

COUNCIL MEETING – 17 JULY 2019

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.3

Q1 Councillor Dixon to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Councillor Lury

Q1 The Local Plan identifies up to 2,300 houses for the BEW strategic allocation plus a further 700 houses outside the plan period – a total of 3,000 houses. I understand that a figure of 4,180 houses is mentioned in the business case for the A29 realignment.

Are officers confident that the A29 realignment can be delivered without the need for additional housing over and above the Local Plan allocation?

A1 To best answer your question it is important to firstly understand that the Plan as a whole is required to deliver **at least** 20,000 homes up to 2031. Each of the individual strategic allocation is then required to deliver a minimum amount. In the case of BEW this is **at least** 2,300 homes up to 2031. This allocation is slightly unique in that because its delivery will continue after 2031 the Local Plan states that a further 700 should be delivered after 2031. Unfortunately, to confuse matters the phrase **up to** 3,000 homes (representing the total of the two parts) is used rather than '**at least**'. This confusion of phrases will need to be tested against Government guidance at the appropriate time.

Turning now to the scheme itself the site promoters at the public consultation event showed an illustrative layout of just over 4,100 homes. The Council only saw this layout for the first time the day before the event began and to date pre-application discussions have not begun in earnest to test whether this figure is achievable or even desirable. This will happen during the latter part of this year or early in 2020. However, making the best use of the land that is already allocated now will mean that the Council will potentially have to find less land for development in the future when the Local Plan comes up for review and Members will need to carefully consider this approach when it is discussed.

With regard to the A29 re-alignment the £54 million-pound cost includes contributions from a range of sources, but at present the contributions being sought from developers amounts to £30 million, via s106 contributions. Of this amount just over £27 million is to come from the BEW development. This equates to just over £9,000 per dwelling based on delivering 3,000 homes. If in the future the number of homes permitted is greater than 3,000 then the expectation at this point would be that the additional sums captured would allow that proportion of the cost being borne by the public purse to be reduced.

So, the succinct answer to your question is yes.

COUNCIL MEETING – 17 JULY 2019

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.3

Q2 **Councillor Dendle to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Dr Walsh**

Q2 In a recent presentation it was mentioned by officers that you are considering reopening the local plan with up to 4 different options, it was advised that the cost of doing this would be between £1m & £2M, is this correct?

A2 Cllr Dendle, thank you for your question.

Officers were asked to provide at short notice a presentation to illustrate for the benefit of Members what some of the key issues and potential options might be in determining the future strategic direction for planning in Arun. I am very conscious of the fact that the current conservative government continues to require Councils such as Arun to continue to provide ever increasing amounts of housing which I don't believe is sustainable. This is a matter which we will clearly need to consider carefully. At the present time, Officers haven't been asked to prepare a formal report for the consideration of the Planning Policy Committee on the matter. If and when they are asked, then any report will provide indicative costings for the options being considered.

Supplementary

Q How is the Council going to house our sons and daughters and further future generations within the Arun District?

A The Council does need to be looking at the at types of houses being built within the District, focusing more on 1 and 2 bedroom properties and fewer 4 and 5 bedroom properties. As well as looking at social housing, the private rented sector and affordable housing, and ensuring that there is an understanding of who does make those houses affordable to.

Q3 **Councillor Dendle to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Oppler**

Q3 In the recent Overview Select Committee you remonstrated with the Chairman at the number of questions I was raising. Do you believe that it is my job to scrutinise you?

A3 Yes, I do.

Supplementary

Q I thought it was my civic duty to ask questions within my role as a Councillor and a Member of the Overview Select Committee, however Councillor Oppler made it clear that he would rather have my questions in writing, could I please have clarification as my intention was to ensure I was getting an answer straight from the Cabinet Member and not an Officer?

A I am more than happy to answer questions that are put to me, however the scope and questions you were asking at this meeting were politically motivated.

COUNCIL MEETING – 17 JULY 2019

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.3

Q4 Councillor Dendle to the Cabinet Member for Technical Services, Councillor Stanley

Q4 As Cabinet Member are you committed to protecting all our communities from coastal flooding?

A4 I would like to take this opportunity to make a clear distinction between the remits of the Environment Agency and Arun District Council. The Environment Agency are, in general, responsible for Coastal Defence along the entire Arun District frontage. Coastal Defence is a branch of Coastal Management that is primarily concerned with Coastal Flooding. As such the Agency manage the coastline where the 'primary risk' is that of Coastal Flooding (i.e. where the land behind the defences is close to or lower than that of sea level).

