



From CPRE Wiltshire, Charmian Spickernell, CPRE Wiltshire Vice-Chairman

QUESTION ONE

Wiltshire Council's bid to the HIF for £75m for roads to the east and south of Chippenham.

CPRE Wiltshire understands that SWLEP was consulted on this Bid and gave agreement, even though it pre-dated statutory Public consultation on the roll forward of the Local Plan post 2026 and neither the villages that will be affected nor Calne Town Council had been consulted. Chippenham Town Council were consulted behind closed doors.

As this consultation does not appear to have been mentioned in the SWLEP board meeting papers, CPRE asks: How was agreement given from SWLEP and whether the criteria on which support was based included environmental ones?

RESPONSE

The SWLEP received a briefing about the work to be developed if the HIF bid was successful. The briefing was in a closed session in January 2019 due to the commercial sensitivity of the material. The Board gave its support for the work to develop the bid and agreed to a request for a letter of support when asked for it by the bid team. Subsequently, the SWLEP Chairman and the SWLEP Director co-signed a letter of support in response to a request from the bid team. The support was based on an overall assessment of the benefits to the local area, specifically within our remit to improve productivity and support opportunities for employment.

The letter is noted in the confidential items for that meeting.

QUESTION TWO

Road and Rail Improvements

Mention is made in the documents for 27 November Meeting of a Sub-national Transport Body looking at road and rail improvements.

Apart from making roads safer, should investment now be in public transport, buses and trains?



Response

We are not yet in position to state that no further investment is required to improve the existing road network. Your comment about making roads safer is very much supported. The SWLEP has developed its Rail Strategy which has been very well received by a range of partners. Our strategy is designed to make rail travel a viable opportunity for business commuters and leisure travellers.

We maintain good contact with the bus operators in the area and discuss opportunities with them on a frequent basis. The SWLEP investment in Swindon's bus boulevard and our funding to assist the development of improved pedestrian, bus and cycle access to Salisbury City Centre are good examples of how the SWLEP Board is pursuing its transport priorities.