



Minutes of a meeting of an Extraordinary Full Council meeting held virtually on Zoom on 21 January 2021 at 7pm.

Councillors present:

James Adman	Desna Allen
Richard Bambury	Pete Bishop
Jenny Budgetell	Clare Cape
Bill Douglas	Raj Gill (until 8.20pm)
Peter Hutton	Teresa Hutton (Chairman)
Ruth Lloyd	Nick Murry
Ashley O'Neill	Andy Phillips
Nina Phillips	David Powell
Chris Ruck (Vice)	John Scragg
Sandie Webb	

Officers present: Mark Smith, Chief Executive
Nick Rees, Director of Resources
Matt Kirby, Director of Community Services
Daryl Jones, Business Support Manager
Gillian Ballinger, Finance Manager
Heather Rae, Democratic Services Manager
Michael Weeks, Democratic and Civic Officer
Ann Chard, Administrative Services Officer - Planning
Andy Conroy, Planning Officer
Lynsey Nichols, Communications and Customer Services Manager
Paul Harvey, Head of Leisure Services
Julie Hook, Head of Venues
Helen Bywater, Corporate Support Officer
Maisie Simpson, Digital Media and Marketing Apprentice

In attendance: Simon Hendey, Director, Housing and Commercial at Wiltshire Council
Christine Lamb, Programme Specialist - Regeneration North, Major Projects Team, Housing and Commercial at Wiltshire Council

Public present: There were 45 members of the public present.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were four verbal questions and two written questions from members of the public, which are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX A**. The responses to these questions were not part of the meeting but are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX B**.

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Holly Bradfield, Michael Merry and Mary Norton.

57. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

58. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

i)

a) The Mayor thanked all present for attending the extraordinary Full Council meeting to receive a presentation from the Future Chippenham Team at Wiltshire Council regarding the public consultation on the Future Chippenham Programme. The Mayor confirmed that a Councillor question and answer session would follow the presentation, and reminded Councillors these should be questions not statements, and to manage the process Councillors would be asked in alphabetical order if they would like to ask a question that has not already been asked. The Mayor reminded all present that Councillors will not be asked to determine a formal Town Council response to the consultation at this meeting. Following this meeting, the next steps of the process would be discussed with the Chief Executive and the final process will be communicated. The Mayor highlighted that the Town Council are only a consultee in this process and do not have a vote on the topic.

59. REPRESENTATION FROM THE FUTURE CHIPPENHAM TEAM AT WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

The Director, Housing and Commercial at Wiltshire Council introduced the presentation and highlighted that the presentation this evening was on the Future Chippenham Programme referring to the proposed distributor road and not about the separate Local Plan Review referring to other development. It was noted that the road will only go forward if there is significant progress on the Local Plan. It was highlighted that there are online webinars on 28 January and 11 February, all the information is available on the consultation website. The Programme Specialist - Regeneration North, Major Projects Team, Housing and Commercial at Wiltshire presented the details of the different options and the consultation and highlighted that there is a newsletter available and all the information is on the consultation website.

Councillor James Adman questioned whether consultation views would be listened to following the recent consultation on the Saddler's Mead car park, where concerns were raised over the height and view were expressed and a taller version than the original plan was proposed. Where the road crosses cycle paths, what will happen to the cycle path and with all three routes Chippenham may double in size. Wiltshire Council confirmed that all comments would be captured so decisions can be made, comments on the cycle paths are invaluable and should be included in responses to the consultation. The size of Chippenham will be determined by the Local Plan review, there are options for allocations of sites for development around Chippenham.

Councillor Desna Allen questioned whether the impact of the pandemic would be built into a revised version of the plan. Wiltshire Council noted this was relevant to the Local Plan Review, and this would be passed onto colleagues at Local Planning.

