



**JUNE 2015**

**REPORT ON ROAD TRANSPORT MITIGATION SCHEMES**

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## Introduction

The issue of HGV traffic through the town has been a concern of the residents of Cricklade for many years, particularly with the increase in the size of these type of vehicles. The Town Council regularly receive complaints about this problem but have limited powers regarding highways matters.

Acknowledgement of the problem was outlined in the June 2014 report of the Planning Inspector when dealing with an appeal for increased capacity at a local industrial site (Wiltshire Council reference 13/01916/WCM) where he was quoted as follows:

*“HGVs are the source of complaint from the residents and the Town Council of Cricklade by reason of safety, noise, intimidation, vibration and damage to the old buildings, pollution and more. They travel through the middle of this small attractive town between the A419 road and the B4553, as the route through Purton from the A419 is restricted by a 7.5t weight limit.”*

One positive outcome recently achieved is the recognition of the problem in the Core Strategy+which was adopted by Wiltshire Council in January 2015 as the main development policy for the county until 2026. After pressure in the consultation stage from Cricklade Town Council, and others, Core Policy 19 (which deals with the Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade community area) requires all planning applications to *“recognise local concerns regarding the impacts of HGV traffic on the local road network”* and any development proposals will be required to demonstrate how this issue will be addressed.

## Background

As part of the work in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Cricklade it was thought useful to summarise the various proposals that have been put forwards in recent years and bring them together in one document. They are considered below with reference to current planning policy and financing restrictions.

This report comprises:

- An outline of the steps undertaken as part of this exercise
- A review of all the physical proposals that have been made in recent years
- A review of the challenges with financing any new roads at this time
- A note on what may be possible in the plan period to 2026

## **Analysis undertaken**

The relevant files held by the Town Council (10 of them) were reviewed in the summer of 2012 and the relevant points of the history of the issue and its discussion were noted. A note of this together with thoughts on ways forward was prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at the end of August 2012.

There is a section on HGV relief in the Town Plan produced in 2011/12 and the suggestions in that were reviewed. In addition sections relevant to road infrastructure in the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy were reviewed.

In preparation for the Neighbourhood Plan first public consultation held in April 2013 a revised version of part of the August 2012 paper was produced and made available to the public as background to that consultation event and to the questionnaire that accompanied it. It is available on the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan website.

The responses to the April 2013 questionnaire were analysed and published in the First Public Consultation Summary Report. There were discussions of options for ways forward at the Neighbourhood Planning Working Party meetings over the following months after which it was decided to arrange a meeting with appropriate Wiltshire Council officials to discuss the situation. In preparation for this a series of questions were sent to those officials in advance (see page 13) and a meeting was held between some Neighbourhood Plan Working Party members and Wiltshire Council officials on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The notes of the meeting are included at page 15. It was agreed by the Working Party following this meeting that this annex be produced to provide publicly available background to the content on the HGV issue in the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Proposals made for new roads and restrictions on existing roads**

The options that have been considered consist of three combinations which require new road construction and an associated prohibition of HGVs (except for delivery) in some or all of the town centre. Also considered are the various options that involve no new road construction.

The new roads that have been considered are:

1. The Cricklade Southern bypass
2. Friday's Ham Lane Extension
3. A new Mills Road

**Map showing indicative routes of schemes that have been considered in this report**



## 1. Cricklade Southern Bypass

This is regarded as the generally preferred option to reduce through HGV traffic and it has been under discussion since at least the late 1980s. The basic concept is a link from somewhere along the B4553 Purton Road running around the south of the town to meet the Cricklade A419 junction. It would allow HGVs (and other traffic) from Chelworth and points south to access the A419 without coming through Cricklade. It would allow reasonable access to the A419 for traffic heading either north or south.

There is no single definitive route for this. The earliest route found in the Town Council files is a 1997 reference to a route that would go to the back of Paul's Croft and would therefore join the Purton Road opposite the Forty. Clearly this is now much too near the Cricklade built up area given the Byre Close and other developments. Other suggested routes join the Purton Road in the region of the Broadleaze Crossroads near Noah's Ark. A number of sketches of possible routes are in the Town Council file 'Cricklade Southern Relief Road' and there was an invitation only meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2004 at which several possible routes were discussed.

It should be noted that there is also a scheme that was suggested by a local businessman in April 2004 that as well as providing the Purton Road . A419 link, extended a new road to provide a link to the B4696 (Ashton Keynes / Spine Road / Cirencester to Royal Wootton Bassett route). Given the cost of the basic southern relief road it is proposed to disregard consideration of this more ambitious scheme.

The Mouchel Parkman 2004 report (available on the Town Council website) lists a number of disadvantages to the southern relief road, as well as cost, including the fact that it crosses a floodplain and would increase the attractiveness of the B4553 for traffic from the A419 to get to West Swindon.

There is a view that a bypass could remove trade from the town centre.

In terms of cost Wiltshire Council, in a letter of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2004, gave an approximate cost of £7.5m based on £2.5m per km. It is not known exactly what assumptions as regards floodplain etc. are behind this figure. A current cost would be a minimum of £10m but still higher figures are implied by the Wiltshire Council Early Assessment Sifting Tool (EAST) analysis mentioned below.

There may need to be some sort of crossing engineered between any such new road and either the restored canal or the restored railway (or both) depending upon the routings they choose.

