

Wiltshire Council

Council

29 July 2014

Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Terry Chivers, Melksham Without North Division

To Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 1

On Friday May 17th I was in attendance at the Civic Centre Trowbridge at the time you gave a briefing to Wiltshire Council staff. I was disappointed to see so many staff waking out in disgust when being told they are going to have to suffer even more cut backs and savings.

Is it still your opinion that we still don't have a staff morale problem?

Response

I would like to refute any suggestion that the council has a staff morale problem.

Cllr Chivers is referred to the report and minutes of the staffing Policy Committee meeting in November 2013. The minutes record that the committee was pleased to note that despite the lengthy periods of change that had been taking place, employee engagement had improved with the information suggesting that employees were more engaged with the Council now than when monitoring began in 2011 resolving as follows:

- 1) *To note the contents of the report.*
- 2) *To note that the analysis of all the available data showed that concerns about staff morale could not be substantiated.*
- 3) *To conclude that all of the available data suggested that, despite the changes that had been taking place and the challenges being faced, employees were engaged.*

I would also like to remind Cllr Chivers that in January of this year Cabinet was provided with a summary of the feedback received from the Local Government Association following the Corporate Peer Challenge. The Corporate Peer Team stated that one of the key strengths and important building blocks in continuing the council's transformation journey and mastering the financial challenges ahead was that they found a highly engaged workforce with a real sense of pride in the organisation stating that Staff consistently commented that they were proud to work for the Council.

It is therefore inappropriate for Cllr Chivers to be making suggestions of this nature when there is clearly no sound evidence to support it. Cllr Chivers also needs to recognise that by raising unsubstantiated issues of this nature in itself will affect morale in a negative way which is unacceptable. Cllr Chivers has been advised that if he has concerns about operational matters of this nature he should take these up with directly the Corporate Directors and despite being actively encouraged to do so has chosen not to.

The monitoring of the data available has continued since then and the most recent analysis of the data, based on the information available on 31 March 2014, showed that levels of sickness had dropped when compared to the same period in the previous year, and there had been a slight increase in voluntary turnover (0.3%). There have been no spikes in any of the data to indicate that staff engagement has reduced.

Question 2

How many disabled parking spaces are there at County Hall?

Response

County Hall (Main)

22 spaces for mobility impaired members of staff
9 spaces for mobility impaired visitors to the council

County Hall (East Wing)

2 spaces for mobility impaired drivers

County Hall (Chapman's)

4 spaces for mobility impaired drivers

Total number of spaces for mobility impaired drivers for the entire complex = 37

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From Cllr Terry Chivers, Melksham Without North Division

**To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning,
Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property, Waste**

Question 3

Does Wiltshire Council have any plans to introduce a doorstep food waste collection service? If so when, if not, why not?

Response

Wiltshire Council has no immediate plans to provide a food waste collection for residents of Wiltshire. The primary considerations are the significant cost that the council would incur in providing such a service (both in initial capital outlay, and annual revenue costs), combined with the fact that we have recently increased the county recycling rate following the successful implementation of new waste and recycling collection services across the county.

In addition to these increases in recycling, 110,000 tonnes of Wiltshire's household waste is now diverted from landfill using alternative treatment technologies. 50,000 tonnes per annum goes to produce energy at the Lakeside Energy from Waste plant in Slough, and now 60,000 tonnes per annum is treated at the new Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) facility in Westbury, where it's volume is significantly reduced and a fuel is produced.

Both of these initiatives, combined with ongoing efforts to recycle household waste, have seen the amount of waste landfilled fall to 26.7% of all municipal waste collected. Our target is to reduce this to 25% for 2014/15.

At this time, therefore, we feel that the introduction of a separate collection of food waste would place an additional and unnecessary financial burden on council tax payers when we are making good progress towards achieving recycling and landfill diversion targets.

The council has chosen to focus on food waste reduction to date. The latest research published by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) found that the average household wasted £700 per year on food and drink which was thrown away. This impacts on the council due to the need to collect and manage this waste as well as impacting on greenhouse gas emissions. The council provides advice on reducing food waste and subsidises food waste digesters which compost all types of waste food.

