

Future Chippenham

Connecting our communities

Public webinar on 20 February 2021 Questions and answers

What is the purpose of the distributor road and its high-level design?

The road's primary function is for local transport connectivity and distribution and this is to enable residential and employment development. It is not a strategic road or a bypass. The road is a single carriageway and includes transport infrastructure for cyclists, pedestrians, buses and cars. The road can be described as a primary street running through the future development.

What is the speed of the road?

The road will be low speed. It's likely at this stage to be 30 miles an hour through the development, but this will be subject to agreement with Wiltshire Council highways and it will also be subject to a Road Traffic Order as part of a separate decision-making process.

Does housing front onto the road?

It's intended that houses will front onto the road corridor with pedestrian access directly from the primary street. At this stage we are considering that motor vehicles will access to rear parking courtyards, although there may be some limited direct access onto the road for shops and retail.

What structures are included in the scheme?

There are two large structures over the River Avon flood zones to the north of the scheme. The bridge over the River Avon is 258 metres long and that is common to all distributor road options. To the south of Chippenham, the lengths of bridge viaducts vary depending on the distributor road options; so Option A has a 468 metre long viaduct, Option B has a 444 metre long viaduct and Option C, which is the inner route, has a 336 metre long viaduct.

In addition to those structures there are bridges over the Wilts and Berks Canal, which are much shorter at 30 metres in length. Option A has two bridges, one at Pewsham Locks which is close to the restoration so it would need to be very carefully designed and it has another bridge just north of the A4 at Green Lane Farm. The inner and middle routes have the same bridge location near Pewsham Way and close to the Pewsham Locks restoration and could potentially provide access to future development at that location. The final bridge is dependent on the Pewsham link option that is taken forward; Pewsham link option one has a bridge that is currently 80 metres long bridging the valley at Avon Valley Walk to connect to canal roundabout, the other Pewsham link road option doesn't require a bridge.

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Are you intending to build the whole road at the same time would not it be better to build it in stages as the houses are built over a period of years?

The current thinking is that the road would be delivered as a single project, which will allow for efficiencies of scale. There may be elements of the road that would open slightly in advance of other elements of the road, but certainly it won't be more than maybe a few months apart.

The programme for delivery is really being driven by the funding availability which is coming through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).

What will happen at the points where the public rights of way intersects with the distributor road?

There are several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) that will be intersecting with the route. Accessibility is a key issue for the design; we want to develop that permeability and that connectivity. Our current thoughts are that we will be trying and aiming for at grade crossings to allow people to pass across the new route as easily as possible. We are not really anticipating subways or footbridges at this stage. The final types of crossings will be informed by the transport assessment for the scheme at planning stage and these will be reviewed by an independent Road Safety Audit.

What examples might there be of similar roads that we can see elsewhere that give us some sense of what this might look like?

We have presented a number of cross sections in previous webinars which give a good indication as to the elements of the carriageway and the surrounding infrastructure.

One of the better examples you could visit is not actually in Wiltshire; there is a location at Lobley's Drive in Brockworth in Gloucester which is the section that is east of the M5 and that is quite similar. There are parts of Upton Meadows in Northampton that are also similar.

An example within Wiltshire would be Eastern Way in Melksham as the road size and the scale of the infrastructure there is in line with what we are envisaging, the separated footways and cycleways. Eastern Way though does not have the tree lining, the landscape planting and it obviously doesn't have the buildings fronting onto it.

What influence do individual stakeholders have on the route selected, for instance is there more weight from one to another?

We are interested to hear the views of everyone, and we will take all views into account. If you think about engineering design, there are particular disciplines that we need to think

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about and certain stakeholders have particular influence in those particular disciplines. The Environment Agency might be an example, their discipline clearly is the rivers, the floodplains and how we deal with the question of water and drainage on this scheme, so their views in that discipline area will be key. The views of major stakeholders with key areas of involvement such as the Environment Agency will have key influence in their particular discipline area.

Clearly the views of the public, the views of local people and local knowledge is of importance to us and we want to hear those local views.

We are interested to hear the views of all and will take all views into account.

What is the evidence base used for the scheme?

The Wiltshire strategic traffic model has been used and includes future forecast years for 2024, which could be an opening year, 2036 which is the Local Plan year and 2051 for future forecast year. The base count data that was available in this and also informed the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid was taken during 2018 which was obviously pre COVID-19. The influence of COVID-19 will certainly be considered as part of the transport assessment for the planning application. At the moment it's a very difficult thing to predict but it will be something that is included in the process. The modelling for the options assessment builds on previous evidence from the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan which was for the previous Local Plan up to 2026 and also builds on evidence that was undertaken as part of the HIF application, so these two documents support the selection of the eastern distributor road as the most appropriate option to enable the housing growth.

What are the current findings?

