

Provision of Two Bus Shelters – A4 Chilvester Hill

1. Background

The Chilvester Hill housing site on the A4 immediately to the west of Calne was granted planning permission on appeal and is now progressing towards completion. Although the Bewley Homes development is an extension of urban Calne, it will remain part of Calne Without PC's West Ward until boundaries change in May 2025, when it will come within the new boundaries of Calne Town Council.

At its meeting of 9th September 2024, the Council considered a report seeking approval to provide two new bus shelters on the A4 at the existing eastbound and westbound stops close to the new housing side. A copy of this report is included as Appendix A. The cost of installing the shelters (£11,000) was recommended to be funded from CIL monies. The Council resolved to defer the item to the next Strategic Planning Committee and/or full Council to allow further information to be gathered.

The proposal was reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee on 23rd September and subsequently by full Council on 14th October, which resolved:

“that the Council refers the proposal to provide and install two bus shelters at the existing east and westbound bus stops on the A4 at Chilvester Hill to LHFIG. The Council will commit up to 50% of the cost rather than the normal 30%.”

2. Update and Discussion

Approaches to Bewley Homes for a contribution to the project have been unsuccessful.

The proposal was considered by LHFIG on 1st November 2024. Traffic Management was discussed, with an action taken by Highways Officers to consider the traffic management requirements and provide an appropriate estimate. Funding in the current financial year looks unlikely as the budget for 2024/25 has now been almost completely allocated.

The total costs for the scheme are now estimated at:

Item	Cost	Comments
Two bus shelters at £5,243 each	£10,486.00	As per quote from Wiltshire Council's supplier
Traffic Management	£625.68	Estimated from Wiltshire Highways Officers. Based on two-way lights operating 09:30-15:30 over two days.
Total	£11,111.68	

The installation would be managed by Wiltshire Highways, who would obtain utility searches, organise traffic management, remove the bus stop flag signs and re-erect them on the new shelters. Calne Without Parish Council would need to obtain approval from Bewley Homes to excavated in the new footpath they have provided, as it has not yet been adopted.

It is noted that Calne Without Parish Council has received two tranches of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments arising from the Chilvester Hill Development - £15,346.20 in October 2023 and £18,008.90 in April 2024. A final third tranche will be due following completion of the development. Following the implementation of the Community Governance changes in May, CIL reserves arising from these payments will be transferred to the successor councils of Calne Town and Bremhill Parish at a ratio of 70%/30%.

The Council could resolve to take the following approaches:

- a) Fully fund both bus shelters this financial year, with the assets being transferred to the successor councils of Calne Town and Bremhill Parish following the governance changes in May; or
- b) Defer the scheme to 2025/26, for implementation by the successor Councils at their discretion (potentially using transferred CIL arising from the development and a possible contribution from LHFIFG).

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council resolves to either:

- a) Authorise and fully fund the procurement and installation of two bus shelters on the A4 at Chilvester Hill, to an estimated cost of £11,111.68; or:
- b) Defers implementation to 2025/26 following the implementation of the community governance changes, with a recommendation to the successor councils of Calne Town and Bremhill Parish that they progress the project, using transferred CIL funds arising from the development and, potentially, a funding contribution from LHFIFG.

Cllrs John Barnes and Ioan Rees
Highways, Transport and Road Safety Working Group

Appendix A – Previous Report (September 2024)

1. Background.

The Chilvester Hill housing site on the A4 immediately to the west of Calne was granted permission on appeal and is now progressing towards completion. Although the development is an extension of urban Calne it will remain part of Calne Without PC's West Ward until boundaries change in May 2025.

Both Calne Without PC and Calne TC objected to the planning application and supported Wiltshire Council's refusal at the subsequent planning appeal where the developer argued that the site was sustainable as it was on a relatively frequent bus route. The Inspector granted the appeal by Rainer Developments and the land was sold on to Bewley Homes who are currently constructing 28 houses on the site. It appears that neither Wiltshire Council nor the Inspector sought a requirement for the developer to provide bus shelters at the two nearest stops to the development. This was possibly because the developers transport consultant's report contended that -

"3.7.1 The closest pair of bus stops to the site are the 'Bremhill' stops, situated on the northwest corner of the site on Chilvester Hill. These stops are approximately 150m walk (equivalent to a 2-minute walk) from the centre of the site, and are equipped with a bus shelter, and a flag and pole with timetable information attached."