We shall however keep this under review, and consider the opportunities again once new collection arrangements are in place post-2017. We also note with interest that there is increasing speculation that more challenging recycling targets for local authorities could be on the way, and the potential remains for 'landfill bans' on certain materials, including food and other bio-degradable matter (items such as batteries, tyres and plasterboard are currently already regarded as unsuitable for landfill disposal). However, a food waste collection system should be implemented when required in order to deal with potential new challenges, rather than at present when current services are achieving their objectives.

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From Cllr Trevor Carbin, Holt and Staverton Division

To Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning,
Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property, Waste

Question 4

Last November a members' briefing note gave a list of solar farms going through the planning process. Would it be possible to provide an updated version of the list?

Response

The updated position with Solar Farm applications is as shown below and with a map attachment.

STATUS OF SOLAR FARMS (>1MW)

(Source: planning database)

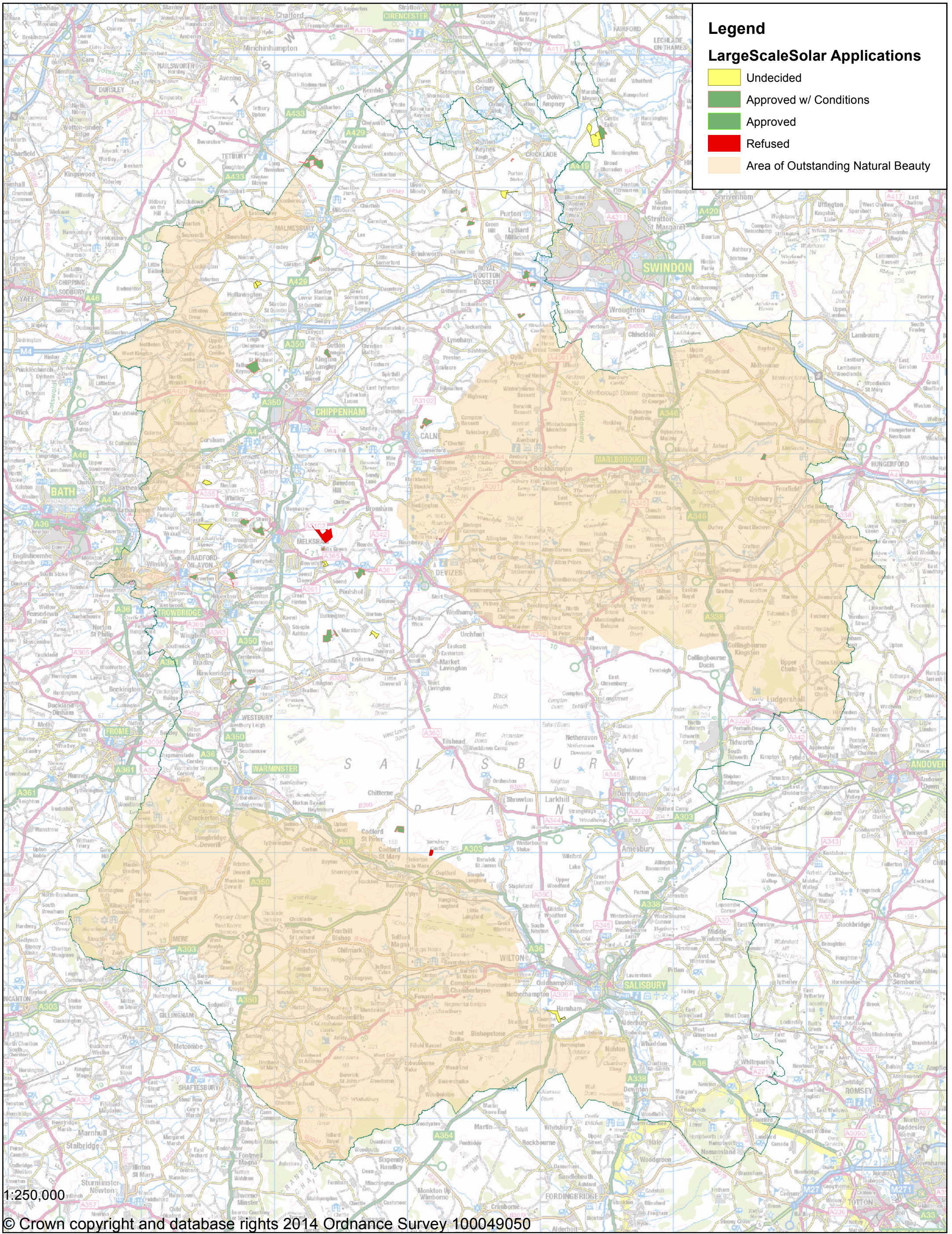
Reference	Site Address	Capacity (MW)	Area (ha)	Decision
N/11/00003/FUL	Lake Farm, Draycot Cerne, Sutton Benger, Wiltshire SN15 4SQ	5.00	17.44	Permitted
W/11/01064/FUL	Land South And East Of The Cemetry, Holt Road, Bradford On Avon, Wiltshire	5.00	14.35	Permitted
N/11/01081/FUL	Upper Marsh Farm, Brokenborough, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 9SR	5.00	14.31	Permitted
N/11/01683/FUL	Newnton Dairy Farm, Brokenborough, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 9SR	0.30	0.89	Permitted
W/12/00467/FUL	Land North Of Craysmarsh Farm, Bowerhill Lane, Bowerhill, Wiltshire	1.50	4.73	Permitted
E/2012/0946/FUL	Land at Rudge Manor Farm Rudge Marlborough SN8 2HN	7.00	11.80	Permitted
N/12/01122/FUL	Rodbourne Rail Farm, Grange Lane, Corston, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 0ES	5.00	17.19	Permitted
W/12/01213/REM	Land North Of Craysmarsh Farm, Bowerhill Lane, Bowerhill, Wiltshire	1.50	0.00	Pending
W/12/02072/FUL	Land West Of 198, Norrington Lane, Broughton Gifford, Wiltshire	12.30	22.52	Permitted
W/12/02081/FUL	Land Adjacent Sewage Treatment Works, Slag Lane, Westbury, Wiltshire	6.10	12.55	Permitted
N/12/02104/FUL	Long Newnton Airfield Brokenborough Malmesbury Wiltshire SN16 9SR	12.00	34.31	Permitted
W/12/02216/FUL	Land North East Of Codford Dairy East Farm, Church Lane, Codford, Wiltshire	7.50	14.13	Permitted
N/12/03968/FUL	Land at Chelworth Industrial Estate, Braydon Lane, Nr Cricklade, Wiltshire	1.00	2.22	Permitted
N/12/04169/FUL	High Penn Farm, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 8TE	12.00	30.38	Permitted
N/13/00520/FUL	Rodbourne Rail Farm, Grange Lane, Corston, SN16 0ES	0.00	0.02	Permitted