The Options Assessment Report for the road the modelling focuses on comparing the traffic impacts of each route option. In terms of current findings, the results are quite similar for each option as there's minimal difference in traffic modelling terms although Option C, which is the inner route, does perform better than the other two in terms of reducing traffic in the town and reducing pressure on existing junctions.

What is the process and how is this linked to designing a new road?

Transport modelling and the associated forecast flows inform the route types and widths for all modes of transport and that's including cycles, pedestrians and motor vehicles. It also informs the new road junction types and scale and it will also inform amendments to existing roads and junctions and requirements to mitigate the impact of future housing and employment developments. All of the transport modelling will be summarised in a transport assessment as part of the planning application.

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Does your traffic modelling allow for the expansion of other areas of Chippenham or just the development that you want to promote?

The traffic modelling undertaken to date reviews the housing development to the east of Chippenham. This was initially undertaken to inform the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid.

Future Chippenham will seek to promote development on Wiltshire Council land to the east of Chippenham. All landowners and developers will be responding to the Local Plan Review process and where their land is allocated this will provide a good basis for progression of a planning application.

It is logical that improvements to the transport network will provide greater opportunities for other areas to be developed and indeed there are a variety of landowners located along the eastern distributor road route and potentially other areas in the town that may also benefit.

The traffic model and the transport modelling does include for other developments that are in the pipeline so we're not just looking at the existing situation and then Future Chippenham, we are looking at it more globally.

What is the model coverage and which roads are included, for example is the modelling including the A4 to Calne A342 Derry Hill and the various country lanes in the area?

The model used is the strategic model for Wiltshire; it's an area-wide model so it has all of these roads within it.

The model has been cordoned to initially assess the impact on the main routes through the town centre. So, a lot of the output data that you'll see in the summary and the Options Assessment Report does focus on unlocking that congestion in the town centre as an enabler for housing growth. The model will assess the impact on the wider transport network and appropriate mitigation will be included as part of the planning application; unclassified roads will also be considered where affected.

What do the results show, or what are you anticipating in terms of traffic increases?

The model includes a number of assessment categories and shows significant in over capacity queues and delay when compared to a no road scenario. This model summary is presented in section 10.8 of the Options Assessment Report.

Will the intersecting Public Rights of Ways such as the national cycle route be resurfaced as part of the scheme?

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We're not anticipating wholesale changes to the existing Public Rights of Way infrastructure.

The needs of and provision for walking and cycling will be considered as an integral part of the design development. There may be opportunities to provide some local resurfacing, perhaps vegetation clearance or maybe some street lighting upgrades but it's going to be relatively local to the new route and the national cycle routes will be considered as part of this process.

Will the whole road open at the same time and if not, could the existing road network end up as rat runs?

The intent is that the construction of the road will be a single project and broadly speaking it will all open within a short period of time.

There could be some local routing that develops as elements come forward and one consideration that we will need to have as we go into the construction phase, which obviously is sometime into the future, will be construction traffic. How we deal with that, how we route that, how we access the site are all questions which will need to be considered as we develop the transport assessment for planning; the planning conditions will help to mitigate this concern.

Why have you proposed a southern link road between the A4 and A350?

The distributor road, between the A4 and A350 south, provides a number of benefits including mitigating transport congestion from the town centre by providing an alternative route to access the A350 to the south of Chippenham; this would predominately be used by residential areas to the south of Chippenham and also from traffic using the A4.

How has the impact of the road route options on biodiversity been assessed?

The biodiversity assessment for the options appraisal process has been informed by a Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken on site which basically identifies what types of habitat are on site and what protective species are likely to be on site. That's been combined with a review of the environment records so that gives us details of what previous species have been found on site and where they've been located.

The Phase 1 habitat survey found that generally speaking the biodiversity of the majority of site is actually relatively poor because its land type is semi-improved grassland or arable land which does not encourage high biodiversity. This has been supported by the findings of the species specific surveys we've undertaken to date. There are some pockets of better habitat across the site located around the River Avon, the River Marden and also along the minor water course Cocklemore Brook. Small patches of woodland, some ponds and the

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hedgerows on the site are also relatively species poor and lacking woody vegetation, but at the same time they are an important asset for protected species we do have on site to commute and get to these areas of better habitat and obviously they're also used for foraging and occasional sheltering.

How will the scheme ensure local biodiversity is not ruined?

The main impact in the scheme on biodiversity is likely to come from cutting across these hedgerows and varying the landscape we are moving through. However, these effects should be mitigatable through careful design and vegetation planting as the scheme progresses. We can strengthen existing hedgerows and other solutions for connectivity such as wildlife tunnels or green bridges to cross the roads as required. More detailed assessment based off surveys undertaken for specific species will be undertaken to inform the design and the environmental impact assessment for the planning application so essentially more information will come forward.

How will landscape and local views from property be affected?

