



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Philip Whitehead – Leader of the Council
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge

BY EMAIL

Date: 26 February 2021

Reference: MD16385

Dear Philip,

I am writing regarding the Housing Infrastructure Fund Grant secured to fund a new road for Chippenham to reduce congestion and a plan which would mean substantial additional housing development. I supported the bid back in 2018 but was very clear that my support was only given under the premise that this plan would deliver for Chippenham and local people. I made my support explicitly contingent on the plan delivering for the town in a number of ways but I am deeply concerned that this has not been the vision which the council have shared with residents over the last few months.

During my time as the local Member of Parliament residents have repeatedly asked for improved amenities and an improved town centre and this bid offered the opportunity to deliver this. I was assured by Wiltshire Council at the time that this was also the council's vision and that Chippenham's interests were the key motivation rather than just a desire for more houses. I now have grave reservations and I cannot stand by and let Chippenham suffer.

I would like this letter to act as a formal statement that I will be withdrawing my support unless I receive written confirmation that Wiltshire Council will still honour its pledge to use the project to fund:

- A town centre multi story car park
- A new leisure centre, family friendly amenities and an entertainment zone i.e. an area reserved for entertainment facilities which can be marketed for private companies to potentially locate
- Confirmation that the speed limit of the new road will not inhibit the ability for the road to reduce the towns congestion
- Confirmation that the plan will increase the sense of community and preserve the town centre - there has been no talk of the council's plans for the town centre or desire to support social cohesion

- Confirmation the council will work closely with the CCG to ensure we sufficiently bolster our medical services
- Confirmation the plans will facilitate more active and greener lifestyles - with cycling and walking at the heart of the plans plus the preservation of green spaces

I said in my letter of support back in 2018 “these are the things that residents are crying out for and any large scale development that fails to meet these will not have my support.” I did also stress that a full consultation process should be open and inclusive so if the above is being planned I ask that you communicate this to local residents. At the moment local people are literally only being presented with thousands of houses and a road and there is no communication of Wiltshire Council’s vision for Chippenham.

I should also like to seek confirmation that all of the CIL money will be invested in Chippenham not elsewhere in the county.

I should like these assurances by EOP Wednesday 3rd March given that the consultation closes on the 12th.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Donelan', written in a cursive style.

Michelle Donelan MP
Member of Parliament for the Chippenham Constituency