N/13/00623/FUL	Braydon Fields Farm, Braydon, Wiltshire, SN5 0AG	0.25	12.62	Permitted
13/00699/FUL	Land north of Deptford Farm Wylve Warminster Wiltshire	7.50	11.46	Refused
13/00984/FUL	Land to the North of Hopton Industrial Estate	1.30	2.87	Permitted
N/13/01311/FUL	Battens Farm, Allington, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 6LT	11.00	56.40	Permitted
N/13/01495/FUL	Lane East & West of Hill Hayes Lane, Hullavington, Chippenham, Wiltshire	7.00	9.32	Permitted
N/13/01561/FUL	NEWTON DAIRY FARM, BROKENBOROUGH, MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE	7.20	21.38	Permitted
N/13/01723/FUL	Braydon Manor Farm, Braydon, SN5 0AG	7.00	15.08	Permitted
13/01962/WCM	LAND SOUTH OF 40 Park Lane Heywood Wiltshire	3.50	20.59	Permitted
13/02191/FUL	Spittleborough Farm Swindon Road Lydiard Tregoze Royal Wootton Bassett Wiltshire SN4 8ET	10.00	23.91	Permitted
13/02309/FUL	Stokes Marsh Farm Coulston Westbury Wilts BA13 4NZ	16.60	50.30	Permitted
13/04055/FUL	Land East of Manor Farm Wadswick Box Corsham Wiltshire SN13 8JB	9.60	14.67	Refused
13/04872/FUL	Land at Bentham Farm Bentham Lane Bentham Purton Swindon Wiltshire SN5 4JB	8.00	21.75	Pending
13/05001/FUL	East Farm Office East Farm Codford Warminster Wiltshire BA12 OSJ	6.00	12.20	Permitted
13/05244/FUL	Lodge Farm Poulshot Road Poulshot Devizes Wiltshire SN10 1RQ	16.00	32.81	Permitted
13/06022/FUL	Land to the north of Eastwell Manor Eastwell Road Potterne Devizes SN10 5QG	1.00	0.02	Permitted
13/06140/FUL	Land at Snarlton Farm Snarlton Lane Melksham Wilts SN12 7QP	44.20	76.41	Refused
13/06336/FUL	Land to the west of Bake Farm Buildings Salisbury Road Coombe Bissett Salisbury SP5 4JT	16.07	29.21	Pending
13/06707/FUL	Land South East Of Leechpool Farm Norrington Lane Broughton Gifford Wiltshire	13.00	30.50	Permitted
13/07071/FUL	Goldborough Farm Goldborough Broad Town Swindon SN4 7QX	5.00	11.44	Permitted
14/00592/FUL	Land North Of Marsh Farm Marsh Road Hilperton Marsh Wiltshire	10.10	23.42	Permitted
14/02273/FUL	Lower End Farm Long Street Marston Devizes SN10 5SL	4.90	13.65	Pending
14/02508/FUL	Wickfield Farm Royal Wootton Bassett Swindon SN4 8QR	5.00	10.60	Permitted
14/03084/FUL	Land East of Manor Farm Wadswick Box Corsham Wiltshire SN13 8JB	6.30	15.06	Pending
14/03736/FUL	Land to the east of Bollands Hill and North of The Kennet and Avon Canal, Seend	4.00	9.40	Pending
14/04326/FUL	Land at Water Eaton Farm Latton SN6 6JT	30.00	76.91	Pending
14/05253/FUL	Land West Of Ganbrook Farm Little Chalfield Wiltshire	12.00	23.50	Pending