The first two webinars largely focused on Option A in the sense of there was potential significant effects identified for views from south and east of that option which weren't felt under Options B and C because there weren't any significant impacts on landscape associated with those options. Obviously, there is a lot of interest from people, particularly from Monkton Park and Pewsham, about what the visual effect of the scheme will be.

Pewsham and Monkton Park both have quite dense vegetation strips around the outside of the development towards our site which does give us a natural screen to work into. The existing topography Options B and C run behind existing landform, they allow it to be naturally screened and when there would be an occasional bit where you would potentially be in views it's within the landscape character where vegetation screening and small landscape bunds will be appropriate to help screen the road, so these effects were seen as non-significant.

What are the quantified carbon costs of the proposals?

At this stage, the project has not quantified the carbon cost of the scheme, with the assessment for options appraisal being a comparative assessment which has been based off experience of carbon emissions from construction of these schemes and looking at the usual key indicators such as scheme length and requirement for structures. The reason this approach was taken forward is that we are at such an early design stage that there is not enough robust quantifiable data about the scheme design to allow an accurate quantified assessment of construction carbon to be made. When a preferred option has been selected, the scheme design will progress to allow a planning application to be made. As part of this design process, opportunities for carbon reduction will be explored and there will

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be a quantified assessment of construction carbon provided as part of the environmental impact assessment for the scheme submitted alongside the planning application.

Won't this development increase the flooding downstream?

The development of the road scheme and housing development will not cause additional flooding of homes or property either within existing settlements or within the new development.

As visible on the cross-sections shown during the presentations, the road and housing development is planned on being drained using a sustainable urban drainage system. This will ensure that all additional water run-off from the increase in hardstanding in the area as a result of the new highway will be collected using swales and discharged into settlement ponds. These ponds will be allowed to fill up during periods of heavy rainfall and discharged into local watercourses and rivers at rates agreed with the Local Lead Flood Authority and the Environment Agency. These discharge rates will ensure that the schemes will not lead to a much faster discharge of water into local rivers which causes river 'storm flow' which then lead to flooding therefore, the scheme will not cause additional flooding on land downstream.

The road or the housing development will not involve construction of houses within the existing floodplain. The housing will be, as evidenced by the Local Plan Review consultation, located outside of the existing floodplains of the River Marden and River Avon as well as tributary watercourses such as Cocklemore Brook.

As part of the planning process for both the highway and the housing developments, the schemes will be required to produce a flood risk assessment (FRA) of the scheme. This FRA will include modelling of the development under various different storm scenarios adapted for climate change, to ensure that the scheme does not produce a worse effect on flooding than would occur if the development did not take place.

How will the natural habitats be managed during the construction phase?

The ongoing specific species surveys will tell us what species there are on site, their commuting routes and the size of populations. This information will be used when assessing the impact of the scheme upon these species and will drive the mitigation necessary to protect these species and natural habitats during construction.

Depending on the findings of the surveys, protected species licenses may be required to undertake the works, and these will need to be granted prior to the start of construction. These protected species licenses will only be granted if certain activities to demonstrate how the site will be managed are brought forward. This may include the confirmation works can be undertaken under a precautionary method of working, or whether trapping and translocation of species is required.

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This type of information as well as other environmental controls, are normally included within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which will detail the measures by which the site must be managed to protect the environment. A CEMP will be produced at the planning application stage for approval by the local planning authority, before then being further refined by the contractor for the works.

We have otters in the river what's going to happen to them and their habitat?

Specific species surveys on the site are ongoing. The impact on protected species, such as otter, will be assessed in detail in the environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the planning application and appropriate mitigation will then be put in place. In the specific case of otters, their habitats on the River Avon and Marden should be largely undisturbed.

The design of the bridges over the River Avon will be clear span of the watercourse and banks, so as to avoid any permanent impact on otter and water vole commuting along the river corridor. There is potential for construction impacts on these species, but as noted above, suitable mitigation will be put in place through the EIA process, and if necessary, protected species licenses will be applied for which will stipulate further mitigation measures.

How are you going to manage the carbon footprint of this development?

The carbon footprint in the design of the scheme is generally reduced using the following principles: avoid, reduce, remediate and compensate.

An example of an avoidance measure on this scheme would be the use of flood modelling to understand the total length of viaducts required. Concrete is a very carbon dense material, and reducing the amount of concrete required to bring the scheme forward will reduce the overall carbon footprint of the scheme. Flood modelling is ongoing to understand what the shortest length of viaduct is to maintain the same level of flood prevention, as this would allow us to avoid using as much concrete, and therefore reducing our carbon footprint. Similarly, choosing a shorter route option, would avoid the use of as much tarmac and type 1 material in road construction, which would again save both transport costs in delivery as well as the carbon costs of its production.

An example of a reduce mitigation is the use of alternative lower carbon materials for the job. The use of recycled materials or low carbon alternatives will be examined to see if they can be utilised on the scheme and check that they are appropriate across a 'whole lifecycle basis'.