Arun District Council is the Coast Protection Authority (CPA) and is, in general, responsible for Coast Protection. Coast Protection is a separate branch of Coastal Management and is primarily concerned with Coastal Erosion. As such Arun District Council manage the Coastline where the 'primary risk' is that of Coastal Erosion (where the land behind the defences is higher than sea level).

It should go without saying that the branches of Coastal Management are interconnected and I am committed to ensuring that Arun continues to work closely with the Environment Agency to ensure that coastal management is effectively delivered in accordance with the The Beachy Head to Selsey Bill Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) and the three Coastal Defence Strategies that cover Arun.

All three strategies suggest how best to manage coastal flooding and erosion risk over a 100 year strategy period, none of which have changed their policy since their adoption in 2009 and 2010. However, it should go without saying that Arun District Council is a coastal district with some challenging pieces of coastline which present varying levels of risk. Homeowners should make themselves aware of these risks and make informed judgement based upon the available information.

Supplementary

Q I am looking for further reassurance from Councillor Stanley regarding the District's coastal defences

A As discussed earlier on in this meeting, that reassurance has been given.

Q5 Councillor Dendle to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Dr Walsh

Q5 In the last Cabinet Meeting you reported that you wanted to declare a Climate Emergency, what practical steps have you got to do that?

COUNCIL MEETING – 17 JULY 2019

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.3

A5 It is vital that the climate change and its impacts are recognised as a fundamental issue in our society and that we have a plan in place to help address them. Climate emergency declarations are one way of doing this. To date over 40 Councils have declared a climate emergency.

I have asked the Director of Services to prepare a report to be considered by the Environment and Leisure Working Group; one of the options will be to declare a climate emergency. The report will set out and scope some of the many activities that Councils can undertake and facilitate as community leaders to start to address the causes of climate change. These include improving the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings, fleet management, education, training, tree planting, waste management and much more.

Q6 **Councillor Chapman to the Cabinet Member for Residential Services, Councillor Mrs Gregory**

Q6 Can the Cabinet Member confirm that no Elected Members of this Council are in arrears with the payment of their Council Tax and are therefore not “conflicted” when making decisions or supporting recommendations that affect the finance of the Council at Committees, Cabinet or Full Council?

A6 No. I cannot confirm that this is the case.

Supplementary

Q What is to be done if Members of this Council are not up to date with their Council Tax payments and are steps in place to manage this?

A The Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer responded to this question on the Cabinet Member’s behalf. In these instances Councillors are advised and dealt with on an individual basis. Councillors who are in arrears, are dealt with in exactly the same way as a member of the public.

Q7 **Councillor Edwards to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Dr Walsh**

Q7 Arun District Council is recognised as the leading local authority in West Sussex for its work with the Armed Forces Covenant. In view of current events, can the Leader please inform me who will be the Armed Forces Champion? As a Veteran who is heavily involved with military charities, I am greatly concerned that with no-one at the helm, we will not be fulfilling our obligations towards our Veterans. As the leading local authority, we must not allow our standards to drop because Veterans and their families will suffer!!

A7 Arun, like all the other District and Borough Council’s in West Sussex are signed up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant. The Covenant is to provide support to serving personnel, both regular and reserve, their families and ex-

COUNCIL MEETING – 17 JULY 2019

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.3

service personnel and ensure that they are not disadvantaged. The position of Armed Forces Champion is supported by our Armed Forces Covenant Officer who ensures that the Council's obligations under the covenant are met.

Supplementary

Q Will the current representative for the Armed Forces Champion for Arun District Council be remaining as the champion moving forward?

A It is the intention to appoint a new champion at a later point in this meeting.

Q8 Councillor Kelly to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Dr Walsh

Q8 During the campaign leading up to the Local Elections held on 2 May I made several reports to the Police about attempts to intimidate myself and my wife and to alienate electors in East Preston. This was allocated the PNN number 0645 on the 1st August 2018

My question is; are such incidents reported to the Returning Officer by the Police as a matter of routine or should candidates also separately report such incidents to the Returning Officer as well as the Police Service?

A8 Thank you for your question.