Wiltshire Council Map showing planning apps for solar PV farms

Where everybody matters

21.07.14



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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Ernie Clark, Hilperton Division

To Councillor Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 5

It is reported that Wiltshire Council employs 287 staff on 'zero hours' contracts. These contracts are a disgrace for any forward-looking 21st century institution. What action does the Leader intend to take to bring this practice to an end?

Response

Owing to the nature of the question, the Leader has referred drafting of the response to the Cabinet Member for Hubs, Heritage & Arts, Governance (including information management), Support Services (HR, Legal, ICT, Business Services, Democratic Services)

The council uses variable hours employment contracts where the requirement for staff is based on demand and the type of service being delivered, and allows flexibility in working patterns for the employee as well as the council. A variable hours contract means that the employee is not contracted to work a fixed number of hours, instead they are paid based on claiming for the hours that they work, and for the council this is what has been referred to as zero hours contracts.

A majority of the staff on these contracts are employed in the council's leisure centres, and in the main are employed in roles providing coaching for swimming and delivering or supporting exercise classes and other leisure activities. The use of variable hours contracts means that the employees have a choice about the hours they work for the council based on other work commitments that they may have, and allows the service to plan in response to the changing demands of its customers. Unlike many other councils Wiltshire still has a significant amount of leisure services in house, hence the comparably high number of staff employed on this basis.

The use of casual staff on zero hours arrangements in these type of roles is common place with other providers of leisure services, and we are aware that in some cases up to 60% of the workforce of some providers are employed on this basis.