In respect of remediation/compensation, an example of this would be to maximise vegetation cover to provide carbon sequestration, with special thought given to species ability to sequester carbon and the management of this; the use of grasses may be less appropriate if it needs to be mowed for example.

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Further savings can be made during the scheme implementation phase, with requirements set on the contractor to use low carbon practices such as car-pooling for work and using batteries and electric plant and machinery on-site instead of more typical diesel versions.

Carbon footprint during operation will be managed by ensuring a thought-out development which encourages the use of active travel and public transport as low carbon transport modes to reduce vehicle emissions. This will be supplemented by good original road design to maintain consistent traffic flow to avoid stop/start travel which typically is less efficient for vehicles.

What is master planning?

The questions of if this development should proceed, if we should build on the east of Chippenham are for the Local Plan, the policy document for Wiltshire. The process of master planning will be about asking if it does go ahead what form should that development take, how can the area be best developed to produce the best place and the best benefits for the community. In very simple terms a masterplan describes and also maps out an overall development concept for an aerial site. It will include all future land uses, it will include the urban design, what the place will look and feel like, the landscaping, the built form, the essential infrastructure and the services needed to provide services to the future residents. Master planning is based on a really in-depth understanding of a place, it provides a clear and consistent framework for the development of a particular site. It is important that a large site particularly is master planned to ensure the development on the ground provides a more sustainable and effective development for that particular place. Master planning should be produced objectively based on firm evidence such as the constraints that operate on the site and the on-ground assessments such as ecology, water, landscape, topology for instance these things all together dictate the layout and capacity of the site. It is likely that a masterplan for the site could meet Chippenham's housing needs, employment needs well into the future and provide some good certainty about how the town will develop probably beyond the Local Plan period currently being reviewed.

When will the masterplan be drafted?

A masterplan showing the distribution of land uses, the connectivity, the design concepts and essential infrastructure will be drafted this spring by the Future Chippenham team.

When will the full public consultation on the masterplan take place?

There will be full public consultation on the Future Chippenham Masterplan which is currently planned for the summer 2021.

How will feedback be responded to?

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All representations that we receive will be included in a written report which will be published on the council's website. All comments we will show how they've influenced the revisions to the masterplan, it will be a meaningful consultation process.

Will there be a planning application and if so, when?

It is envisaged that a planning application will be submitted winter 2021/22.

How does the rest of the town in particular the town centre benefit from this development?

This consultation is about possible road route options. The consultation leaflet on our consultation webpage www.wiltshire.gov.uk/future-chippenham-consultation contains the strategic objectives of delivering the distributor road. More information can also be found in the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid which is available at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/future-chippenham

Will there be allocation of space for self builds?

It is a great suggestion, and yes, we can certainly take that forward as a requirement of the masterplan.

Will you be considering heating networks and how we manage things like waste?

Yes. The masterplan will look at opportunities to deliver the clean energy where that is practicable and viable.

In accordance with adopted policy the masterplan will make it clear that any planning applications will need to be accompanied by a full waste audit detailing the sustainable management of waste.

What is meant by blue and green infrastructure?

This refers to water and natural environment. One of the benefits of master planning is we can plan to ensure that water features and landscaping form a central part of the future development area providing important ecological, recreational and aesthetic contributions to place making.

Can anything realistically be built in zone four especially with the Bremhill Neighbourhood Plan?

A masterplan for an area explores all of an area and sets out where development is and isn't acceptable. These decisions are made considering constraints, evidence from

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assessments, consultations and analysis of existing plans and strategies. The content of Neighbourhood Plans will be a material consideration in this process.

Please can the council share its housing infrastructure plan which determines what type of housing for instance number of bedrooms and in what quantities are required to meet the current demand of housing in and around the town?

This evidence is produced in a document known as a Strategic Housing Needs Assessment. Every council by law has to carry out a Strategic Housing Assessment, Land Availability Assessment and also Housing Needs Assessment which shows the demand in the area for the type of dwellings the size of dwellings number of bedrooms for example. It is available to view on the planning policy pages of the Wiltshire Council website and it will set out exactly what the quantified and evidence need is for this area.

How people who don't have such easy access to the internet to keep up with this consultation?

Our approach for consultation was agreed by the council's cabinet last year. At the beginning of this presentation, we made it clear that we do have the ability to provide hard copies of consultation materials to those who do not have access digitally and paper copies can be requested from Customer Services on 0300 456 0100 or collected from the reception desk at the council's Monkton Park office. In addition, we have engaged with local Town and Parish Councils and they have made information available.

As the A350 is already built and sites have been identified why cannot they be developed without the huge cost of the distributor road?

The potential road provides a link to the existing A350 to the north and south of Chippenham. The road options being consulted upon all lie to the east because that is where the Future Chippenham development areas are located.

