

## MELKSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### COMMENTS FORM

Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council are working to produce a joint Neighbourhood Plan.

This is a plan for the parishes of Melksham Town and Melksham Without and, once in force, will be used in the determination of planning applications.

Before submitting a draft plan to Wiltshire Council for a period of formal consultation and examination, your views on the proposals for our area are sought.

This form has been produced to collect feedback. If you are completing a comment by hand, and need more space please use the same format as the table so we can identify what your comment relates to.

**Please return this form by *no later than midnight on Monday, 13 July 2020.***

By e-mail to: [townhall@melksham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townhall@melksham-tc.gov.uk) or [clerk@melkshamwithout.co.uk](mailto:clerk@melkshamwithout.co.uk)  
or [mnpsq@mail.com](mailto:mnpsq@mail.com)

Or alternatively post to:

Melksham Town Council, Town Hall, Market Place, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 6ES

Melksham Without Parish Council, The Sports Pavilion, Westinghouse Way,  
Bowerhill Industrial Estate, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6TL

***PLEASE NOTE:*** *Your personal details will not be published as part of the consultation response, but anonymous comments will not be actioned so please provide personal details to accompany your comments. Communication regarding progress of the Plan and amendments to be made will be publicised. No individual responses will be given.*

*Both Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council have a duty to protect personal information and will process personal data in accordance with Data Protection legislation. The personal data you provide on this form will only be used for the purpose of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. The data will be stored on computer and/or manual files. You have a right to a copy of your information held by any organisation, with some exemptions. This data will be passed on to Wiltshire Council for the Regulation 16 Consultation. To gain access to your personal data held by Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council please contact the Town Clerk or Parish Clerk – as above.*

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**Melksham Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

Ref (office use)

**COMMENTS FORM**

**Each new comment should be in a new row. If completing this form digitally, the columns will expand to fit your text, and please save your file using the original file name <NDP R14 Comment\_initials\_MMDD.docx> but replacing “initials” and “MMDD” with your initials and the month and day (e.g. 0911) respectively. If comments are completed as a hard copy, please attached multiple sheets.**

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**Name (+ any person or organisation you represent) and contact details including email/post code<sup>#</sup>**

<sup>#</sup>For purposes of clarification and feedback only    <sup>\*</sup>Sufficient to identify the commented point precisely

Plan page and para.*	Comment	Any proposal to deal with comment made
	<p>No specific mention of the Campus and the current lack of community indoor sports facilities.</p>	<p>This is a painful reminder of the unwillingness of the lower level councils to truly confront the power of the WC cabinet, and how it chooses to prioritise its agendas. This fact should be very much in mind when reading the following feedback comments.</p>
84	<p>The reason for WC's plan for a SE Melksham A350 bypass is to support its County Housing Structure plan. Within that it was stated that it intends to create an A350 corridor between Trowbridge and the M4 junction at Chippenham. The reason for this corridor is to support the target to grow Trowbridge by @ 20,000 new homes during the period 2016-2036 in order to achieve its aim of making the town the primary settlement in Wiltshire. With an overall goal of some 75,000+ for the county as a whole.</p> <p>The costing of £135m is inaccurate, At the Area Board minutes from the 04/03 it</p>	<p>A SE Melksham A350 bypass does nothing for Melksham other than destroy vast swathes of land of which large areas are used for recreation and cannot be replaced due to their location and therefore would be lost to the community for ever. There are so many things wrong with the proposal that cannot be listed here but I can provide a comprehensive list which includes WC's attempts to mislead the DfT in its funding</p>

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	<p>stated that “The actual cost of developing and implementing the scheme could be up to £180 million.”</p> <p>To be noted also from these minutes. “The DfT will give £1.33m for progressing of both the Salisbury A338 AND A350 schemes, not just A350. WC have spent at least £280,000 already and expect the Outline Business Case to cost at least £2m. There is no guarantee that the DfT will fund the scheme as this will depend on many things including a public enquiry. So WC are expecting to spend more than another £1m of Wiltshire community charge payer’s money on the A350 OBC, potentially to no positive outcome. Source, Submission to the DfT.</p> <p>Also to be noted: The original submission to the DfT costed the scheme at £135.8m in total, although WC didn’t specify how much they wanted from the DfT. It will be interesting to find out what figures they finally settled on, because there is a caveat in the submission that effectively states that; once the DfT has granted money for a scheme then that’s it, any shortfall needed to complete the scheme that arises during its progression, is the sole responsibility of the requestee, i.e. WC, or in fact it’s community charge payers.</p> <p>There is an agreement for WC to pay what’s referred to as the ‘standard 15% local contribution’. So for £135.8m = WC contribution of £20.4m and</p>	<p>submissions for the scheme. It also contains interesting reading as to substantial risks and negative impacts WC themselves expect the scheme to have along its route.</p>
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£180m = £27m. If we look at recent history on large public projects costs, it's not unrealistic to expect the scheme's final cost to be @ £250m with us paying at least £37m, provided the £250m was agreed up front, it not then it would be considerably more, because, as already stated, WC has to pick up the gap between the original bid and final cost. NB Don't forget WC is committing itself to several other multimillion-pound A350 schemes in the same time frame with the same 15% contribution requirement representing tens of millions in community charge payer's money. Source FOI request to the DfT.

