

3 March 2021

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House of Commons
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Cabinet Office
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
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Your Ref: MD16385
Our Ref: PW/PT/PW21026

Dear Michelle

Re. Future Chippenham Programme

Thank you for your letter of 26th February 2021 concerning the Future Chippenham programme.

I would like to begin by stressing the current consultation on possible road route options which could ultimately be funded by HIF do not change the Council's strategic aspirations for Chippenham town.

Before addressing your specific points, I think it would be helpful to make clear the differences between the two consultations that are taking place at the moment. The Council as local planning authority is consulting on the Local Plan Review and has proposed both a level of growth and preferred sites for Chippenham over the period to 2036, as part of a wider strategy for growth across Wiltshire. The consultation asks people's views on 'place shaping priorities', which includes improving the resilience of the town centre and allows for comments to be made on infrastructure needed to support growth. The Local Plan will determine the development that comes forward and infrastructure requirements.

Future Chippenham is consulting on possible road routes for a distributor road if development comes forward as part of the Local Plan Review.

Future Chippenham will have funding via the HIF to assure viability; specifically, in relation to any distributor road. There has been concern as to the timing of the consultation on both the Local Plan Review and Future Chippenham, but as you are aware timescales for Future Chippenham have been dictated by the HIF funding programme and as such, not within the Council's gift.

The other principal point that I think needs clarification is that the Future Chippenham programme has not secured funding for infrastructure over and above the road and moreover the £75 million that has been secured does not cover the full cost of that infrastructure. Therefore, any benefits of development such as those that you state in your letter will be dependent upon any community infrastructure levy (CIL) that is generated. I am sure you will thus understand it is difficult to reconcile a request to spend CIL or other contributions on infrastructure derived from development but then not support the development.

The Future Chippenham programme consultation has made it clear that, subject to agreement to a preferred road route in the Summer this year, there will be a programme of master planning consultation taking place until the end of the year. That will inform many of the issues you have raised. It will also inform a planning application for the road with a masterplan at the end of the year, subject to progress on the Local Plan Review.

I am sure you will understand the need for the Council to maintain separation between different statutory functions of the Council (Council as executive and Council as LPA). Therefore, the Council, as landowner, has been unable to promote the full extent of the benefits it believes that could accrue from being able to masterplan future developments, as to do so could have inadvertently been misconstrued as predetermining the outcome of the local plan.

I note your point about the vision that has been shared with residents over the last few months and your intention to withdraw support for Future Chippenham unless the Council commits to the requests you have set out. In response I think it should be recognised that the vision is to be found not just in the consultation taking place on road route options, but also the Local Plan Review.

At every opportunity we have encouraged residents and stakeholders to engage in the consultation programmes. If you are so minded to withdraw your support for Future Chippenham you are of course also withdrawing support for the proposals in the Local Plan Review for Chippenham, thus generating the problem of where land will be allocated for development, at what scale and how that will generate the CIL or other contributions that will be required to address the provision of new infrastructure at the town as part of development proposals.

In turning to your specific requests, it may be appropriate to refer to the table that I presented in my reply to Sandie Webb of Chippenham Town Council, which may have crossed in the post with your current letter. As made clear in the letter, at this stage the numbers should be treated as indicative as they will depend upon what, if any, development comes forward and as such it may be better to rely upon the percentage split of CIL. It should also be noted that the table does not take account of any admin charge to CIL.

CIL spend area	£ 'm	Percentage
Total potential CIL based on 7,500 units across two plan periods	54	100%
Town / Parish Council CIL based on Neighbourhood Plans being in place	13.5	25%
Road infrastructure	21	39%
Leisure	18	33%
Balance unallocated	1.5	3%

The above table sets out the CIL that could be generated from development of 7,500 homes over two plan periods. As you will have seen in the letter that I sent to Sandie Webb, Wiltshire Council is keen to work with Chippenham Town Council to deliver the infrastructure the town needs and to safeguard and enhance the Chippenham town centre. The table above sets out the envelope within which those discussions can take place and if investment takes place in advance of development and CIL being generated, then the additional costs incurred will need to be taken into account.

Turning to your specific requests;

- A town centre multi-storey car park** – The provision of an appropriate level of parking in Chippenham to support the needs of the community, businesses and visitors to the town is very important to the Council. Managing demand for parking will also be an important component of the Council's carbon reduction strategy. We anticipate that alongside an understanding of demand management, significant investment could also be made in encouraging walking, cycling and public transport as an increasingly attractive alternative to use of the car, thereby reducing the pressure on parking and better carbon outcomes. Funding would not be solely dependent on CIL as such a facility would be based on a business case. It would not be sensible to predetermine the type of structure to achieve this, but I am happy to confirm the objective.

- **A new leisure facility** – as you will see the HIF bid included a provision of £18 million and Wiltshire Council would aim to work with the community and Chippenham Town Council to ensure such investment addresses this requirement, also taking into account the existing assets that support such activity. Again, this could be enhancement of the current leisure centre and/or additional new facilities so I would not want to limit the scope to simply “a new leisure facility”.
- **Confirmation that the speed limit of a new distributor road will not inhibit the ability for the road to reduce the town’s congestion** – I refer you to the Options Assessment Report (OAR) ([Future Chippenham - Options Assessment Report January 2021.pdf \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](#) section 10.8 which sets out the traffic modelling conducted for housing growth scenarios with and without a new distributor road. The speed limit applied to the distributor road for this modelling was 30mph from the railway line to the A4 London Road and 40mph from Pewsham Way to Lackham roundabout. Obviously when a preferred route is agreed that modelling can be honed and determined fully. I would expect the capacity of the road and associated junctions to be the main influencing factors affecting transport capacity and not the speed limit.
- **Confirmation that plan will increase sense of community and preserve the town centre** – consultation on possible road routes for a new distributor road cannot possibly confirm this. However, I refer you again to my previous letter to Sandie Webb which makes Wiltshire Council’s commitment to preserve and enhance the town centre clear. As mentioned above, the proposed consultation on master planning will answer these questions.
- **Confirmation the Council will work closely with the CCG to bolster medical services** – we can confirm that as part of the Local Plan Review, we will be ensuring that the CCG are consulted and that they are engaged in the planning for health services in Chippenham.
- **Confirmation that plans will facilitate more active and greener lifestyles with cycling and walking at the heart of plans plus preservation of green spaces** – we can confirm that this will be at the heart of the master planning that we intend to undertake from the Summer onwards, as this responds positively to the climate emergency the Council declared in February 2019. This will include linking communities with walkways and cycleways and the creation of green corridors to the centre of Chippenham.

You have asked for confirmation that CIL generated will be invested in Chippenham and not elsewhere in the county. I am happy to confirm that the CIL generated from development in and around Chippenham will be invested back into the same area and not elsewhere in Wiltshire, reflecting the fact that some development may fall within neighbouring parish council areas. To be explicit, in relation to the neighbourhood proportion of CIL, this will go to whichever parish the CIL generating development takes place in and can be used to spend on infrastructure that supports development of Chippenham. So not only Chippenham Town Council will receive CIL directly but also other neighbouring parishes. The remaining CIL as illustrated in the table above will be invested in the Chippenham area.

I hope I have been able to satisfactorily answer your concerns. If you have any remaining questions or wish for further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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