The distributor road will direct traffic to the A350 at Lackham and will merely exacerbate the long queues trying to get to Melksham. Has this been considered? Some traffic will use the A3102 causing havoc in Sandy Lane and Derry Hill plus adding to the congestion already in the approach to Melksham from that direction. Has that been considered?

Please refer to section 10.8 of the Options Assessment Report for further information on the modelling of the route options.

The strategic model for Wiltshire is built with numerous data sources, including Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) data. This ANPR data, in conjunction with other data

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sources such as Census 2011, is used to derive the distribution of traffic flows on the network.

Further detail will be provided within the Transport Assessment which will be prepared in line with appropriate local and national guidelines and submitted through the development planning application process.

If the road is built it will not ease the traffic in the Centre of Chippenham. How will people get to railway and bus stations, town centre shops (few that are left), Bumpers Farm, Hathaway Park, Chippenham Hospital, Hathaway Health Centre, Sheldon and Hardenuish Schools, Rowden Surgery, Olympiad and Council Offices at Monkton Park (Police Office), petrol stations in Bath Road area and Bath Road outlets?

Any planning application made will be considered and tested by Wiltshire Council as Local Planning Authority in exactly the same way as those from other interested parties. Any mitigations required form part of this process.

It is clear from the comments on your YouTube presentations (none in favour) that the residents of Chippenham clearly are all against this destructive scheme. Will Wiltshire Council please take this onboard and not waste anymore public money?

The Future Chippenham team will be taking onboard all the feedback received as part of this consultation and we encourage everyone to make representation into the scheme as well as to the Local Plan Review process.

What considerations and mitigations are in place to protect wildlife and ancient trees/hedgerows please? Thank you

At this stage, the main mitigations have focused upon avoidance mitigation to avoid areas of better habitat that we have currently identified.

We are in the process of identifying further ecological assets, such as veteran trees and important hedgerows through the undertaking of our species specific surveys, and an arboricultural survey to be undertaken in the coming months.

Likely mitigation that we have already identified will be required will be the improvements of existing hedgerows across site to provide greater connectivity between the better areas of habitats. This connectivity impact will be further mitigated through the use of other solutions, such as wildlife tunnels and green bridges, although the requirement for these structures is still to be defined as species specific surveys continue and when detailed design begins to commence.

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Beyond this, we also aim to produce new habitat through the scheme which will integrate with other key design features such as the drainage design.

Why weren't the residents of Chippenham consulted prior to all the money being spent on the road bid? Just because they didn't have to doesn't make it right.

The council does not as a matter of course consult on seeking funding from government.

Why is the distributor road not considered as a bypass?

The function of the proposed low speed road to the east of Chippenham is for local transport connectivity and distribution, to enable residential and employment development, it is not a strategic road or bypass.

What is there to stop motorists from using the road as an east west, north south bypass to Chippenham town?

Any planning application made will be considered and tested by Wiltshire Council as Local Planning Authority in exactly the same way as those from other interested parties. Any mitigations required form part of this process.

How close to the Wilts and Berks Canal will the housing development be?

The location and proximity of any housing or employment land to the Wilts and Berks Canal will be determined through the master planning process and then subsequently individual planning applications. We acknowledge the setting and heritage of the canal and the importance of its ecological and recreational value. It is a key consideration in our place shaping and we are working with members of the Wilts and Berk Canal Trust as we would want to make it an attractive part of any development going forward. The master planning will be consulted on in due course later this summer.

Will we receive a written copy of the questions answered on the webinar as we are being given a lot of good information but it's not on the slides?

A recording of this webinar is available on the council's YouTube channel and can be accessed via www.wiltshire.gov.uk/future-chippenham-consultation

A copy of all questions asked at this webinar and the responses will be sent to everyone who registered to attend this event, and a copy will also be published on the above webpage.

It's not clear if there is real need for the additional housing in Chippenham and therefore the road. Or is this a case that Wiltshire Council need to distribute their

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housing requirement and thus building a road will permit this to happen even if Chippenham does not actually require it?

Housing need is assessed as part of the Local Plan process. This evidence is produced in a document known as a Strategic Housing Needs Assessment and is carried out regularly by the council as Local Planning Authority. It is available to view on the planning policy pages of the Wiltshire Council website.

It does identify the need for significant new housing over the next 25 years. The driver for new housing include factors such as increased life expectancy, people occupying homes in smaller family units and affordability/access to the market.

You've mentioned the length of the bridges. How high are they likely to be?

We will be seeking to follow the natural topography of the land and keep the scale in terms of the height and the visual impact as low as we can; so fairly low level in terms of height impact.

The concept designs that we have undertaken so far consider the flood zone three and so it is the 1 in 100 year flooding plus climate change for the river and then add extra on to that, which is called freeboard, so when the river is at the highest level for the 100 year event effectively driftwood and trees that float down do not conflict with the underside of the bridge. There is actually a design standard that you would apply but that is the minimum level you would set it up, but it has to clear the flood zone. It does sit lower in the landscape and as low as we can as long as we clear that particular flood zone.