The simple fact is that even prior to the impact of Covid-19 WC really didn't have that sort of money to spend on schemes like this, unless it implemented massive cutbacks in projects/services. Now to attempt to take this sort of spending on, would simply be fiscal suicide, as they are effectively already teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. See BBC story:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53069772>

This makes the issuing of a section 114 notice almost inevitable and as the scheme hasn't even produced an OBC, it must be considered new, and therefore halted under the "no new spending" edict.

It will be interesting to see if Boris Johnson's announcements about the government spending its way

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	<p>out of recession by backing infrastructure projects, extends to bailing out WC and fully funding all of their road building plans. Or if Brexit's impact will turn that into empty rhetoric.</p> <p>NB As a result of initiatives coming out of the Covid-19 situation, WC have been allocated £227,000 to spend on walking and cycling to help people use alternatives to public transport which aren't the car. See link below. Have they discussed with Melksham how it might be able to access some of that money, and what if might be spent on ?</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-active-travel-fund-local-transport-authority-allocations/emergency-active-travel-fund-total-indicative-allocations">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-active-travel-fund-local-transport-authority-allocations/emergency-active-travel-fund-total-indicative-allocations</a></p>	
85	<p>The SE Melksham A350 bypass route has been submitted to the DfT as part of the funding request, so it's misleading to show anything other than that route in the context of this document. Effectively the route and costings they submitted in the request, is for what has been described as "Route C".</p>	
	<p>The above comments are based on information provided from two separate FOI requests made to the DfT to have the documentation supplied to the DfT from WC in relation to the A350 Melksham bypass submission and includes the original WC requests documents/The DfT responses including its partial</p>	<p>The material to the DfT from the WC is "misleading" in the extreme (an entirely inadequate descriptive euphemism for the content) over the situation with the A350 in Melksham and was clearly</p>

