians and cyclists

b) they are not being designed to LTN1/20 standards and that

c) for a county the size of Wiltshire and the high density of residential populations in our towns these projects are not ambitious enough to achieve a reduction in car based journeys particularly when the LCWIP contains statements “Wiltshire Council is unlikely to support new schemes on existing routes where they would cause significant detriment to motor vehicle drivers”

#### **Question 1 (23-03)**

How will these projects proposed by WC contribute to the aim of achieving 50% of short urban trips in England to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030?

#### **Response**

The emphasis of Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 (ATF4) guidance was on walking and wheeling rather than cycling. Safe and accessible shared-use paths linking communities as an alternative to hostile road conditions were in scope. It is assumed that ATE have acknowledged that such measures have a role in meeting the government’s targets.

#### **Question 2 (23-04)**

What incremental targets does WC have to increase the % of short urban trips year on year up to 2030 to achieve 50% of short urban trips in Wiltshire to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030?

### **Response**

We do not yet have such targets. The intention is that these are developed in the Active Travel Strategy that will be prepared as part of LTP4.

### **Question 3 (23-05)**

For the projects proposed how will WC measure/monitor the current baseline and increases in short urban trips made by walking and cycling year per year?

### **Response**

The council will monitor the schemes in accordance with ATE's Active Travel Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance.

### **Question 4 (23-06)**

Can WC define "significant detriment to motor vehicles" which in the centre of Salisbury are the reason for the poor air quality, congestion and danger to vulnerable road users?

### **Response**

The sentiment of this phrase is that motorists' needs should not be overlooked when developing and delivering active travel infrastructure.

### **Question 5 (23-07)**

How will Wiltshire council reduce the vehicle based congestion and pollution in Salisbury that is having a significant detrimental impact on the commercial business community and discouraging increased active travel?

### **Response**

The draft Salisbury LCWIP sets out the infrastructure that will be delivered to promote active travel in Salisbury. The implementation of the LCWIP will significantly increase active travel trips and reduce vehicular trips thereby improving congestion and air quality.

### **Question 6 (23-08)**

Can WC explain why they will not support new schemes on existing road that cause "significant detriment to motor vehicle drivers" when this clearly contravenes the aims of ATE?

### **Response**

Each active travel scheme is considered on its individual merits and demerits, and the impacts of any scheme on all road users will be established and evaluated during consultation on the scheme. However, the consideration of motorists' needs does not mean that key active travel infrastructure such as point closures, segregated cycle lanes and

junction treatments will not be implemented. Indeed, such measures have recently been implemented in Wiltshire.

## **Statement 2**

It is interesting that ATE have stated that "All schemes must be developed in consultation with local communities, in line with responsibilities under existing legislation (Public Sector Equality Duty and Road Traffic Regulation Act) and the Transport Secretary's letter of 2020. This will enable a range of views to be considered and given due regard."

## **Question 1 (23-09)**

Could you please provide evidence that all schemes were;  
i) developed in consultation with local communities along and  
ii) actual communities/groups were consulted and when for each project?

## **Response**

All of the town cycle networks, draft LCWIPs and active travel schemes were developed in consultation with local communities have been fully consulted on. Evidence of this can be provided separately.

## **Statement 3**

The Sustrans active travel challenge for schools – The Big Walk and Wheel ([www.bigwalkandwheel.org.uk](http://www.bigwalkandwheel.org.uk)) is taking place over the 20-31 March.

Yet from over 260 schools in Wiltshire only a handful were registered to take part. Such active travel initiatives are a great incentive for schools and WC to demonstrate inclusion and uptake by the schools to make a difference in the health and mental well being of children across the county.

## **Question 1 (23-10)**

Why has WC not achieved a greater uptake of schools taking part in such high profile active travel initiatives?

## **Response**

The Big Walk and Wheel is a Sustrans initiative, and this question is better addressed to them. The council supports the initiative but there are other considerations currently at play which may have led to schools not registering to take part.