What plans are there relating to the sequencing of infrastructure and housing development? We're currently experiencing the significant issues of housing coming before necessary roads etc at Birds Marsh and would want to ensure that this sequencing isn't repeated.

Should the Local Plan Review confirm housing to be delivered in this area, then it will be subject to an overarching masterplan which will show the distribution of land uses. This will be accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure all essential infrastructure (roads, drainage, power, schools, services for example) are in place at the right time to serve the new residents. This will be part of a subsequent consultation later this year.

Where is the example of a town which has had its cycle path ruined when we are all enjoying the outside areas more, a cycle path through a housing estate with only a courtyard between it? Currently we have a 7 mile cycle route through valuable farmland. It's against the Government's 10 point climate plan to destroy it.

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Cycle route networks will be designed as part of the master planning process, we would be seeking to enhance this infrastructure and improve connectivity.

The routes are likely to utilise existing Public Rights of Way, and we will certainly be considering recreational routes and commuting routes, including links to the canal, the national cycle network and new crossings of the River Avon.

The cycle networks won't be just alongside the road.

How can we go to Melksham from Chippenham to look at the road when it is against lockdown rules or are you authorising this?

We are not endorsing any breach of the lockdown rules. However, Google maps provide good street views of Eastern Way in Melksham:

https://www.google.com/maps/@51.3716226,-2.1138005,3a,75y,16.83h,90t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1sYmLnUccQlxSdSHJUm-aLjw!2e0!6s%2F%2Fgeo3.ggpht.com%2Fcbk%3Fpanoid%3DYmLnUccQlxSdSHJUm-aLjw%26output%3Dthumbnail%26cb_client%3Dmaps_sv.tactile.gps%26thumb%3D2%26w%3D203%26h%3D100%26yaw%3D10.695478%26pitch%3D0%26thumbfov%3D100!7i16384!8i8192

Great to ease congestion in the town centre but will diverting people away from it result in the end of the town centre and Chippenham High Street?

The master planning process is also critical to this. It will be planned to improve access and choice of travel modes to the town centre. It will increase the critical mass of people using the town centre and will, if planned properly, boost its viability and vitality.

Does any of this thinking take into account changing behaviours as a result of climate change, efforts to get to zero carbon and / or the COVID pandemic?

Yes, it does. Carbon reduction is a key part of the design progress going forward both for the road and also for the potential housing. We've previously mentioned opportunities and potential methods for the road around avoidance reduce compensate but obviously master planning has similar opportunities in respect of planning for people to use more electric cars and planning for the fact that more people can use active transport to get into the centres to get into the train station and maintaining good public transport access. It's all those sorts of things that's the real key of this the whole design to come forward; it's all going to be future proofed towards where both Wiltshire Council and nationally we're trying to aim to achieve the net zero target.

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Last time we were told the environmental review was a desktop exercise and now we are being told it is a proper review, which is correct? Can I have a copy of the wildlife report as I have photographic evidence against what is being said?

Desk based and onsite assessments of the opportunities and constraints have been carried out, including assessments of ecological, flooding and heritage constraints. These surveys will inform a more detailed assessment of impact of the scheme which will be produced within an environmental statement to be submitted alongside the planning application.

The Wilts & Berks Canal is a haven for a diverse range of wildlife including an array of bird life, bats, deer, foxes for example. How will this road / housing development impact on this and what mitigations are in place to prevent adverse impacts?

The assessment in Preliminary environmental assessment of options report (PEAOR) was undertaken based on an extended Phase 1 habitat survey, review of survey data collected for over-wintering birds, and preliminary bat assessments of trees and buildings on the site undertaken in winter 2019/2020. This was supplemented by the Environment Record data held by Wiltshire Council which gave us information regarding previous protected species found on the site.

The review of this data found that, as a 'baseline' environment, the site area is generally of quite poor ecological value as it generally passed through agricultural fields which are recorded as 'semi-improved grassland or arable land'. Whilst this habitat has some benefits, it is generally species poor and is considered sub-optimal for many species as the fields are managed to drive agricultural output rather than increase biodiversity. As a result, the effect of the scheme passing through the centre of these fields is from a biodiversity standpoint, relatively low impact.

There are pockets of better habitats located at various locations within the general scheme area focused around watercourses, ponds and small areas of woodland, but the scheme options generally avoid these. Where better biodiversity is expected within direct impact from the scheme is at field margins along hedgerows, as these are utilised by species to travel between these pockets of better habitat, as well as being used for sheltering and foraging. The field margins within the survey area are of mixed quality, but a fair extent of them are narrow, species poor and lacking in woody vegetation that would provide better foraging, sheltering and commuting abilities for protected species.

The road will need to intersect field margins and this does have the potential to cause impacts on local biodiversity when un-mitigated as it may segregate species from the pockets of better habitat mentioned above as well as the loss of the hedgerow itself as a commuting, sheltering and foraging resource.