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	<p>rejection/WC's second submission responding to the DfT's concerns and to my comments made to the DfT of the original WC submission.</p> <p>The comments are also based on WC documents in the public domain which includes their Spatial framework plan and Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, amongst others. These having been approved by Central Government inspectors in the last year or so.</p>	<p>never meant to come into the public domain. The responses to the DfT's original concerns and points I raised, are eye watering in their "inaccuracy". One example explains Bridget Wayman's comments about cycleway access. This was her response to the issue of the DfT being made aware of the lie in the submission that "the A350 severed pedestrian/cycle access to the railway station from the town", which made acceptance of the bid by the DfT incumbent on addressing that severance issue. Of course there is no severance issue as there is a perfectly adequate and safe underpass that's been used by generations of George Ward students. She was forced to admit to the DfT that the subway did exist but claimed that it posed access problems for disabled users (Really ? Go and look at just how difficult it is to use [not]), and therefore it would be removed and replaced with a 'road level' crossing</p>
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		<p>similar to those either side of it. As we know those crossing have been subject to some serious accidents despite the road's 30mph limit at that point. So in essence, she suggested removing a perfectly safe underpass with a road level crossing of very questionably safety, simply to attempt to ameliorate a lie in the original submission. This is someone willing to put people's safety and wellbeing at risk simply to get their way.</p> <p>If someone's moral compass takes them down this path there will be no way back from it, or its consequences.</p> <p>Look at the end of this form for more corroboration of the mind set of WC.</p> <p>The whole proposal and the later responses to the DfT are riddled with these sorts of lies, which effectively makes the entire proposition originated on foundations of sand, and nothing good comes from building on that.</p>
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		<p>I've also included the Nolan/Seven Principles of Public Life. You might want to ask yourselves to what degree do WC uphold these principles, say 1.6 for example, and what it says about those that support their endeavours.</p> <p>I'm happy to discuss and share the information I have, on the basis that the local Melksham Councils will be open to the idea of moving from their current position of uninformed acceptance of what WC are telling them will happen, to a more informed position that rejects WC's current A350 proposal and instead looks for a more rational scheme to address what is effectively one simple bottleneck.</p> <p>What is being proposed is in effect, if it were a blocked cardiac artery, to rather than insert a short bypass around the blockage, instead pass a tube quite unnecessarily around the entire body.</p>
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		<p>A solution for the bottleneck: Put a flyover in over the A350 Farmers roundabout so that A350 traffic can flow through without interference from local traffic with a junction for that traffic located directly underneath the flyover. To improve things further close off the A365 Bath road junction and redirect it west from Shurnhold to join the BOA road close to the water treatment site, and upgrade that section to accommodate the traffic. It'll require a rail bridge but still far cheaper than £180m+. And with that spare cash another rail bridge could be built to feed ASDA etc from the new A365 alignment, which would remove that A350 junction.</p> <p>It would even allow for the current roundabout junction to be restructured and moved, in whole or part, albeit at a height above flood level, to the field opposite the former West Country Farmers site.</p> <p>None of this precludes the other solution which is simply to dual the</p>
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		<p>entire length of A350 from Chippenham to Trowbridge which is eminently possible with a little bit of creative thought and with some, but far fewer, sacrifices than the current scheme.</p> <p>The reason why none of these suggestions will be considered by WC, is they don't support their real goal of a massive expansion of housing along what they call the "A350 corridor", between the Chippenham M4 junction and Trowbridge. This is to support their documented objective of making Trowbridge the primary settlement in the north of the county.</p> <p>If the scheme does go forward in its current form, any "commitment" to a greener Wiltshire is simply empty hyperbole, as it will allow large scale housing expansion around the outside of towns, with only roads and primarily private cars, as the main transport option. It's also to be noted that WC's plans have little realistically to say on how it expects jobs,</p>
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		<p>health, welfare, education, physical and social activities to be provided for.</p> <p>The A350 will become a conduit for all those living in its influence to easily travel elsewhere to find those things, e.g. Swindon, Bath, Bristol, or further afield etc.</p> <p>The one certainty is that towns like Melksham can be expected to see an acceleration in their 'dormitory' status, with town centres and a sense of community further withering due to a lack of inward investment and wider pressures outside of any council's ability to address.</p> <p>Whatever you have been told by WC, or concluded for yourselves are the advantages of the scheme, and think that these will be delivered, are being misled. The motivation for its support may be based on a true belief that it will make things better for Melksham, but once you step back and take a really hard challenging look at what WC are actually aiming for,</p>
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		<p>and what they willing to do to achieve it, including the cost of their plans, fiscal, social, and environmental, then you should feel very betrayed.</p> <p>It's clear that the WC cabinet think they are a law unto themselves, and despite all outward appearances and assurances, <b><u>no one else</u></b> is invited to their real game, certainly not Melksham Councils or in fact any of us.</p>
<p>Here some links to the Historic Melksham Facebook Page which illustrates just how fast development is happening and what people think about that.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/651929414869627/3226335134095696/?comment_id=3228133097249233&amp;notif_id=1591552183986042&amp;notif_t=group_comment">https://www.facebook.com/groups/651929414869627/3226335134095696/?comment_id=3228133097249233&amp;notif_id=1591552183986042&amp;notif_t=group_comment</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/651929414869627/?multi-permalinks=3226371794092030&amp;notif_id=1591551123877284&amp;notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic">https://www.facebook.com/groups/651929414869627/?multi-permalinks=3226371794092030&amp;notif_id=1591551123877284&amp;notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/651929414869627/?multi-permalinks=3287413241321218&amp;notif_id=1593439889158133&amp;notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic">https://www.facebook.com/groups/651929414869627/?multi-permalinks=3287413241321218&amp;notif_id=1593439889158133&amp;notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic</a></p>	
	<p>Sadly another thing that this document pulls into sharp focus, is the absence of clear leadership of the Melksham councils. There are several individual 'stories', but what's missing is a one single person that stands up, and stands out,</p>	

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	<p>as having a clear meaningful, and, above all, deliverable, vision for the whole Melksham community. Consensus is important, but as someone whose delivered and been part of many successfully delivered projects, I can attest with absolute sincerity, that nothing is achieved unless one person takes overall ownership and sees it through.</p>	
	<p>The above point is particularly relevant as Melksham is on the cusp of a significant opportunity, although it may not seem like that at the moment. The Avon's manufacturing site in the town will close soon, although soon is difficult to define in precise terms, but it's unlikely to be still operating by the end of 20's and it's end can will probably be much earlier than that. So once the shock of the final closure of what was once the town's major employer is over, what next ?</p> <p>The redundant site will offer both challenges and opportunities. There will be significant opportunities to develop housing, jobs and leisure, that have the potential for a huge beneficial impact on the town. Importantly the site is genuinely positioned to take advantage of all of Melksham's transport facilities. It will be a once in a lifetime chance, so it's vital that there is a well thought out strategy for the site's reuse, including wider infrastructure plans, ready to be enacted when the inevitable happens.</p> <p>If you need an example of how not to do this, then look across the road to the former Unigate</p>	