Whilst the walk distances are broadly correct there is very clearly no bus shelter at either stop. By misleading both the Wiltshire Council and the Planning Inspector the developer has avoided providing a very important facility to encourage greater public transport use and reducing car use. Encouraging people to use sustainable forms of transport, with the provision of bus shelters playing a part in that, should be a requirement of every new housing development

2. Proposal

The proposal is for the Parish Council to commit some of its CIL monies to provide two shelters at the existing eastbound and westbound 'Bremhill' stops on the A4. The location of the stops and the development site are shown on the plan below. Both stops already have raised kerbs and either hardstanding or are part of the footway. The stops serve relatively frequent bus services between Chippenham, Calne, Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon

Wiltshire Council's preferred bus shelter provider, 'GW Shelter Solutions' has quoted (see below) a cost of £5,243 to provide and install each shelter (Total cost £10,486 excluding VAT). The shelters, which have cantilever pitched roofs, would only need to have two bays rather than the longer three bay versions needed for stops with high numbers of passengers. The quote includes quarter end panels, seating and flag brackets as options which are considered desirable. Wiltshire Council's Highways and Passenger Transport Departments have both assessed the sites and are in support

3. Discussion

The Parish Council holds significant levels of CIL payments from various housing developers across the parish including the Chilvester Hill developer. Whilst the proposals are not included in the Council's Strategic Plan the shelters would have direct benefits to residents of the Chilvester Hill development as well as residents of the nearby properties.

The parish boundary changes in May 2025 will result in the Chilvester Hill housing development becoming part Calne and the A4 falling within Bremhill Parish Council's boundaries. Precise detailed plans of the new boundaries are not yet available but I am advised by officers of Wiltshire Council's Democratic Services department that the westbound bus stop will be within Calne Town Council's boundaries and the eastbound stop within Bremhill PC.

Under the agreement between the Town and Parish Council's involved in the boundary changes, the ownership of fixed assets such as bus shelters are to be transferred to the councils where those assets are located. Any future replacement and maintenance of assets within the new boundaries will also become the responsibility of those councils. This applies to assets installed or in the process of being installed up to May 2025 provided this council has committed to the scheme before 1st Nov 2024.

Whilst the area remains within Calne Without's responsibility until next May, the Parish Council has the responsibility and duty to look after the best interest of all its residents. However as future maintenance of the shelters will become the responsibility of other councils the proposals have been informally discussed with Calne TC and Bremhill PC councillors. Bremhill PC discussed the proposals at their meeting in August and supported the proposed shelters but were not prepared to contribute financially to their provision. The proposals have been discussed with Calne's representatives at the Local Highway, Footpath Infrastructure Group (LHFIG) and a number of other Calne TC councillors, all have supported the proposals.

I understand that from Calne TC who already own and maintain a number of shelters, that the cost of maintenance is minimal and they could easily include an additional shelter to their existing cleaning and maintenance contractor. Although Calne Without PC owns only one bus shelter in Stockley, it hasn't incurred any significant maintenance or cleaning costs since its installation.

4. Alternative Sources of Funding.

Before committing parish council to fully fund this project it would be prudent to explore other potential sources of funding. There are two other possible funding sources, firstly the the developer, Bewley Homes and secondly Wiltshire Council through the submission of a Highway Improvement Form to LHFIG.

Contact has been made with Bewley Homes but to date they have not given any indication that they would fund the shelters, an update can be provided at the meeting.

Until recently it was believed that public transport improvement were not elegance for LHFIG funding however Wiltshire Officers have now confirmed that bus shelters are eligible for funding at the normal 70%/30% split between Wiltshire/ Parish Council's.

A Highway Improvement Form (see below) has been completed for the Council meeting to consider if it wishes to submit it to the next LHFIG meeting on 18th October. However, at this stage of the financial year, Calne LHFIG has committed most of its budget, only £11,570 remains uncommitted. As there will inevitably be further requests to LHFIG including safety improvements, it must be questioned whether LHFIG is likely to commit at least 63% of the remaining budget to the shelters. The Council could consider, if it wishes, to increase its own contribution to 50% or more to increase the likelihood of gaining some Wiltshire Council funding through LHFIG. However even with an increased contribution, the chances of a successful bid through LHFIG would seem uncertain and

probably even less likely if the council commits (as a fall back) to fully fund the proposals in advance of the LHFIG decision on 18th October.

A Parish Council decision to fully fund the shelters after the LHFIG meeting and still meet the 1st November deadline could only be made at an additional/ extraordinary parish council meeting as the next scheduled Council meeting is on 11th November.

4. Recommendation.

It would be possible to pursue the LHFIG route whilst also approving the full funding of the shelters. This would allow the Council to proceed with the proposals should the bid to LHFIG fail

It is recommended that the Council approve –

a) the provision of two bus shelters at the existing bus stops on the A4 at Chilvester Hill at a cost of up to £11,000 (ex Vat) to cover installation and any additional traffic management costs.

And.

b) the submission of the Highway Improvement Form to LHFIG to seek Wiltshire Council part funding towards the provision of the shelters.

Cllr Ioan Rees
Calne Without Parish Council