The council has worked hard to move its zero hours casual workers to variable hours employment contracts as this means that these employees now have the same employment rights, including terms and conditions of employment, as every other employee at the council which includes payment for sickness absence and holidays.

There are no plans for the council to cease its use of variable hours contracts.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Terry Chivers, Melksham Without North Division

To Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Highways and Streetscene and Broadband

Question 6

It's interesting that Wiltshire Council are finding the money to sponsor Radio Programmes, on Commercial Radio across Wiltshire to promote Connecting Wiltshire. In the short advert its rightly encourages the use of all public transport including buses.

1. Is this the same buses that you have been axing across the County?
2. How much is this sponsorship costing.
3. Would you agree that this money could be better spent on supporting rural bus services cross the County?

Response

The radio adverts are paid for by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund – a grant provided by the government. This part of the funding is specifically for marketing transport related to the LSTF programme i.e. the new TransWilts rail service and access to rail stations.

We are not allowed to spend this money (or any other part of the LSTF funding) on supporting rural bus services. However, we have tried to use the LSTF marketing campaign to encourage patronage on all buses across the county, where the opportunity arises. As radio adverts target a wide geographical area, this was one of those opportunities. It is part of a bus campaign this summer which includes a free fortnight on the Bradford-on-Avon and Melksham Town buses – two supported bus services which access rail stations. Depending on how successful this campaign is, and whether there is further LSTF funding available, we may look at further free weeks on other supported bus services, so long as we can connect them to the LSTF programme.

LSTF funding has been used to pay for the new Melksham Rail Link bus, but this is because it is a new service. We are allowed to use the funding for new services (but not for existing ones unfortunately), and we are hoping that all the marketing work we are doing will make this link bus financially viable when the LSTF funding ceases.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Terry Chivers, Melksham Without North Division

To Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 7

It seems that Trading Standards has been privatised via the back door. With the consumer part of the service being passed to The C.A.B in Cumbria the public are now being told to ring 0345 4040504 which takes you to the Cumbria based call centre.

So with this in mind could I please have my questions answered which are?

1. When and why was the service transferred to the C.A.B
2. Who made the decision?
3. Why have members not been informed?
4. Where in the minutes can I find this decision?
5. What consultation took place with the public?

Response

A verbal answer will be provided at the meeting by the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Protection Services, Adult Care and Housing (excluding Strategic Housing).

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From Cllr Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 8

- a. Has the Administration made provision for a capital contribution to a skate park in Chippenham?
- b. If so, how much? And
- c. If so, who made the decision?

Response

- a) The Council has identified funding for the skate park from the sale of the Bridge Centre and the land on which the existing skate park is located.
- b) The indicative budget identified is £275,000
- c) This was a delegated decision by officers negotiated as part of the relocation package of services associated with the disposal.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Highways and Streetscene and Broadband

Question 9

- a. The Chippenham CATG has allocated funds for three road safety projects in Monkton ward in Chippenham – on Lowden Hill, on Langley Road and on New Road. In each case Balfour Beatty carried out the road engineering work but the necessary electrical connections to complete the projects took (or is taking) many additional months. Does the Council's contract with Balfour Beatty not include a requirement for them to liaise effectively with SSE to have projects of this kind completed in partnership and on time?
- b. Do you accept that the failure of these two companies to work together can jeopardise public safety and reduce public confidence in the sub-contracting of this work to the private sector?

Response

The equipment and cables providing power to most of the county's street lights and illuminated signs are the responsibility of the electricity supply company which is generally SSE in Wiltshire. The legislation does not currently allow the Council's contractors to work on this equipment or make connections to it.

This can be a problem especially with regard to street lighting faults where SSE have 20 working days to respond, which is longer than we would wish. It is appreciated that power supplies to hospitals, residents and businesses are likely to take priority to some of the Council's work, especially when there have been storms or flooding.

The Council is working with Balfour Beatty Living Places to review processes to improve delivery of the Integrated Transport schemes, and this includes liaison with SSE. Whether the work is carried out by contractors or an in-house team, the vital connection work would still have to be carried out by SSE.