In June 2013 Wiltshire Council produced an assessment of 70 major transport improvement schemes as part of a process to assess which ones to ask central government for funding for. The EAST (Early Assessment Sifting Tool . see page 22) assessment of the Cricklade Southern Bypass option resulted in it not making the shortlist to proceed further.

If a southern bypass were to be built then a restriction on non delivery HGVs travelling through Cricklade could be introduced.

## **2. Friday's Ham Lane Extension**

This was mentioned in the Mouchel Parkman 2004 report and was taken up by a local politician in 2009, possibly on the grounds that he opposed any major housing development to the north or west of Swindon and felt that a Cricklade Southern relief route would be dependent on that development coming forwards but this scheme would not. Irrespective of how correct or not this was at the time, the idea still has some support.

The scheme would extend Fridays Ham Lane to Waterhay so providing a route between Chelworth etc. and the Spine Road via the B4040 and Waterhay. It would provide a shorter route between Chelworth and the Spine Road than the existing roads and pass to the east of Ashton Keynes rather than the west. It would also be further away from housing on the edge of Ashton Keynes.

Wiltshire Council wrote to the local politician that had suggested the scheme on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009 giving an estimated cost of the Fridays Ham Lane scheme at just under £6m . they also added in the letter that they saw little prospect of it being realised.

Whilst this scheme provides a solution for traffic from Chelworth (and points to the south) which is accessing the A419 to head north, it is unsuitable for traffic going from Chelworth to the A419 to head in a southerly direction because of the additional distance involved. Like other schemes to send northbound HGVs to the spine road they only allow a weight limit to be imposed in Cricklade if done in conjunction with a facility for southbound HGVs.

The view that because it only really provided a ~~6~~ solution for traffic to or from the north and was over half the cost of the Southern bypass made it worse value for money than the southern bypass was discussed with officials from Wiltshire Council. They agreed that this would probably be the case (see Q4 from the notes of meeting with them of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 on page 17).

## **3. A new "Hills" Road**

This link would be from the B4696 (Royal Wootton Bassett to Ashton Keynes Road) and would allow access from the south to the Hills industrial area at Purton. At the moment much of this HGV traffic is routed through Cricklade because there is a 7.5t weight limit in Purton. This proposal would allow HGV traffic from the industrial site to travel via the B4696 to the spine road and hence to the A419 (for traffic to or from the north) and also, via the B4696 and B4042, to the M4 junction 16.

Hills have discussed this scheme but have given no commitment to funding it.

Cricklade Town Council, in their letter of objection to a planning application for increased capacity at the Hills industrial area (Wiltshire Council reference 15/00401), indicated that they might be minded to support the scheme if a southern access road to the Hills site formed part of the proposal. On 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015, when giving the formal Wiltshire Council response to the application, the Highways Officer made the following passing reference: *"Cricklade Town Council, in its consultation response, has indicated that a route to the site from the south should be provided to make the application acceptable; I do not concur with this view, although I sympathise with the sentiment"*

## **Proposals not involving new road construction**

### **(i) Tadpole Lane as a route to Blunsdon / Swindon and the A419**

The idea of upgrading Tadpole Lane to take HGVs in a west to east direction only was discussed in the 2004 Mouchel Parkman report, having first been suggested (but as a two way HGV route) in 2002. The Mouchel Parkman proposal would not have eliminated HGVs between Blunsdon and Chelworth etc. having to travel through Cricklade. Those travelling from Blunsdon would still travel through Cricklade. The reasons that they gave for not implementing two way HGV working was that there was building to the south of the road but not the north and the geometry was such that there would be extra cost in modifications to accommodate HGVs in the other direction. Although a schedule of works needed was prepared we have not found any overall cost estimates for this scheme.

Subsequently the draft Cricklade Town plan suggested that the use of two way working on Tadpole Lane should be investigated in conjunction with a route for north bound HGVs via the Spine Road to the A419.

All of this was before the Tadpole Farm development to the north of Tadpole Lane received planning consent. That development actually downgrades Tadpole Lane itself as a through route with the main road being diverted along part of its way to the north through the new development. In fact Wiltshire Council's Environment Panel reviewed the Mouchel Parkman report on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2005 and rejected the Tadpole Lane proposal due to the scale and cost of the improvements. (At the same meeting they said that the Cricklade Southern Bypass should be further considered depending on Swindon development).

Given that the Tadpole Farm development is now under construction, making either the existing Tadpole Lane or the new road through the Tadpole Farm development unsuitable as an HGV through route, this concept is no longer feasible. This was agreed as a reasonable conclusion by Wiltshire Council officials at the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

As any enhanced use of Tadpole Lane for HGV traffic is not now feasible the issue of any accompanying restriction of through HGV traffic in Cricklade does not arise.

### **(ii) Access to Spine Road**

Without building either the Friday's Ham Lane extension or the Mills Road it is possible to get to the spine road and hence onto the A419 without going through Cricklade by going via the Broadleaze Crossroads (if coming from the Purton direction) or directly (if coming from Chelworth itself) onto the B4040 and hence to the B4696 and from there to the spine road and onto the A419.

This was suggested in conjunction with Tadpole Lane for southbound and Swindon bound traffic in the draft Cricklade Town Plan. There is additional distance for northbound traffic of between two and three miles compared with coming through Cricklade, depending on the point of origin. Forcing northbound HGVs along this route rather than them coming through

Cricklade would increase the traffic on it which would not be appreciated by people living along that route, particularly where it skirts around Ashton Keynes, although these are fewer in number than on the route through Cricklade. Wiltshire Council has in the past expressed reservations about the road and particularly the safety aspect of forcing more HGVs onto this route.