Councillor Richard Bambury questioned which traffic surveys Wiltshire Council had been working on and highlighted concerns over more traffic on Pewsham Way. It was highlighted that the Local Plan review was considering 9,500 homes for Chippenham including surrounding towns, but little development was happening outside of Chippenham. Wiltshire Council confirmed that the traffic survey was available on the consultation website, including the options appraisal report, which is linked to development of options presented, the Local Plan related the development. It was highlighted that the routes to the South would ease congestions on Pewsham Way and the growth would be over a significant period. The HIF funding has been secured so that infrastructure can be implemented to support development of the town which is related to the Local Plan.

Councillor Jenny Budgell highlighted confusion over the Future Chippenham consultation and the Local Plan Review consultation processes happening at the same time with duplication of costs and questions having to be referred back to the Local Plan which causes confusion over where responsibility lies. Wiltshire Council noted they wanted to ensure information is being provided and highlighted that they are not arbiters of development, the Local Plan review process and it is the local planning authority that makes decisions.

Councillor Clare Cape declared that her job is a benefits manager and questioned a section of the document titled 'benefits' and whether these were vague objectives of the plan rather than benefits and questioned the lack of recorded disbenefits to the environment and heritage of the cycle track and canal. The format of the questionnaire has no option to say none of the options are suitable and why were Chippenham Councillors excluded from the initial expression of interest. Wiltshire Council confirmed the benefits are outlined in the brochure, and there are links to the full options assessment report and summary including environmental considerations. It was noted there was no limit to feedback in the box at the bottom of the consultation survey, opinions could be put there, and all feedback will go to Cabinet.

Councillor Raj Gill left the meeting.

Councillor Bill Douglas asked for clarification on whether the initial HIF bid included the proposed road through the Rawlings Green development. Wiltshire Council confirmed it did, the route through Rawlings Green was not covered by this current consultation but the proposed routes would connect to and end at Rawlings Green.

Councillor Peter Hutton questioned whether there would be a robust lighting condition as lighting from the road would have a big impact. Were recyclable materials being considered for the road, would the impact of litter from the road and laybys and infrastructure needs be considered from the start. Wiltshire Council noted that any contractor should have value engineering and if soil is taken up from one area it should be used in another area across all major projects

in the county. The comments on laybys and litter should go into the feedback form for designers to consider, electric vehicle charging points would be included. Councillor Ruth Lloyd supported Councillor Budgell's comments regarding confusion over the two Wiltshire Council consultations. Why at a time of climate and ecological emergency are the carbon cost of options not being looked at, assessed and budgeted. Wiltshire Council would take this question away and provide a response following the meeting.

Councillor Nick Murry questioned whether the intention was to build the road before the Local Plan has been adopted as plans had been developed and money spent already. Could the agreement with Homes England be revealed, should biodiversity surveys and climate change impact be done before proposing planned routes, as Wiltshire Council had declared a climate emergency. Wiltshire Council confirmed the Future Chippenham Programme is separate to the Local Plan Review, there is no predetermination. The planning application will depend on the progress of the Local Plan. The funding is a contribution toward the total cost of the road, there needs to be confidence that any development will take place, and this can only be determined by local plan. Publishing the agreement with Homes England is not in Wiltshire Council's gift, the bid information has been published with some redacted commercial information. Preparation work on routes is ongoing, once we have preferred option, more detailed biodiversity work will be undertaken. Wiltshire Council noted that a full environmental impact assessment and statement would be included, to do this on all three options would be costly and premature.

Councillor Ashley O'Neill raised concerns that the original purpose of the road was to resolve traffic and make town centre improvements but has now grown into a distributor road with no natural boundary. Why is there no option to completely disagree on the consultation page. Wiltshire Council confirmed the survey is based on road route options, the box at the bottom is for freehand options.

Councillor Chris Ruck questioned whether added public services such as schools would be built and would any future Section 106 (S106) money that comes to town because of development be spent on Chippenham rather than other development in the county. Wiltshire Council confirmed the original HIF bid highlights potential infrastructure that homes would require but it would depend on the road route option which would drive where the neighbourhood centre would be. S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies are part of an ongoing discussion and this would be taken back to Wiltshire Council. The programme would make sure there is benefit to the whole of Chippenham.