It is important that the electrical work is carried out correctly and to the required standard and in accordance with the legislation.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

**To Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member for Public Health,
Protection Services, Adult Care and Housing (excluding Strategic Housing)**

Question 10

How many full time equivalent qualified social workers were directly employed by Wiltshire Council on:

- a. 1 January 2012?
- b. 1 January 2013?
- c. 1 January 2014?
- d. 1 July 2014?

Response

	FTE			
	1st January 2012	1st January 2013	1st January 2014	1st July 2014
All Social Workers	196.1	192.8	209.34	213.94
Adults Social Workers	101.4	97.3	88.5	94.2
Childrens Social Workers	94.7	95.5	120.84	119.74

These are all Full Time Equivalent figures and the 'All Social Workers' figure is combined adults and children's social worker figures.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 11

- a. Why has Wiltshire Council's planning system allowed so much out of town centre development and done so little to protect and enhance the town centre?
- b. Is this a result of decisions taken by the Conservative leadership of North Wiltshire District Council or of the priorities of the unitary administration which you lead?

Response

Owing to the nature of the question, the Leader referred the drafting of this response to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property, Waste

Wiltshire Council in determining planning applications for retail development takes into consideration national as well as local planning policy. Current national policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that a sequential approach is taken to new retail developments, as follows:

"Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. They should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale." (paragraph 24).

This recognises that it is not always possible to locate all retail facilities within town centre locations and that it may be necessary to bring forward sites elsewhere to provide for the needs of the community.

The NPPF goes on to state that for edge and out of centre proposals that an impact assessment should be undertaken for proposals that are in excess of 2,500 square metres to determine whether there will be an adverse impact of the proposal on town centre viability. Within the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy a lower threshold of 200

square metres is proposed, which will enable greater scrutiny of retail proposals than national policy.

In accordance with the NPPF, when an application fails to satisfy the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on the town centre including planned investment within it, it should be refused.

The Council implements the above national policy in its decision making, which will have contributed to the level of out of centre development. In the past the Council had the ability to also take into account the need for proposed retail development in terms of quantitative and qualitative need, which helped manage the level of out of centre retail growth. However, this test was removed from national policy some years ago.

This is not the result of the decisions taken by the Conservative leadership of North Wiltshire District Council nor the priorities of the Unitary administration. The decisions were made in accordance with The North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011, which was produced and adopted by the Liberal Democrat administration at North Wiltshire District Council in 2006 and more recently the NPPF para.24 set out above

Question 12

- a. Will the Wiltshire Council be making any representations on the Coalition Government's proposed change to the trespass law, through the Infrastructure Bill about to go through Parliament, which would allow fracking companies to drill under people's homes and land without permission?
- b. Has this Council yet issued any exploration licences for shale gas hydraulic fracturing? If so, how many and for where? If not, has it refused any? What are its future intentions on exploration licenses?
- c. Does this Council believe that the geology in Wiltshire is compatible with unconventional gas and oil extraction?
- d. Can the Council guarantee that the amounts of water required for the hydraulic fracturing process will not negatively impact on river levels and water resource in the County?
- e. Does the Council have a view on whether the County's road infrastructure could cope with the additional truck movements to and from well pads, both during exploration and full production?

Response

Owing to the nature of the question, the Leader referred the drafting of this response to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property, Waste

The Council is not proposing to respond to the consultation regarding changes to simplify procedures for the exploration of shale and gas exploration to no longer require the permission of landowners to drill under their land.

The response to the Question from Councillor Jenkins provided to the Council meeting on 4 February 2014 sets out the background to how shale gas exploration is

regulated. This clarifies that the oil and gas licencing system is managed by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC). In addition to the licence, planning permission from the Council as local planning authority is required. DECC has not granted any exploration or development licenses within Wiltshire and the Council has not received any request from potential developers to engage in preliminary discussions on matters relating to hydrocarbon development potential in Wiltshire.