In any event, given that the Tadpole Lane option for traffic heading south or east is not feasible, the encouragement of HGVs to or from the north to use this route on its own would not allow a ban of HGV through traffic in Cricklade to be imposed.

### **Conclusion on options involving no new road construction**

Given that the use of Tadpole Lane for HGVs to travel east or south is not feasible then any ban on through HGV traffic in Cricklade would have to entail the construction of one or more new roads. Indeed the Mouchel Parkman 2004 study recognised that *“the long-term approach in the study area should involve the creation of additional road capacity, to reduce HGV’s through Cricklade.”*

## **Financing New Roads**

Finance for new roads can come from a number of sources including:

- a) Section 106 contributions
- b) The new community infrastructure levy
- c) Bespoke offers of funding from developers
- d) Contributions from neighbouring local authorities
- e) Contributions from Central Government

### **a) Section 106 contributions**

This has been the standard method of raising money for infrastructure from new developments but is being replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy (see below) from May 2015 in Wiltshire. After that time it can only be levied on very local infrastructure that is directly necessitated by a single development (or sometimes two or three adjacent developments). It could not therefore be collected from several new housing developments and used to fund any of the new road schemes considered.

It was however considered whether it might be possible to fund a southern bypass in particular if a single extremely large new facility (for example a major supermarket or retail chain distribution centre) were to be permitted to locate at Chelworth. This was discussed on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 with Wiltshire Council officials who said that if something of the scale of the Cricklade Southern Bypass was required to cope with a major new facility at Chelworth

that would be taken to imply that Chelworth was not a suitable location for that new facility and so planning permission for it would be opposed. Irrespective of this it is unlikely that most facilities that could stand making a payment of the order of £10m could be fitted into the Chelworth Area without impinging onto a considerable amount of open countryside, which would be contrary to Wiltshire policy.

A suggestion has been put forwards which might enable the use of section 106 payments which is to ~~move~~ the Chelworth developments to the Calcutt area which could then have direct access onto the A419 via a link road. This idea was mooted in the Town Plan and has also been discussed with Wiltshire Council officers.

Leaving aside possible difficulties with not spoiling the visual appearance of the approach to Cricklade from the A419 (which may be able to be mitigated) as well as the opposition from people living in areas that could be adversely affected, there is another significant difficulty with this idea. It is that it is not possible to force companies currently at Chelworth to move and it would therefore be likely that one would end up with both the current activity at Chelworth and a new industrial area with access onto the A419.

Consideration has also been given to inducing the current occupants of the Chelworth area to move by allowing residential development there, creating effectively a residential satellite of Cricklade. Creating such a satellite further than a sensible walking distance of the Town Centre facilities would not however be regarded as sustainable development and so would be unlikely to receive planning consent, even if all the parties involved could be brought onboard with such a major relocation.

It is therefore concluded that there is no feasible way for section 106 contributions from local development to fund any of the new road schemes.

## **b) Community Infrastructure Levy**

This was introduced in May 2015 in Wiltshire and will be the main levy on future new development to fund general infrastructure improvements. Part of the proceeds of the levy will be passed to the Town Council to spend (a higher proportion if there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan) but, as roads are not a Parish responsibility, it is instructive to see how much development would be necessary for any of the schemes being considered, assuming 100% of the levy would be spent funding a new road.

The community infrastructure levy will not be charged on non residential developments in this area apart from superstores and retail warehouse type developments. For residential developments it will not be charged on low cost housing i.e. any housing that is not for sale or rent at the open market rate. It should be noted that around 40% of any new housing development will have to be ~~affordable~~ and the level of the levy will be set to yield an average of about £5,000 per market priced dwelling.

This would result in the following numbers of market priced dwellings being required to fund the schemes being considered:

- For the Cricklade Southern bypass @ £10m approx . 2,000 new market priced houses
- For Friday Ham Lane @ £6m approx . 1,200 new market priced houses

It can be seen that funding any new road building that would allow HGVs to be prohibited from the town by new house construction would require the number of properties in the Town to be at least doubled. Even if residents wanted this to happen (which successive surveys show that they do not), Wiltshire Council policy is quite clear that they would not allow expansion on this scale as this amount of new home building is more sustainably undertaken in larger settlements.

#### **c) Bespoke offers of funding from developers**

There was an important meeting of companies based at Chelworth, the Town Council and various others in January 2004 at which possible means of financing a southern bypass were discussed as well as possible routes. Some of the companies involved took the view that residents of Cricklade should fund it as the Chelworth companies already paid significant business rates and it was the Cricklade residents that would benefit from an increase in the value of their homes.

The Mouchel Parkman 2004 report quotes an offer of £3.5m in return for being granted planning permission for 300 houses. There had apparently been offers in 2003 from some of the occupants at Chelworth to contribute towards the cost of a bypass. It is not known what (if anything) this would have been in return for.

The Millers road could only be brought forwards with funding from that company and with support from Wiltshire Council. Neither would appear to be a reasonable prospect at this time.

Therefore, it does not appear that there is currently any bespoke funding for new road construction available that would not be dependent on something that would in any event be refused planning permission.