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However, we know at an early design stage that this is a potential impact of the scheme on protected species and this allows us time to design suitable mitigation to prevent significant impacts wherever possible and aim for the scheme to actually achieve Biodiversity Net Gain. In this respect, there is benefit that the future housing development of the site will be designed alongside the road development as it will allow for a more joined-up approach in providing long-term biodiversity benefits. This will allow for more opportunities for the designs of the highway and housing to integrate and provide a better result for biodiversity. For example, the Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) systems that will be used to drain the highway and the development land can be combined to provide large new wetland habitat features within the scheme area. The housing can then be designed to include dense hedgerow features along existing alignments to connect in with these new habitat features which will allow existing species commuting corridors to be maintained and improved, whilst also providing better habitats than what is currently available to them. The suitability of methods to support habitat connectivity across the road such as green bridges and wildlife tunnels will also be investigated as part of design progression to minimise impacts. These features being integrated as part of highway and housing design will clearly have additional benefits, such as providing locations for walkers, acting as visual screening of the housing and improving the visual amenity of the area, as well as their function as supporting drainage of the development to prevent flooding both within the immediate area and downstream.

The requirement and design of these features will be informed by additional information about current species populations across the site. Species specific surveys have been undertaken throughout 2020 and are ongoing across the scheme area to inform this. These surveys will also inform a more detailed assessment of impact of the scheme which will be produced within an environmental statement to be submitted alongside the planning application.

Why do you state that the building of the road will reduce congestion in the town centre of Chippenham, when your other colleagues have stated that the road is not being constructed as a bypass, but is being built to support future housing development?

By building the road it will have benefits for the town centre traffic. The transport modelling conducted for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid demonstrated that, as well as serving the Future Chippenham new housing build, a distributor road would deliver benefits to the Chippenham transport network by providing an alternative route for existing and future users, including those travelling from the east or west of Chippenham, who currently have to travel through the town centre. Such data was scrutinised by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Highways England as part of the bid process and accepted as valid. It was based on the DfT's Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG) on highway scheme appraisal and modelled through the Wiltshire Base SATURN model itself calibrated against the DfT's TAG guidance.

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How can it be a proper consultation if we are judged on strength of replies and evidence when we are not experts?

We are seeking your opinion as residents/users of the area who are likely to be familiar with where you live and can advise on your view of where the best route for the road may lie.

When will we see this webinar on the council YouTube site? I cannot see the previous one from 15 February 2021 yet?

Recordings of both webinars are available on the council's YouTube channel and can be accessed via www.wiltshire.gov.uk/future-chippenham

How many people are attending this webinar?

41 people attended this webinar.

How do you put more value on the canal area than the farm and cycle route area?

We are unclear about the meaning of this question and require further clarification / information in order to be able to provide a response.

Why build a new road to support more housing, when the land to the west of the A350 could support the housing, without the need to build a road and destroy the habitat of the Marden Valley?

Future Chippenham development area lies in that vicinity and the road that we are consulting on is to serve those developments.

Are you not putting the cart before the horse, by building the road before you have decided if there is a need for more housing in the area?

The need for a road to support housing development has been identified within the Local Plan. Any road will need to receive planning permission before it can be built.

What consultation has been done with the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust with respect to the road and the housing development?

Wilts & Berks Canal Trust are one of our stakeholders and have been contacted as part of the consultation.

Why have you proposed a Southern link road between the A4 and A350 South when there is no reason whatsoever to spoil the landscape, apart from the council's need to develop council owned farms?

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The distributor road, between the A4 and A350 south, provides a number of benefits including mitigating transport congestion from the town centre by providing an alternative route to access the A350 to the south of Chippenham, this would predominately be used by residential areas to the south of Chippenham and also from traffic using the A4.

The southern distributor road section from A4 to A350 has been stated as taking traffic away from the town centre – so effectively will be used as a bypass route and instead take through traffic via residential areas on low-speed roads. This sounds like a poorly thought through proposition – if the road is a low speed residential distributor road (as has been stated) it cannot also meet the needs of an A4-A350 southern link road to bypass Chippenham town centre. Please can you explain how the road can serve both purposes of alleviating town centre congestion whilst also not being a bypass and being designed as a residential low-speed distributor road?

The new distributor road will form part of the public highway network and will provide additional route choices for users. The proposed road's primary function is to provide local transport distribution between existing and new developments, this includes cycle and pedestrian routes. However, the road will also provide transport benefits within the town centre, reducing through traffic by providing alternative routes to access the A350 Chippenham bypass to the north and south of the town. The assessment of the route options to date have been conducted using the strategic traffic model for Wiltshire. The assessment presented in the Options Assessment Report (OAR) (section 10.8) was conducted with a distributor road design and as shown in the reduction in traffic flows in the town centre (please refer to section 10.8.3 of the OAR) the distributor road provides another route option for traffic travelling from the A4 east to the A350.

