



Melksham rail user group

info@mrug.org.uk
<http://www.mrug.org.uk>

8th March 2021

Dear Sirs,

Wiltshire Local Plan response from Melksham Rail User Group

In response to "[Wiltshire Council - Local Plan - Planning for Melksham](#)"
a/so in response to "[Wiltshire Council - Local Plan - Emerging Spatial Strategy](#)"

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Alongside each point, we have added reference back to the documents / questions we are responding to in order to help you correlate responses.

Please feel free to contact the author should you wish us to clarify or expand any points raised.

Contents:

- * Who we are
- * Our inputs to the consultation (with question referenced in each case)
- * How to contact us for follow up

Who we are

Founded in 1995 as the Melksham Railway Development Group, we have renamed as the Melksham Rail User Group (MRUG) with the successful growth of train and bus use in the Melksham area in which we and our members have played a significant part. We support all forms of sustainable transport and a high quality of business, resident and visitor life in the area, and partner to take that forward and help inform and promote.

MRUG is a member of the Community Rail Network, TravelWatch SouthWest, and the TransWilts CIC. We are a volunteer community group, supported by Melksham Town and Without Parish Councils. We support the neighbourhood plan and request that the Wiltshire plan be produced compatible with it.

We are apolitical and will leave more general comments and views of members to be expressed separately if they wish. This input is purely on Melksham Transport related issues, including the effect of transport on quality of life and zero carbon agendas.

Input points to this consultation

We note an expectation of substantial additional housing in the Melksham Area and suggest:

1. [[Question ME3](#)] **Housing development be located within easy walking of cycling distance of frequent public transport corridors**, both internal and interurban ones. This means a preference for sites which are nearer rather than further from the Railway Station in particular.
2. [[Question ME5](#)] **Housing developments should be "porous"** to allow public transport close to homes, and to provide cycling and walking routes that are as direct as practical between points on people's journeys. Likewise, development at **public transport hubs** is needed to **make them more porous**.
3. [[On the Emerging Spatial Strategy climate change suggestions, and how it related to Melksham](#)] Developments should allow for public transport to access interchange and resource hubs as part of their natural journeys. We note your suggestion (in environmental) to build resources for walking and cycling and **request that you add public transport**. That will include improving bus and train facilities such as bus shelters and information at key stops, lay-bys, turning circles, cut throughs for buses (but not other motor vehicles where a "rat run" would result). It will also include additional capacity measures on the railway to allow an hourly passenger train to call each way. Note that Melksham was the fastest growing station (percentage wise passengers) from 2014 to 2017 by which point no more people could be rammed onto the only evening peak train. Train use remains at only a fifth of the level of that in other comparable Wessex towns, and the infrastructure for more journeys is needed.
4. [[Question ME2](#)] We note that you propose further car park provision at Melksham Station. In 2011 there were 5 space. By 2016 that had risen to 20 and there are now 50. Passenger journeys by train rose from 3,000 to 75,000 per annum (before lockdown 1) and the extra spaces will be used, but **we request that bus facilities and services be prioritised over further parking**. The Melksham Rail Link Bus - an interim provision when there were just 5 parking spaces was carrying 9,000 journeys per annum after just 9 months of operation when it was replaced by the car park, on just two journeys to and three journeys from the station per day.
5. [[Question ME5](#)] Melksham has a significant history, some lovely parts, and a vibrant social centre, to be enhanced with new facilities at the Campus. It has green spaces, a river, and a canal returning which we encourage. **These elements should be linked in a welcoming, well waymarked and sustainable** way, with especial attention being given to developments of all facilities - not just residential - on current and future brown field sites within this core, and with green open spaces being protected.

6. [Commenting on emerging strategy and on ME2 and ME5] Although we are a transport group, we encourage a reduction in the need or distance to travel where that does not impact on quality of life. That means working from home, strong employment, health and leisure facilities in Melksham, a wide range of local employment. We do not wish to see a heavy growth of travel (by any mode) based on Melksham being a dormitory town where you'll be told "but there is no-where to work / nothing to do here" when we survey passengers!

Contact details

Our website is at <http://www.mrug.org.uk>

We offer immediate (real time) information at <http://melksh.am/trains>

We can be reached via secretary@mrug.org.uk

Postal address - via 48, Spa Road, Melksham, SN12 7NY

Chair - Peter Blackburn; Secretary - John Hamley; Treasurer - Judith Gradwell

This Document prepared (and enquiries to) Vice Chair - Graham Ellis - info@mrug.org.uk or direct via graham@wellho.net or 01225 708225, 9th March 2021. **I am more that happy to provide background evidence and reasoning behind the suggestions, which have been developed by the group and its members and friends over many years and with a very great deal of personal, practical and professional experience.** These things WILL work.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. The Melksham Rail User Group wishes to be involved as a stakeholder partner in the future development of these plans, which we believe will be to the mutual benefit of all parties.

Yours faithfully

Graham Ellis
Vice Chair of MRUG on behalf of The Group

http://www.mrug.org.uk/MRUGtoWCLP_20210308.pdf

in response to

https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/5638/Planning-for-Melksham/pdf/WLP_Market_Town_Planning_for_Melksham_FINAL.pdf

and

https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/5623/Emerging-Spatial-Strategy/pdf/Wiltshire_Local_Plan_Emerging_Spatial_Strategy_FINAL.pdf