#### **d) Contribution from neighbouring local authorities**

There was a period when it appears there was a view that new development in or on the edge of Swindon might provide a source of funding. It is now clear that this is unlikely to be the case as Swindon Borough Council are giving priority to the Purton / Iffley relief road which would provide relief for Mead Way in Swindon and essentially complete the northern Orbital Road as a dual carriageway. It appears that the substantial Tadpole Farm (1700 homes) and Ridgeway Farm (700 homes) developments on the edge of Swindon will not

lead to any funding for a Cricklade Southern bypass or alternative relief road. It is believed that possible funding from these schemes (which are both now currently under construction) as well as other development in Swindon is what led to the optimism in the early part of this century by the then MP for Cricklade (which was at the time in the North Swindon constituency) that the southern bypass could be funded without large scale house building in Cricklade itself.

#### **e) Contributions from Central Government**

Reference has already been made to the assessment by Wiltshire Council of the Cricklade Southern Bypass road using the Early Assessment and Sifting Tool which is attached at page 22. Whilst funding from central government for new roads is made available periodically, and local authorities can put forward proposals for a share of this money, it is now the case that such funding must be supported by the Local Enterprise Partnership. This allocates central government funding for the %Single Local Growth Fund+which is meant to cover all areas that may promote local economic growth, not just roads. There is a joint Local Enterprise Partnership covering Wiltshire and Swindon and the board of which comprises a single representative from each of Swindon Borough and Wiltshire Councils together with a number of representatives of local businesses. It is therefore this body that it is necessary to convince of the merits of relief for traffic in Cricklade which, given the amount of funding available and the other priorities, is unlikely to be easy.

The most recent release of money from central government for Swindon and Wiltshire will be utilised for improvements to J15 and J16 of the M4 as well as improvements to the A350.

### **Conclusions on new road construction and the prohibition of HGV traffic from Cricklade town centre**

There would appear to be little prospect of the ability to prohibit HGV traffic from the town centre over the plan period to 2026. This is irrespective of the number of new homes or commercial development that would be accepted by the community. However, there are other options that might provide some relief and these are outlined below.

## **What may be achievable via the Neighbourhood Planning Process**

There are two schemes that might be achievable, one affecting all of Cricklade and one affecting part of it.

### **(i) A planning policy to encourage a change in the type of businesses at Chelworth**

It has been confirmed by Wiltshire Council that it would be possible to introduce a regeneration strategy for Chelworth discouraging any growth in HGV generating businesses and this is already both Wiltshire and Cricklade Town Council policies. Instead the policy would encourage the growth of businesses that are less dependent on HGV traffic. Whilst the effect of this policy may take a long time to emerge, a positive % encouraging non HGV using businesses as well as not granting permissions for anything that would increase HGV use+could shift the type of businesses there in the long term.

This type of policy relates to land use and therefore could become part of a Neighbourhood Plan.

### **(ii) Relief for High Street North**

The possibility of prohibiting HGV traffic from High Street North (apart from deliveries) and making such northbound traffic use Calcutt Street to access the A419 has been discussed for some time. It would make High Street North more pleasant for pedestrians but would increase the HGV traffic using Calcutt Street. In addition there may be additional congestion at the junction between the High Street and Calcutt Street with long HGVs having to turn right rather than being able to go straight on.

It is unlikely that there would be a unanimous view from Cricklade residents as to whether to pursue this option. Wiltshire Council officers have stated that a ban on non delivery HGVs in High Street North could be implemented. However Wiltshire Council will not get involved in arbitration where part of a local community wants a particular change and the other part does not. For them to proceed with the process to introduce any such ban they would expect to see that there was an overwhelming majority of local opinion in favour of a change.

However any such policy would not relate to land use and therefore cannot be included in a Neighbourhood Plan. In this respect it is in the same category as the introduction of time limited parking (and possibly residents only parking) in High Street North which was also mentioned by residents as a possibility in the first Neighbourhood Planning Consultation. Reference to this is made here for completeness only and if taken any further it would be done so as part of normal Town Council business.

## Letter to Wiltshire Council Planning Department

Henning Totz  
Senior Planning Officer  
Economy and Regeneration  
Wiltshire Council  
County Hall  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 8JN

9<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Dear Henning

### **QUESTIONS FOR WILTSHIRE COUNCIL HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT**

During the consultation stage on our Neighbourhood Plan many questions were raised by the public that related to Highways issues and the major problems that already exist in Cricklade relating to HGVs and the 'rat run' effect caused by continued building in North Swindon. Concerns were raised regarding the impact on future developments for the Town and its residents.

As you know, there has been considerable debate in the NPWP about these questions, but the general view is that we do need to answer the points that have been raised by residents and we need to demonstrate that the matters have been properly considered by us.

Would you please forward these questions to Highways, as our point of contact within Wiltshire Council? They may prefer to meet with us to deal with the matters and I think WP members would welcome the opportunity for a meeting sometime in the New Year.

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. If a very large new user of the Chelworth area (say a supermarket distribution centre) was permitted, would it be possible to fund a Cricklade Southern Relief Road via a Section 106 contribution from that?
2. What would be the case if the new development was more remote, say a significant extra HGV generating activity from Hills in Purton?
3. What about a combination of the two?

For the avoidance of doubt permission for any of the facilities is not being advocated – the question is merely what might be possible if they were permitted.