Councillor John Scragg questioned the nature of the road to be built and whether it would be suitable for traffic from Calne and Melksham to the motorway as well as the needs of housing, would there be direct access from houses and shops to the road or a minor road parallel to main road. Wiltshire Council noted that the principles of the road design would be different to a bypass, but would have facilities, housing and shops off the distributor road. This is the early stage, the next stage is concepts and principles of the road.

Councillor Sandie Webb supported the view that if there isn't a benefit in the town of Chippenham why progress the plan and did not support a route through

Stanley Park Sports Ground. A resident on the proposed route had not received communication from Wiltshire Council about the potential road. Wiltshire Council apologised for the resident not receiving the letter, something may have gone wrong in the postal system as all should have had a letter. Wiltshire Council have put posters in and around high footfall areas and encouraged all present to promote this consultation to get lots of feedback.

The Chairman thanked Wiltshire Council for attending and taking questions and highlighted that the consultation is open until 5pm on Friday 12 March. A future meeting would be organised to determine a Town Council response before the deadline.

60. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION

Councillors requested that links to the Wiltshire Council consultations be coordinated and put on the Town Council website. Councillors requested that the Youth Council have input in the consultation to provide a youth viewpoint.

61. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Full Council will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 24 March 2021.

The meeting concluded at 9pm

These Minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting

Signed on behalf of the Committee as a true record of the meeting

Chairman:

Date:

Public comments and questions

At the invitation of the Chairman residents made the following statements:

Verbal public questions:

1. “Thank you Madam Chair, my question concerns Chippenham and the Local Plan and is about risk, not only financial risk but also strategic risk and planning risk. I’m keen to know as a resident the nature of the thinking, the business logic the planning logic behind the road. Why we are proposing to invest from the County Council on a road for which the planning hasn’t been awarded and in fact the planning for the property, businesses and houses that are around it hasn’t been approved either, because it seems a strange ‘cart before horse’ kind of story. With it, given COVID and given the local economy and threat to the tax base, risks are going through the roof. My question is really about the business logic behind that and the view of the Chair and the Council, Thank you.”
2. “Thank you very much, I think there are a lot of issues that need to be thought about before there is anything definite about the distributor road but I would like to know, what sort of crossing is planned, if there were ever to be built a distributor road, where this distributor road crosses Stanley Lane because that has not been clear in what has been published so far.”
3. “Firstly, I would like to start with the plans for the Road. Based on information released under an FOI request, it can be seen that on 24th June 2019 a letter to WC confirmed the council’s support for the HiF Bid. I was one of the members of the public excluded from that meeting. However there is also a letter from Councillor Webb and the Chief Executive Officer Mark Smith supporting the bid dated 26 November 2018, 7 months before the discussions in the full council. It is important to note that this letter was fundamental to WC in fulfilling one of the conditions for the Bid, which was to have public support. How is this discrepancy in dates possible, on what authority was that November letter written and how can the road be being considered before the Local Plan, without resorting to pre-determination? I would like once again to remind the council of the Nolan Principles that govern public life, including acting only in the public interest, and being transparent in all actions. I’m sure the councillors will have noticed the flood warnings in place around Chippenham. Imagine how bad the flood would be if the flood plains were built on the surrounding area was concreted over, and climate breakdown resulted in significantly more rainfall, as predicted in Wiltshire Council’s own Core Policy.

I attended WC’s Local Plan presentation last night (20th January), and I have a couple of comments; It was stated that Chippenham was chosen because it is “environmentally less constrained”. I would challenge the council to find an area that is more constrained than the part of Chippenham that has river on two sides, is largely flood plain, and is bisected by a railway line.

I also contest the statement from Spatial Planning that it is “inevitable that greenfield land will be needed” and challenge this council to think progressively about the kind of future they really want for Chippenham. Will CTC support more

of the same infinite growth on a finite planet, or look for new solutions that meet the needs of future generations without resorting to Ecocide?”