## **Question 2 (23-11)**

What plans does WC have to increase the number of schools taking part in active travel initiatives that may be run in the future?

## **Response**

The council is currently working with Sustrans to develop a travel plan toolkit for schools. The council also has a travel plan coordinator who is available to support schools in developing travel plans.

## **Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan**

### **Question 1 (23-12)**

Have the results of the consultation on the Wiltshire wide and Salisbury LCWIPs been published?

#### **Response**

No. The transport planning officer for Salisbury left the council in October and the council has only recently secured a permanent replacement who will now finalise the Wiltshire wide and Salisbury LCWIPs.

### **Question 2 (23-13)**

If the LCWIP consultations have not been published – when will they be published?

#### **Response**

The plan is to publish the Wiltshire wide and Salisbury LCWIPs in early summer.

### **Question 3 (23-14)**

How have the comments made by members of the public been incorporated into the final documents?

#### **Response**

The consultation responses have been collated and categorised but have not yet been incorporated into the final documents.

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**Questions from: Dr Jimmy Walker**

**To: Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, and Skills  
and  
Cllr Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Street Scene, and Flooding**

#### **Statement**

One of the major ambitions of ATE is for 55% of primary school-aged children to walk to school by 2025. Yet in its LCWIP, the council has stated that “Wiltshire Council is unlikely to support School Streets at existing school sites where this would cause any significant detriment to motor vehicle drivers.”

#### **Question 1 (23-15)**

How is WC going to achieve 55% of primary school-aged children to walk to school by 2025?

#### **Response**

The Council is working closely with Active Travel England to ensure that we are best placed to secure funding for high-quality cycling and walking routes, improved crossings and widened pavements.

The current review of our Local Plan and Local Transport Plan will ensure that future development is planned to facilitate access to key services (including schools) by sustainable modes.

The Council's Road Safety team delivers education and training initiatives including programmes for schools to help develop the confidence and skills to walk, wheel and cycle safely.

We are also reviewing the extent to which we engage and incentivise schools to 'own' school travel plans. Schools are best placed to influence the behaviours of parents and children by locally promoting safer, active and sustainable travel to school, with the main emphasis being on reducing the number of children being driven to and from school.

#### **Question 2 (23-16)**

How is WC measuring the number of children currently cycling to school?

#### **Response**

Numbers cycling can be collected on a school-by-school basis where a school has an up-to-date travel plan, but as Wiltshire Council no longer collect mode of travel data through the school census, there is no overall picture of levels of cycling to school in Wiltshire. Aggregated data from the HomeRun app shows 2.65% of pupils from participating schools cycling.

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#### **Statement**

The Department for Transport (DfT) is currently helping local councils with a Bus Service Improvement Plan to make buses more frequent, more reliable and better value for money. Compact cities like Salisbury are ideal candidates for bus service improvements to reduce the congestion and pollution in our city.

#### **Question 1 (23-17)**

Is Wiltshire Council part of this scheme to give them access to government funding to support local services and were you awarded any funding?

#### **Response**

Unfortunately, Wiltshire Council were not successful in being awarded funding from the DfT towards their Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), although only 40% of LTAs that submitted a BSIP did. However, we were awarded £1.2 million from the Rural Mobility Fund to introduce a new Demand Responsive Transport service in the Pewsey Vale area; this will be launched at the end of May 2023.

We remain ambitious in our plans to grow bus usage and increase the modal share of the bus to meet the vast range of economic, environmental and societal benefits that the bus brings.

#### **Question 2 (23-18)**

If Wiltshire council were not awarded any funding how does WC intend to improve bus services at a time when the cost of living crisis is squeezing household budgets?

#### **Response**

Our approach to improving bus services is outlined in the Annual Review of our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which is available on our [website](#). We are working with our Enhanced Partnership, which includes all our main bus operators, towards the aims and objectives set out in the BSIP and National Bus Strategy. It is also worth noting that the Government has recently extended the £2 fare cap until the end of June to assist households with the cost of living crisis.