4. Do Highways have any comments on the traffic relief options note prepared for the Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan consultation <http://crickladenp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Major-traffic-relief-options.pdf>? In particular do they agree that there is now no prospect of using Tadpole Lane as an HGV relief route and that the Friday's Ham Lane proposal (on its own) has little merit as it would not be a sensible alternative for traffic from Hills / Chelworth wishing to go south?
5. Could Highways provide some background on the discussions / events between 2005 and 2009? In 2005, as part of the "Swindon joint study" 2006 to 2026, there was discussion

between Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council on the possibility of a Cricklade Southern Relief Road. Also at the Wiltshire County Council (Environment Panel) meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2005 the Mouchel Parkman report was considered. It was stated that whilst the Cricklade Southern Relief Road was not in the structural plan it would be further considered depending on Swindon development. By 2009 it was made clear by Wiltshire Council that even with development to the north and west of Swindon there was no prospect of funding a bypass. It would be useful to get an account of the reasons why between 2005 and 2009 the prospect of a bypass receded and what arguments were made for and against it. What role did Swindon play in any discussions? Was the possibility of funding from Swindon discussed again during discussions on the Tadpole Lane development? We are still awaiting response from SBC on S106 funding contribution towards traffic mitigation in Cricklade arising from Tadpole and Ridgeway Farm developments (ref response 26/09/13 from Wiltshire Highways).

6. Are there any plans for an HGV/traffic survey in/around the Cricklade area to take place in 2014? (We seem to remember that a previous Wiltshire Councillor had been told that there would be.)
7. Wiltshire published an EAST assessment of the Cricklade Southern Relief Road in the spring of 2013. When will the next EAST exercise be undertaken? Will there be an opportunity for community/local council input the next time an EAST is undertaken?
8. Whilst there is no relief via a new road for Cricklade what, if any, traffic mitigation measures do Wiltshire propose to implement? This might not be a question specifically for Highways.
9. If the NP transport focus group decided to include an option for time restricted parking in the High Street as an alternative to increasing car parking facilities, how could this best be delivered outside of the current alterations to parking restrictions arrangements?
10. If the NP transport focus group decided to include an option to ban vehicles greater than 7.5gvw from using the northern section of the High St (thereby diverting all large goods vehicle down Calcutt St), would this be a deliverable option in the opinion of the Wiltshire Highways?
11. "In the main, when building new links, we try to build permeability into it. The way in which the new route is proposed has no function for journeys from A to B, so arguably there are minimal benefits."  
Please can this comment be amplified – what does permeability mean in traffic terms? Are A and B general points or referencing points on a map?
12. "In principle, by locating new housing alongside new employment, new residents may choose to work nearby."  
Are there any statistics on what happens in practice? If 100 new houses are built near an employment area, how many new occupants work in that employment area? 1? 10? 99?
13. How much additional traffic does the Highways Agency consider that the A419 Cricklade junction could take before it becomes a matter of concern?
14. In relation to the exercise leading to a firm-costed proposal, who would undertake putting together the cases outlined and what would be a typical budget cost for this exercise?

Yours sincerely,

## **NOTES FROM MEETING WITH WILTSHIRE COUNCIL HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT**

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 10:30am in County Hall, Trowbridge**

### **Present:**

Mark Clarke (MC) - Chairman Cricklade NP Working Party (NPWP) and Chairman Cricklade Town Council (CTC)

Tim Russell (TR) - Community Member Cricklade NPWP

John Harmer (JH) - Community Member Cricklade NPWP

Henning Totz (HT) - Wiltshire Council (WC) . NP Link Officer

Alan Creedy (AC) - WC Highways

### **Objective:**

Meeting requested by Cricklade NPWP members to gain answers to questions sent in advance (letter attached). These were the outcome of issues raised by the Town Plan and from the NP consultation in April 2013 regarding traffic in Cricklade and the potential for new development to fund new road capacity.

#### 1. Introductions

MC, TR and JH introduced themselves to AC.

#### 2. Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan Update

HT summarised the status for benefit for AC. Cricklade parish had been designated as a Neighbourhood Area in February 2013 and had held a roadshow-type consultation in April 2013 to help scope the plan and identify issues. The Town Council now had a grant from Locality to fund specialist reports etc. It hoped to consult again in late Spring on the draft Plan to date, with an intended end date of mid 2015 for an adopted Plan.

Two key issues were alleviating impacts of HGVs and what could be put into the Plan in respect of transport and traffic related policies. MC confirmed HGVs were a major issue for residents.

TR also wished to take the opportunity to document a conclusion to a number of transport and new road issues which were continually raised by Cricklade residents even if these were outside the scope of the NP.

AC said he would do his best to answer issues as he believed WC would view them but could not speak on behalf of WC and noted some issues were policy related and not technical.

### 3. Questions to Wiltshire Council

**Q1:** TR provided background: the NPWP had established there was no realistic number of houses that could fund a southern bypass. However could another industrial or commercial development at Chelworth justify the funding of a bypass and what scale could this be? JH gave the example of large out of town retail which seemed profitable enough in other locations to support delivery of major infrastructure.

AC expressed his view that intuitively the scale of development required would bring as many problems as it solved. The outcome of this thinking elsewhere (e.g. Bradford on Avon) was that the disadvantages of large scale of development outweighed the benefits it brought. For Cricklade the scale of development would probably be too large to be accommodated in other planning terms.