What is the planned budget for this A4 to Lackham road and the Pewsham way folly?

The indicative budget for the potential road and link road is identified in the Options Assessment Report, section 10, which can be found on www.wiltshire.gov.uk/future-chippenham-consultation

Why has Wiltshire council added 5000 to the housing need figure for the county other than to support this project?

Your response: _The Future Chippenham programme has identified that up to 7,500 homes could be delivered on the sites that are supported by the distributor road up to 2046+.

This does not in any way answer my question in fact I could add to your reply and say as there are no road boundaries given, therefore the size of development could be in excess of 15,000+ so please answer the question.

Housing need is assessed as part of the Local Plan process.

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It is not for the Future Chippenham programme to determine housing need – initial work by the Future Chippenham programme has identified that there is potential for up to 7,500 homes to be delivered in the area, but it will be the role of the masterplan to determine that in more detail. This will take account of evidence, constraints, assessments, consultation and design issues.

Should the Local Plan determine that development is acceptable in principle then the masterplan will guide subsequent planning applications setting out the number and distribution of houses.

It is possible that a well-planned development area could meet Chippenham's needs well into the future beyond the new local plan period of 2045.

When will Wiltshire Council be open and upfront about the Stone Circle Businesses it has set up to act as land agents and developers, also that they have already been funded with £5 million from Wiltshire Council and that the council state in their HIF bid documents that they are to borrow another £100 million for Stone Circle Businesses to progress this scheme?

At the moment there are no plans for Stone Circle companies' involvement if this development comes forward, despite the fact that there was some reference to that in the HIF bid. The council would have to consider any proposed business plans from Stone Circle development company against any other possible way in which the council's interests could be developed and would need to assure itself that the council is achieving best value for its interests and also issues around governance and risk so at this point in time there are no plans for the use of Stone Circle.

If it is not the intention to use Stone Circle Businesses to progress this scheme could you please advise why the council put the following provision into the 2021/22 budget?

Agree the Stone Circle development company business plan 2021/22

Agree the Stone Circle holding company business plan 2021/22

Subject to agreeing the business plans to allocate the £34.40m loan finance required for the Stone Circle housing company business plan and £2.657m for the Stone Circle development company business plan in the 2021/22 capital programme

These companies are wholly owned by the council and under the shareholders agreement the council agrees the business plan for the companies one year in advance. The money and the business plan that the council has agreed is for 2021/22. Clearly these proposals, if they do come forward, are significantly in the future and any proposals from the development company would have to be considered in line with those time scales.

The council has agreed the company business plans for 2021/22. If development comes forward as part of this programme it will be in future years, not in 2021/22.

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If you have no intention of using Stone Circle Businesses, why have they been mentioned in the HIF document with planned borrowing for the same in 2024/25 mentioned have you told untruths in this HIF bid document, or are you hiding behind the various names for what is basically a council tax payers funded Stone Circle (WC)?

The Housing Infrastructure Fund bid identified potential delivery mechanisms for the housing.

Your current consultation form is not fit for purpose, as it is open to abuse and fraud, what is to stop roadbuilders, council employees, housebuilders and many others with much to gain ensuring your consultation is completed in the positive and in their favour? The fact that you ask for a post code means very little unless of course you intend to weight various responses from those living in SN15 postcodes differently than say an SN11 or BA1 postcode.

The consultation approach is in accordance with the council's approved strategy, that was agreed by the council's cabinet. Post codes have been requested to help us better understand the geographic pattern of the responses we receive.

Why does your consultation document not require personal details, and signature?

The consultation approach is in accordance with the council's approved strategy, that was agreed by the council's cabinet, and also takes into account any obligations we might have under data protection.

Why when the council has fought and won a 7 day appeal with Gleeson to develop land at Forest Farm then ignore its own and 2 HMG Planning Inspectors advise that the site is inappropriate for development?

This is a planning matter and not relevant to this consultation on potential road route options.

Out commuting is a very important factor on this development

**How many residents of Chippenham are shown as employed in the 2011 Census?
How many of those residents work in Chippenham?
How many of those residents work elsewhere in Wiltshire?
How many of those residents work outside Wiltshire's boundaries?
How many people were recorded as working in Chippenham jobs in the Census?
What are your latest pre COVID estimates of these figures?**

We would refer you to the Wiltshire Intelligence website: [Census Wiltshire Intelligence](#)

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Analysis of the Census 2011 Data is also presented in the Chippenham Transport Strategy 2016.

Why as a property owner who is going to be greatly affected to all three options, but mainly by option C, have I never been consulted by our council out of common courtesy prior to it becoming public?

We ensured that letters were sent out to those residents who would be directly affected by each of the potential road route options to make them aware of the consultation. We will follow this approach again for the consultation on the Future Chippenham Masterplan which we are aiming to hold summer 2021.