

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

30 November 2021

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from Nick Measham (Chief Executive of Salmon & Trout Conservation) - Viney Farm Site

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

Statement

Salmon & Trout Conservation is concerned that the Local Plan proposals do not have an adverse impact on the important protected habitats of the River Avon.

The Viney's Farm site is immediately adjacent to the Avon which is an underperforming SAC. Some of the area suggested for housing slopes down towards the river and there is clear potential for the proposed construction and use of the site to impact the SAC. This is an important consideration.

Question 1 – (21-341)

Can the Council confirm that if the Viney's Farm site were to be considered for inclusion in the Plan, then the Council would carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment?

Response:

Yes, Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) forms an integral part of the plan making process. The Wiltshire-Local-Plan-Review-Habitats-Regulations-Assessment-Scoping-Report, which was published alongside the recent consultation, sets out the approach to HRA for the Wiltshire Local Plan Review.

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**Question from Cllr Jon Hubbard Independent Councillor for Melksham South -
Melksham House Site**

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

Question 1 – (21-342)

With the news that Wiltshire Council has not been successful in achieving the levelling up funding which would have supported the redevelopment work on the Melksham House site could the cabinet member please reassure me, as the local member, that the promised works on this historic building will be proceeded with and that the council will seek alternative funds to hold good to its word?

Response:

There is an item on the December Cabinet forward plan to consider the future of this project.

Question 2 – (21-343)

What are the timescales for the works on Melksham House and when can Melksham residents expect to see evidence of “spades in the ground” as the work commences?

Response:

Subject to consideration of that report the works are intended to commence in the summer of 2022. In advance of this enabling works will commence in early January 2022

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Questions/Statement from Melanie Boyle – Future Chippenham

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

Statement

We are now 7 months on from when the Station Hill traffic lights were installed in Chippenham and still do not have a workable solution for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and car drivers, just extra congestion and pollution. The answer is simple, change the traffic lights to pedestrian only and paint back a roundabout.

Question 1 – (21-344)

Wiltshire Council continually say nothing is off the table, but how long do we have to wait?

Response:

Comparison of journey times in the Station Hill area with those recorded in the same period in 2019 (before the Covid pandemic) has shown that in off peak hours journey times now are comparable with those recorded in 2019. In peak hours (08.30 to 09.30 and 17.00 to 18.00) journey times now are on average 1 to 2 minutes longer than in 2019.

Given that the new layout includes a substantive improvement for vulnerable road users in the form of dedicated cycle facilities and pedestrian provision, this level of delay is considered acceptable particularly as it is only occurring during the peak hours

Optimisation of the signal operation continues with further changes due shortly to help the overall efficiency of the junction.

Statement

For Future Chippenham residents are being misled, according to the website it will:

Reduce town centre traffic congestion - this shows a total lack of understanding of Chippenham, as we have seen with the Station Hill traffic lights.

When you dig deeper it is said that by 2036 we will be using cars less, which when the latest information is that all new houses will have electric car charging points and the expense of putting on numerous new bus routes isn't viable Chippenham residents are being misled once again with selective research and headline grabbing, having links to Pewsham Way and 20% of the housing for the whole of Wiltshire in Chippenham will increase traffic in the town centre not reduce it.

In the past Chippenham residents may have given up after 7 months, but we can't keep doing this and seeing Wiltshire Council promote distress to residents, congestion and pollution in a Climate Emergency.

Question 2 – (21-345)

Why will Wiltshire Council not follow their guidelines and deal with Chippenham's traffic issues, all currently caused by Wiltshire Council with honesty and integrity?

Response:

The Future Chippenham scheme will follow all due process and will be independently assessed through a thorough planning submission. Its transport impacts will need to be assessed and encompassed within a full Transport Assessment, which will need to propose all relevant mitigation required to address or avoid congestion.

Due to the scale of development, the scheme is likely to have widespread impact, with far reaching implications which will engage and interest both Wiltshire Council as Highway Authority and National Highways as the authority for the strategic road network and junction 17 of the M4.

The Highway Authority will provide a thorough assessment of the scheme and its impacts, following a full assessment of the planning submission, with all relevant correspondence made publicly accessible on Wiltshire Council's planning website.

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Agenda Item 7 – Financial Year 2021/22 – Quarter Two Capital Budget

Question from Richard Curr – 2021/22 Budget

**To Councillor Pauline Church–Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement,
Commissioning, IT, Digital and Commercialisation**

Question 1 – (21-346)

What is the purpose of the land purchase from Lackham College budgeted at £1.3m in 2021/2.? If this for the Future Chippenham development is it pre-empting the outcome of the Local Plan.

Response:

The proposed purchase of land from Wiltshire College at their Lackham college site was dealt with in the report to cabinet December 2020. Purchase of the land cannot pre-empt any decision on the Local plan review.

Question 2 – (21-347)

What is the budget of £7.39m to be used for on the HIF if costs incurred to date are only £1.635m.?

Response:

The capital allocation reflects the estimated costs of work in progressing Future Chippenham in the current year. This includes fees and professional services.

Question 3 – (21-348)

Does the £37.526m shown as deferred to 2024/5 relate to the revised road proposal and is it anticipated that this will be fully recoverable by the revised HIF bid or is it a provision for proceeding with the road in any event?

Response:

The Council can recover expenditure incurred on Future Chippenham from the Housing Infrastructure Fund as long as expenditure complies with the requirements of the Grant Determination Agreement.

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Agenda Item 7 – Financial Year 2021/22 – Quarter Two Capital Budget

Question from Mr N Parry – 2021/22 Budget

**To Councillor Pauline Church–Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement,
Commissioning, IT, Digital and Commercialisation**

Statement

These are very important questions given the underhand nature of the way Wiltshire Council are conducting business behind closed doors, they need to be honestly answered after all this is public money being spent.

Question 1 – (21-349)

Would you please explain why there is a £1.3 million payment being made to Lackham college for land purchase in 2021/22 budget figures, please advise why and for what purpose this land is required?

Response:

This was dealt with in the report to cabinet December 2020.

Question 2 – (21-350)

Please provide a full explanation of the proposed expenditure of £7.39 million listed as Housing Infrastructure Fund and how this capital is being funded?

Response:

The budget represents projected spending for the Future Chippenham programme for the current financial year. Preliminary costs include road design and associated surveys, all other surveys, master planning and other project costs such as specialist advice and programme management. The capital is funded by £0.999m of Wiltshire Council borrowing and a £6.391m Grant

Question 3 – (21-351)

Could you please provide clarification whether any of the £1.635 million listed as spent on the Housing Infrastructure Fund has included any payment to the Shiles family as advised in the Cabinet meeting in December 2020 see item 14 in minutes.

“ Resolved:

1. That the Council makes offers for an option on the land owned by the Shiles family to the south of Chippenham as shown in appendix A to the report.

2. That the Council makes offers for an option on the Shiles land based on maximum existing use value for the land and a percentage of the land value uplift if the site comes forward for development minus the Council’s costs plus the vendors fees , and another offer based on reduced existing use value and vendors fees but increased percentage of land value uplift minus the Council’s costs.

3. That the existing use value is determined by an independent valuation.

4. That the detailed offers are made by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.”

Response:

There has been no payment made to the Shiles family

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AGENDA ITEM 9: DISPOSAL PROGRAMME UPDATE – DISPOSAL OF UPAVON FORMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Statement from Mr Colin Gale Chairman Rushall PC – Upavon Primary School
To Councillor Phil Alford Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for
Housing, Strategic Assets, Asset Transfer**

Statement:

Background:

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.

Response:

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.