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	<p>creamery site, which although smaller, provided similar opportunities when the factory closed in the 1980s. However it's abundantly clear that the current council's predecessors put no real thought or energy into how best to redevelop the site. So Melksham is left with an eyesore and a few random businesses that contribute far less to the town, than the whole site's potential.</p> <p>If you want an example of the good that can be achieved in near identical circumstances, then look no further than our downstream neighbour in BOA.</p> <p>Whilst WC will no doubt attempt to take the lead in whatever decisions are to be made about the Avon site, Melksham needs a strong representative in this process, who has a clear plan for the site's future to benefit the town, and who has the mandate and personal drive to see it executed.</p> <p>This is something they can practise on with the wider Christie Miller site, as that must now be at the point where it can be disposed of by WC. The question is; will Melksham see any benefit for the loss of its primary indoor sports facility, particularly as, as it seems that the Campus' fruition is as far away as ever ? The answer will almost certainly be, no. With the money simply being swallowed up to pay for WC's county wide budget deficit, and Melksham will be left without any all-day community indoor</p>	
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	<p>sports facilities for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>NB The Bowerhill industrial estate although thriving, is far from full with sites, some significant, that have lain empty for some time. There are also large as yet undeveloped areas, that still have little or no interest being shown in them.</p>	
	<p>If you want a 'Neighbourhood plan' to be taken seriously then you need one that is worth the disk space to store it on. To achieve this, one single person needs to effectively own it, and personally see it done. They of course will need help and support, but they must be a viable, effective, and above all, visible figurehead that everyone can rally around.</p> <p>The thing is, and trust me on this as someone who has tracked the Melksham councils for some time, at this point there is no one from that collective, regardless of their titles, that has <b>all</b> of the qualities to fulfil this difficult, but crucial project leader role.</p> <p>Therefore, the first and most important step in producing a credible Neighbourhood plan, is for everyone to take the tough choice to swallow their pride, acknowledge that fact, and identify and recruit that person. There are a number of the larger local businesses e.g. Knorr Bremse, that might be able to provide a business leader that would have the training and expertise to take this on if properly approached. This also has the advantage of being able to choose a project</p>	<p>You can choose to ignore the feedback supplied on this form, but the material will be published into the public domain in time, at which point Melksham's constituent voters will probably ask themselves basically one or both of these two questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the Melksham councils knew this, why did they not publish it, but instead chose to withhold it from us ? (Remember principle 1.5)</li> <li>2. If the Melksham councils didn't know this, what are they actually doing and what real use are they to us ?</li> </ol>



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	<p>leader who is politically agnostic, and so can unite rather than divide the political tribes involved. This is clearly vital for a group which is effectively politically deadlocked, by being made up of a collection of self-serving individuals.</p> <p>If chosen well, then Melksham has the chance to take some positive steps into the future.</p> <p>Also to ensure the absence of any doubt, and with no false modesty, I really, really do <b>not</b> mean me. I know my limitations and preferences.</p>	
	<p>If you still don't believe that WC are working with some serious moral compass issues, look at this Wiltshire Times article from Feb this year. See if you can spot the lie from the WC spokeswoman. NB This was also published in the Wiltshire Times online edition. When the lie was pointed out they hastily replaced that part of the article, but failed to highlight that it had been changed and why.</p> <p>NB Copy and paste the image into a single page, and enlarge so you can read the content.</p>	<p>The lie is that the A350 is WC's responsibility <b>not</b> HfE, (see confirmation here: <a href="#">HfE Onership Map</a> ), and therefore WC should have at least acknowledging that fact straight away, and acted accordingly. Rather than yet again having to be forced to.</p>
	<p>You might also want to consider the handling of the Campus project prior to its enforced reorganisation. Particularly WC's response to those involved in that activity, which was supposed to produce a facility to benefit all, but was really being used to attempt benefit only a few.</p> <p>The Principles below make grim reading in terms of what was done during the project, and what wasn't done in the</p>	

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	<p>aftermath, as pretty much all of them were ignored or simply paid lip service to. All evidence suggests that WC have not learned any lessons, and have certainly not increased their interest in, or adherence to, these principles. This is even more relevant as it appears the project is about to be 'deferred' yet again, quite possibly permanently.</p> <p>NB Melksham Councils didn't distinguish themselves during this time either, with their display of apathy and/or collusion.</p>	
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## **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

### **1.1 Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **1.2 Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **1.3 Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **1.4 Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **1.5 Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **1.6 Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### **1.7 Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.