The Council has not seen any evidence to indicate that the geology in Wiltshire is compatible with unconventional gas and oil extraction. The lack of developer interest would suggest that the potential for unconventional gas and oil extraction in Wiltshire is low.

Should planning applications for the various stages of fracking proposals be submitted, they will be considered in the light of the national planning policy framework (NPPF) and local development plan, which will enable impacts on the water environment and road infrastructure to be considered.

In terms of national policy, the NPPF requires that planning authorities to assess applications for all minerals developments, including conventional / unconventional hydrocarbon developments, to ensure that operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts. In doing so, planning authorities are also advised to take into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or a number of sites in a locality.

Planning applications for each stage must be subject to consultation with the local community and relevant statutory consultation bodies - such as the Environment and Highways Agency before the local planning authority can make a decision. Consideration will be given to the impacts on the water environment as well as road infrastructure during the exploration and implementation phase of planning applications.

Shale gas wells, whether for exploration or production, are subject to the environmental impact assessment regime established by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive. The EIA Directive is transposed into English law through the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. Under the Regulations, all deep drilling operations, including shale gas wells, will be screened by the local planning authority to assess whether they are likely to have any significant effects on the environment including water and transportation matters. Where significant effects are identified, an environmental statement will need to be submitted to the relevant planning authority before the planning application is consulted on and considered.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Ian West, Till and Wylve Valley Division

To Fleur de Rhé-Phillipe, Cabinet Member for Economy, Skills and Transport

Question 13

Could the Cabinet Member re-assure me that Wiltshire Council will honour the Inspectors decision at the last Inquiry dated 16th November 2011 into By Way 12 at Stonehenge

Response

It is clear the council will continue to honour the inspectors decision at the last Inquiry into By Way 12 at Stonehenge. There are no immediate plans to close the byway. As part of the emerging management plan for the WHS, it is recognised that an appropriate system is needed to protect archaeology, safety and free movement around the site. If new evidence and changing circumstances around the WHS (e.g. closure of the A344, which has happened since the Public Inquiry) merited a review of the decision, then this would of course go through the proper due process. In the meantime the council will continue to honour the Inspectors decision at the last Inquiry into By Way 12 at Stonehenge.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Simon Killane, Malmesbury Division

To Cllr Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council

Question 14

Are councillors aware of recent events with the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan and the High Court approval of 180 houses on a site that was not recommended in the [Draft Plan](#) have exposed serious issues that government urgently needs to address. [I have written to Government Ministers](#) requesting that the take action to restore confidence in the policy of Neighbourhood Planning. Malmesbury is the first community in Wiltshire to reach "Examination Stage" and is likely to be the first to referendum.

Wiltshire Council, under your leadership, has supported and resourced our steering group to make the most of any opportunity to produce a robust, well evidence, community led plan that conforms to County and National planning policies. Wiltshire Council has helped us to try to deliver real local decision making to the people of the Malmesbury Neighbourhood. The Council has also helped us to set an example about what other Wiltshire Communities could achieve. I wish to thank you for the letter that you have sent. Your letter is one of many that are on their way to the ministers.

I call on all the other councillors in this chamber to act on our example and [write to the ministers](#) expressing their concerns about the delivery of the policy and requesting urgent improvements to make it work for the people of Wiltshire.

Response

Gleeson Developments Ltd were successful in their legal challenge and the decision issued by the Planning Inspectorate on 18 March 2013 for 180 dwellings at Malmesbury on land south of Filands will stand (Appeal Reference: APP/Y/3940/A/12/2183526/NWF). This is disappointing given the local community are actively preparing their Neighbourhood Plan to inform where growth should go at the town. Significant progress has been made with the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan since the 'land south of Filands' public inquiry took place early 2013 and examination is programmed for September 2014.