JH asked if there were precedents elsewhere e.g. Swindon was the location of major distribution centres . how much money had developers contributed to infrastructure?

HT said the reverse was true . investments like this went to where the infrastructure would support them. Swindon had the trunk road and motorway and so road upgrades were affordable for developers.

AC confirmed that the requirement for major contributions to upgrade the road network would be a planning reason to suggest the location was unsuitable for that purpose.

**Q2:** JH noted that the waste site at Purton was located there for geological reasons. This gave rise to HGV movements through Cricklade because of the HGV ban through Purton village. Could contributions therefore be sought from Hills towards a relief road for Cricklade?

AC said this would be decided on a case by case basis when planning permissions were sought based on transport assessments that were required as part of the supporting evidence.

JH said the issue was the aggregate impact rather than each individual application. This appeared to make it impossible to argue against any one application contributing to mitigation. It was the cumulative impact of Purton Waste Site, mineral extraction and HGV intensive businesses at Chelworth that was the issue. Could Cricklade's NP contain a policy that enabled a contribution to be sought from each applicant?

AC said historically there was negotiation over where S106 contributions would be directed. The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) changed this . it was expected to be in force in Wiltshire at the end of 2014. This would be the only source of funding for off-site infrastructure in future.

JH said that CIL was only levied on houses. HT said it was also on large retail and town centre retail; it was agreed CIL would not be levied on industrial or non retail commercial development.

HT was confident S106 could not be used to gain investment in offsite road infrastructure. It could only be used for direct access to a development or infrastructure internal to the development, and three tests as per CIL Regulation 122 were applied. Developers would be seeking to negotiate down the level of contribution by reference to these tests especially if a

S106 agreement was not secured before planning permission were granted. S278 could be used to fund improvements to junctions.

AC said the ability to pool S106 contributions was no longer there and emphasised that the move to CIL meant that this was the only source of funds for infrastructure like roads. Therefore in terms of the NP Cricklade residents would need to be told that additional money could not be sourced from development.

JH said that this meant any industrial expansion by Hills at Purton or at Chelworth would then make no contribution towards local infrastructure because CIL was not levied on that type of development. And since S106 was not possible for off site roads did this mean there was no planning mechanism for Hills to alleviate its traffic impact on Cricklade?

AC repeated that a proposed development that required such a major investment in infrastructure would demonstrate that it was not in a suitable location.

JH said this was a ~~live~~ issue currently as Hills were currently appealing an application to double the size of its composting facility, without including the construction of a new access road from the SW which they had suggested to CTC in 2011 could be part of such an application. MC confirmed that CTC and Purton Parish Council supported the construction of this road, but there was no sign of it happening. Hills were seeking to argue the incremental impact was low enough for no additional infrastructure to be necessary. Hills also wanted to make the temporary permission for the recycling site into a permanent one.

TR agreed the HGV impact was cumulative and it was this that created Cricklade's issues. A new road into the site from the SW would enable all Hills traffic to avoid Cricklade.

AC said he didn't know the detail and so could not say on which basis WC had turned down Hills' application. MC thought WC had not refused but that Hills had appealed on non determination.

**Action: AC to write note on Highways position on the Hills application**

AC indicated that the change of emphasis within planning meant that Highways found it more difficult to provide grounds to refuse permission as it could only do so if the ~~an~~ individual impact is severe+(wording from the National Planning Policy Framework).

**Q3:** Covered above.

**Q4:** TR summarised the option of using Tadpole Lane for HGVs going south and an upgrade to Fridays Ham Lane being used to take HGVs north.

TR asked if the permission granted for residential development at Tadpole Farm made the first leg of this proposal no longer feasible. AC confirmed this was the case.

TR quoted his understanding of an indicative £6m as the cost of Fridays Ham Lane upgrade, which could only provide half a solution as the diversion required for HGVs wanting to go south would be so great as to be unworkable. TR asked if this was a viable option as it would clearly not offer value for money for traffic going south.

AC confirmed assuming that if money were available (which it wasn't!) then the evaluation would be based on a value for money cost/benefit analysis which would be mainly on

journey time savings. Although AC could not be definitive he expected that the Fridays Ham Lane option would not be assessed as the best option.

JH asked how economic benefit weighed against the benefit to the community of being relieved from HGVs. AC said this was hard to monetise and in the current economic environment its value was perceived as low compared with hard economic benefits of reduced journey times which could be more readily costed. A benefit to the community would help justify a scheme that had economic benefits, but would very probably not outweigh a scheme that had economic costs.

AC therefore agreed that in the hypothetical situation of evaluating the two options, he expected that the southern relief road would offer economic benefits and so be a preferred route to Fridays Ham Lane.

JH asked if the equations that linked road cost with journey times/economic benefit were publicly available.

AC said that WebTAG published by the DfT was certainly accessible but that it was complicated and so WC officers normally engaged specialist consultants to undertake the use of the provided software . it was not intended to be used by communities.

**Q7:** JH asked if whether the EAST (Early Assessment Sieving Tool) methodology could be used as an alternative.

AC explained that EAST was intended to rank candidate schemes for consideration against a specific limited budget. It was not an alternative to the detailed WebTAG analysis. Sometimes the detailed analysis would change the ranking/preference, as EAST was high level broad brush.