4. “Good evening Councillors, very nice clock you’ve got there now, that’s good. I’ve been along a few times to Chippenham Council to talk about the climate and the ecological emergencies, so I think you know where I’m coming from. Having read the information that’s available at the moment I’d like the Council to actually consider requesting that we don’t proceed at all with this consultation on the grounds that there is really only one third of the information there in the paperwork. We don’t have any estimates of the damage to the environment from putting this road in and it won’t just be one road, it’s a distributor road so there’ll be several smaller roads coming off it. We also don’t have any estimation of the carbon emissions budget from all of this work through the countryside. So, what we can see so far is a completely unbalanced, finance only approach. Wiltshire Council have confirmed in writing that they themselves have no plans to do any carbon budgeting for any of either the road or the housing estate or the industrial estate and they have no plans to do any ecological budgeting for any of that work either. So we are presented with an economic growth side of the argument but there isn’t any counterbalance that shows people the damage that’s being done to the environment particularly underneath the soil and also to the climate and the atmosphere and we know that this is a crisis and that actually climate change is the biggest problem that we’ve got on our plate, it’s not economic growth, it’s climate change. So because of those things I’d like to ask that this council request Wiltshire Council and the Future Chippenham Team stop at this moment and put in the damage budgets for CO2 emissions and ecology so that the public can actually consider proposals correctly.”

Written public questions:

5. I sent an email 3-5 January about the housing plans and only 7 out of 20 Chippenham Councillors have replied, is this what is expected/acceptable?
6. Part 1. Will the Chippenham Town Council consider taking the position in regard to the Future Chippenham consultation for a proposed road around the east and south of Chippenham, that making any choice from those presented is premature, because it firstly predetermines the outcome of the Wiltshire Local Plan which is currently under review, and secondly, no evidence presented on the Local Plan to date demonstrates any need for access to land to provide a very large number of proposed homes far beyond Chippenham’s needs.

Part 2. Will the Leader please explain her justification for co-authoring with the Town CEO, a letter of support to Wiltshire Council, dated 26th November 2018, supporting Wiltshire’s HIF bid for £75M funding for the road, and of which the members of Chippenham Town Council were unaware until many months later? Are the Leader and CEO empowered by some kind of proxy to make decisions on behalf of CTC without the knowledge or consent of the Councillors?

A verbal response was given by the Leader of the Town Council, this was not the Town Council response.

Written responses to public questions asked at Extraordinary Full Council on 21 January 2021.

1. Thank you for your question asked at the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 21 January 2021 regarding the business logic behind the Local Plan and the proposed road. As a Wiltshire Council project your question has been forwarded to Wiltshire Council and the Town Council has requested that they respond.
2. Thank you for your question asked at the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 21 January 2021 regarding the crossing of the proposed road through Stanley Lane. As a Wiltshire Council project your question has been forwarded to Wiltshire Council and the Town Council has requested that they respond.
3. Thank you for your comments and questions asked at the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 21 January 2021 regarding the HIF bid, Local Plan and Chippenham Town Council's involvement in the process. A public statement on this topic has been released and can be read [HERE](#).
4. Thank you for your comments and questions asked at the extraordinary Full Council meeting on 21 January 2021 regarding the Future Chippenham consultation and lack of damage budgets for CO2 emissions and ecology available. The Town Council will be determining a response to the consultation at a future meeting, the process can be read [HERE](#).
5. Thank you for your written public question submitted to Full Council on 21 January 2021 regarding your email to Councillors. Councillors are responsible for managing their own emails.
6. Thank you for your written public question submitted to Full Council on 21 January 2021 regarding the proposed road, Local Plan and HIF bid. A public statement on this topic has been released and can be read [HERE](#). Councillors will be determining a formal Town Council response to the consultation at a future meeting, the process can be read [HERE](#).