In addition to the Gleeson development, another appeal for 77 dwellings on land off Park Road, Malmesbury (Appeal Reference: APP/Y3940/A/13/2200503) is now before the Planning Inspectorate for determination and a decision is expected on or before 4 August 2014. Wiltshire Council hopes that the Inspectorate will give careful

consideration of the implications of the allowed Appeal (land south of Filands), in particular the impact it will have on the Town and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Trevor Carbin, Holt and Staverton Division

To Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Highways and Streetscene and Broadband

Question 15

A year ago the cabinet member for highways announced that Wiltshire Council was to purge unnecessary signage to de-clutter our roads. How many signs have been removed to date as a result of this initiative?

Response

The offer to remove extraneous signs was directed through the Community Area Transport Groups (CATGs), who contacted parish and town councils to provide them with any requests. However take up has been low and only a few requests have been made. Active sign removal schemes are currently being progressed at Trowbridge, Melksham, Limpley Stoke, Corsham, Malmesbury, Warminster and Tollard Royal. As yet it is not possible to provide an exact figure of the number of individual signs being removed.

In addition to those locations requested by the CATG's the opportunity for sign consolidation and sign removal has been taken through the Safety Scheme programme. This includes the locations identified on the collision cluster site list and the route reviews on the A420 and A30.

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Item 14 - Public Participation

From Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Cricklade and Latton Division

To Councillor Stuart Wheeler, Cabinet Member for Hubs, Heritage & Arts, Governance (including information management), Support Services (HR, Legal, ICT, Business Services, Democratic Services)

Question 16

Please identify how many people have been/are employed in a PA role and what the total salary cost including on costs is for:

- 2009/10
- 2010/11
- 2011/12
- 2012/13
- 2013/14
- 2014/15 (current levels)

Response

Based on staff with the term "PA", "personal assistant" or "personal secretary" in their job title on SAP as at 1 April for each financial year. Note that figures shown below do not include vacant roles or roles filled with temporary agency cover.

Note that for 2009, 2010 and 2011 these figures do not include staff who undertook PA duties in services in roles with other titles (e.g. administrator).

Year	No. of employees	Salary plus on costs
2009-10	30	£760,456.46
2010-11	26	£694,692.56
2011-12	31	£780,750.74
2012-13	34	£838,729.44
2013-14	32	£809,571.79
2014-15	21	£507,493.49

Question 17

How many people were employed in a PA role and were subsequently made/given redundancy and what was the cost of these redundancies in:

- 2009/10
- 2010/11
- 2011/12
- 2012/13
- 2013/14

Response

VR costs for staff with the term “PA”, “personal assistant” or “personal secretary” in their job title on SAP.

Year	No of employees	Redundancy costs
2009-10	2	£72,425.60
2010-11	1	£16,507.60
2011-12	3	£14,654.11
2012-13	2	£23,924.66
2013-14	5	£67,412.05
Grand Total	13	£194,924.02

Question 18

Please identify all officer/member positions that have access to PA support and identify which officers/member have shared PA support and which have dedicated PA support. Where there are pooled support please identify the ratio of PAs to Officers (ie if the Corporate Directors share their PAs, then identify how many PAs support the CDs).

Response

Prior to 2011 each service area was responsible for their own PA support and staff providing this support were on a variety of different JEQ's and grades. In many areas there was overlap between administrative and PA roles.

In 2011 a review of PA support was undertaken to identify staff undertaking PA duties and to ensure greater consistency across the council. The outcome of the review was the provision of PA support to Service Directors and Heads of Service on a 1:3 ratio (1 full time PA to 3 full time managers) and to Corporate Directors on a 1:1 basis. In some cases service directors and heads of service chose to take a reduced ratio or not to have PA support in their areas.

In 2014 the decision was take only to provide PA support to Corporate Directors and Associate Directors. There is currently a PA review taking place. Once this is implemented there will be 1:1 PA support for the three Corporate Directors and 13 Associate Directors (in total 16fte PA posts). There will be no PA support for head of service level managers.

In 2014 the PA support to the Leader and Cabinet was reviewed. The ratios of PA support in the cabinet office remained the same (1 full time PA to the leader and two

full time PA's to cabinet – in total 3fte). In addition an apprenticeship role was created to provide opportunities for career development within both the cabinet and corporate PA group.