AC said the most important factor was often deliverability as funding was frequently available only for a short window of time and it was important to have schemes that could be delivered within that time frame. AC agreed that in an ideal world schemes would all be developed to a high degree of readiness.

Unfortunately priorities changed and so schemes that met national criteria at one point in time would not necessarily be preferred in the future. As an example about 10 years ago the emphasis was on promoting bus and non-car use and integrated transport solutions and not building new roads. Now the emphasis is on promoting economic growth including through building infrastructure at modest cost. So EAST now biases in favour of economic growth.

JH asked whether communities could be involved in the next EAST assessment and when that would be.

AC said EAST was used ~~as is~~ with parameters set by central Government. The results were published and were open for comment. People may not like the conclusion but they could comment on the inputs.

AC said EAST could be used at any time . it was used last year to rank schemes to access money which was made available then for the local area from central Government on a formula basis. It concluded that the three schemes were M4 J15 and J16 and A350 improvements around Chippenham. The money available for all Wiltshire and Swindon had been about £11m.

AC explained that the access to money has now changed. The ~~mes~~ ~~es~~ ~~el~~ ~~ts~~ ~~l~~ ~~i~~ ~~n~~ ~~e~~ ~~R~~ ~~e~~ ~~v~~ ~~i~~ ~~w~~ ~~e~~ ~~d~~ wanted to prioritise investment into economic recovery and to allow business to focus spend through Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Single Local Growth Fund has been formed from various budget areas including transport, homes, education, EU funding etc. and the LEP now decides where that should be invested to support the local economy. All . or none . could be on roads.

The LEP has a single Council representative from each of Swindon and Wiltshire but is mainly made up from representatives from business. Wiltshire Highways has to make its case for funding to the LEP.

AC said the local LEP has to produce a ~~st~~ ~~r~~ ~~a~~ ~~t~~ ~~e~~ ~~g~~ ~~i~~ ~~c~~ ~~E~~ ~~c~~ ~~o~~ ~~n~~ ~~o~~ ~~m~~ ~~i~~ ~~c~~ ~~P~~ ~~l~~ ~~a~~ ~~n~~ to pitch to Government for a local share of a £2billion national pot, and it may not get a proportionate share of this relative to its population unless it can make a good case. (TR commented that £2bn computed to only £30 per head of population nationally.)

JH asked if in summary the timing of the next EAST exercise would be determined by availability of money. AC confirmed that this was probably the case therefore the timing is uncertain.

AC said that his summary point was that the reality is that most of what is done is based on availability of funding and capturing that required an opportunistic approach to meet the criteria.

**Action: AC to send guidance note on Single Local Growth Fund: Advice for LEPs to explain the current sources of funding.**

**Q14:** TR asked where funding could be sourced to undertake the exercise to firm up costing of options such as a relief road.

AC said that for example the J16 design work had been funded from developer contributions associated with the Wichelstowe housing development, because upgrade of the J16 had been a planning condition.

The A350 upgrade was ~~as~~ ~~easy~~ ~~as~~ ~~it~~ ~~gets~~ because the initial design and construction had anticipated dualling the road. (TR noted that the overbridges visibly were built for this.)

AC said firstly there would be a need to do an outline business case for a new road and this was probably the stage that Cricklade was at.

JH asked for confirmation that funding could not come from a condition applied to a housing development in Cricklade as it was not possible to put this kind of condition in place.

AC and HT agreed that since the test was that development would not be permitted if a condition were not imposed then such a condition would fail this test.

It was noted that the discussion had been useful as supporting evidence as to why such a large scheme could not be taken forward within the Cricklade NP.

**Q8:** TR asked what could be done in planning terms (e.g. opposing significant expansion at Chelworth or Hills Purton) to at least ensure the HGV problem for Cricklade did not worsen.

HT suggested that an approach might be to seek to change the business make up at Chelworth to attract those businesses that were not so heavily HGV dominated. This might be through a regeneration strategy for Chelworth that would over the long term phase out businesses which generated large volumes of HGV traffic. HT suggested this could not be done in the timescales of the current NP but would need to wait for a revision in order for the necessary evidence to be gathered.

JH asked if it would be necessary to identify alternative locations within Cricklade parish to accommodate HGV dominated business. For example the Calcutt area adjacent to the A419 had been suggested both in the Town Plan and in response to the NP consultation. This could be accessed via a service road parallel to the A419. JH said three issues had been identified with this in principle: (i) visual impact on Cricklade and the approach to it, (ii) limiting the expansion of the new industrial area and (iii) ensuring that HGV businesses moved from Chelworth to Calcutt rather than new HGV businesses setting up in Calcutt. Without this last condition the fear was that it would double Cricklade's HGV problem not alleviate it.

JH suggested that a benefit from such an area could enable part of a relief road to be built using S106 money because a suitable road would be needed to access this new industrial area.

HT said his reaction was to consider Chelworth as a standalone problem rather than create a new industrial area. AC agreed that the risk would be that this new allocation would double Cricklade's problem. AC felt that changing the nature of businesses at Chelworth could be seen as acceptable in planning terms since it was not seeking to change the business area per se or the amount of employment provided and it would not be necessary to provide an alternative location for HGV dominated businesses within the parish.

AC asked how the estate came to be located at Chelworth if it was so unsuitable. JH said it was partly an accident of history as it was a post war airfield that had redundant industrial buildings, but subsequent expansion there had been to a considerable extent uncontrolled. Much of the development had been achieved by retrospective planning applications and obtaining certificates of lawfulness.

AC asked what evidence was available about the volumes of HGV traffic accessing Chelworth. What had happened to the results of the residents survey? JH replied that around 60% of HGV traffic was Chelworth related, about 25-30% was Purton related and the remainder was through traffic.

**Action: JH to finalise HGV Survey Report to provide part of evidence base for Plan**

JH said it could be concluded that nothing could be done within the NP in terms of delivering sufficient money from development to improve the road network and all that could be done would be policies that sought to influence the type of development to reduce HGV impact.

**Action: HT to consult internally on what policies could be put in place within the Plan to control future development at Chelworth and limit/reduce its associated HGV traffic**

JH emphasised the need to enforce policies once they were in place as this had been lacking in the past.

**Q5:** TR was keen to understand why the promised relief road had lost its priority following the intervention of the then MP about ten years ago.

AC could not answer directly but agreed with TR it was likely that competition for funds from Swindon to improve Swindon's own road network had used all the available money generated by housing expansion at North Swindon. This was unlikely to change in future therefore Cricklade could not look to Swindon developments for any contribution towards improving the road network around Cricklade. Hypothetically this could be different if there were no boundary between Wiltshire and Swindon, but the reality was this boundary existed. TR understood WC had other priorities given WC's assessment criteria.

**Q10:** HT asked whether a shared space or pedestrian friendly type solution could be implemented in Cricklade to discourage HGVs from using the town centre.

AC said he suspected as much had been done as could have been done with existing traffic calming given all the constraints of allowing through traffic.

In response to the specific question of banning HGVs from High St North (except for access), AC said the community would need to reach a consensus view. WC officers and councillors would be very unlikely to want to put themselves in the position of arbitrating or mediating between two warring factions within the community. Examples elsewhere (e.g. Bradford on Avon again) demonstrated how moving the problem from one road to another created this problem. If the community COULD reach a view via the NP which moderated the extremes of individual resident views then AC suggested Highways would be likely to support the change (accepting a small minority of dissenters) and this could be a policy within the NP.

HT concluded by emphasising that the meeting was expressing officer views and not official WC views.

## June 2013 Assessment by Wiltshire Council of Cricklade Southern Bypass

<b>Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (EAST) - Expanded Print View</b>		
Option Name/No.	Cricklade Southern Relief Road	
Date		
Description	A 3km single carriageway road between the A419 Primary Route and Chelworth Industrial Estate.	
<b>Strategic</b>		
Identified problems and objectives	High volume of HGVs travelling through Cricklade with resultant adverse impacts on noise, air quality, vulnerable road users, community severance and the historic urban environment.	
Scale of impact	4	The scheme would be expected to significantly alleviate the identified problem.
Fit with wider transport and government objectives	2	Low fit with national transport goals. While there is some degree of fit with the objectives related to noise, air quality and streetscapes, there is some conflict with the objectives related to carbon emissions and the natural environment.
Fit with other objectives	2	Low fit with LTP3 objectives and emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy given low levels of proposed development growth.
Key uncertainties	Scheme cost; impact on local natural environment; effect on existing and induced traffic levels.	
Degree of consensus over outcomes	2	Mouchel study in 2004 found that "This option was strongly supported by some participants...However it has to be noted that not all participants were in favour of a new bypass".
<b>Economic</b>		
Economic growth	3. Amber	The option should improve journey times and reliability by reducing delays and vehicle conflicts through Cricklade. Not well related to proposed development growth in emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy.
Carbon emissions	2. Red/amber	Embedded carbon in construction and likelihood of scheme inducing additional traffic.
Socio-distributional impacts and the regions	3. Amber	While the scheme would improve the streetscene environment in Cricklade for vulnerable groups, this is considered to be of relatively limited value overall.
Local environment	2. Red/amber	It is considered that the positive benefits in Cricklade will be offset by the negative impacts of the scheme on the local natural environment.
Well being	4. Amber/green	The option would help reduce community severance in Cricklade and in doing so may encourage more people to walk and cycle as the level of HGV intimidation would be greatly reduced.
Expected VfM category		Not established. Average BCR for local road scheme = 4.23 (from RAC Foundation report 'Rates of Return on Public Spending on Transport' (June 2009).

<b>Managerial</b>		
Implementation timetable	6. 5-10 years	
Public acceptability	2	While the principle of a southern relief road had been discussed at various times by the community, there has been little or no recent widespread or detailed consultation.
Practical feasibility	3	Uncertainties concerning ground conditions.
What is the quality of the supporting evidence?	2	While there is some data on the nature of HGV movements, there is no detailed modelling/data relating to the impact of the relief road itself.
Key risks	Scheme cost, environmental impacts and effect on existing and induced traffic flows.	

**Financial**

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Affordability	1. Not affordable	Relatively high scheme cost and limited local developer contributions available.
Capital Cost (£m)	04. 10-25	Cost estimate based on average cost of single carriageway scheme of £10.6m per mile (see <a href="http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo061030/text/61030w0008.htm">http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo061030/text/61030w0008.htm</a> ).
Revenue Costs (£m)	01. None	Although there would be ongoing maintenance costs.
Cost profile		
Overall cost risk	2	
Other costs		

<b>Commercial</b>		
Flexibility of option	2	Route options.
Where is funding coming from?		
Any income generated? (£m)	No	