I can confirm that the Returning Officer would always wish to be made aware of any such issues. Where this happens his advice would normally be to report an incident to the police if an individual felt it was sufficiently serious. This must always be a matter of judgement for the individual as the Returning Officer would not generally be in a position to carry out an investigation into such a matter. The Returning Officer is responsible for the overall running of any election and needs to be aware of anything which might have an impact on it, particularly if a pattern of incidents is developing.

The Council has contacted the police and they confirm that with regard to the reported incident there was no mention of any connection to any upcoming election and as a result there would not have been any reason to report this matter to the Returning Officer. The Police have confirmed that any offences of election malpractice (under the Representation of the People Act 1983) would be notified to the Returning Officer priority (although on most occasions the candidate would usually have already done this)

Q9 Councillor Roberts to the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing – Councillor Mrs Yeates

Q9 Prior to the recent election, Council Leader Dr Walsh was quoted in the Littlehampton Gazette where he said residents were "sick to their back teeth"

COUNCIL MEETING – 17 JULY 2019

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.3

about anti-social behaviour and vandalism in Littlehampton and across the District. He said it was increasing and mentioned “largish gangs” causing problems.

Public perception seems to be that recently things have got a lot worse, even within the last 2 weeks, several expensive repair works undertaken by Arun District Council were re-vandalised.

However, it is reported that at a very recent meeting of the Littlehampton Regeneration Committee, that the Liberal Democrat Chairman said, and I quote “Littlehampton’s Antisocial problems are being hyped up on social media”

So, which is it? Are Liberal Democrat members able to take a collective view on this, and more importantly undertake actions to tackle this very real issue?

- A9** The official number of reported ASB incidents in Arun for 2018/19 identify a decrease of 462 incidents compared to the 3696 reported in 2017/18. However, I appreciate there are difficulties in making such comparisons as incidents may have occurred, but are not reported. Social media also plays a role in highlighting local issues, but it can skew reality and give a disproportionate perception of crime and antisocial behaviour in a given area. What I can report for certain is the recent formation of Local Action Teams in both Bognor Regis and Littlehampton to identify and respond local issues. This is a new initiative led by Arun’s Community Safety team as a direct response to an increase in local concerns. The Local Action Teams include representatives from the Town Council, local traders, the Police and other partners with the shared goal of working together to take proactive action to address the problems associated with our town centres.

In addition, the Safer Arun Partnership with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner has commissioned Arun Community Church to provide Detached Outreach Workers (Youth Workers operating on the streets) in the east of the district to engage and work with young people. This is supported by Freedom Leisure who have initiated the Friday Night Project which operates out of the Littlehampton Wave and provides a range of diversionary activities for young people in a safe and supported environment.

Supplementary

Q Are the Liberal Democrat Members able to take a collective view that this is a serious matter and not just being hyped up on social media?

A Councillor Dr Walsh responded on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing as she was no longer in attendance at the meeting. This matter is an object of great concern not only for me but also other Members. I am a strong believer in community policing and ‘bobbies on the beat’ and will be continuing to press this matter forward. Anti-social behaviour is

COUNCIL MEETING – 17 JULY 2019

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.3

unacceptable, and we need to up the game in terms of policing within the District.

Q10 From Councillor Dixon to the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, Councillor Mrs Yeates

Q10 I am becoming increasingly aware and concerned that the council is fighting a continuous battle against vandalism across the district.

Can you please advise how much the council has spent making good acts of vandalism over the last two years?

Can you please provide an itemised list identifying each location and the cost of repairs?

A10 Thank you for your question. I too share your concerns regarding how much public money is spent repairing wanton vandalism. Unfortunately, in the time available we haven't been able to prepare a detailed answer as requested so this will follow in writing.

Q11 From Councillor Charles to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Dr Walsh

Q11 A consultation scheduled for early June 2019 regarding the proposals of the regeneration of Pavilion Park was cancelled by the Liberal Democrat administration just days after the Election.

I think the public have the right to know who and why it was decided not to allow them to have an opinion on the proposals. My questions is in three parts:

- (1) Who made the decision to stop it happening
- (2) What was the reason given for the cancellation
- (3) why was it cancelled before any Cabinet or other Committee had discussed this?

A11 My response is:

1. Cabinet postponed the consultation in June in order to receive a briefing on the project. The matter was then considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 8 July 2019 and the formal decision was taken.
2. The reason given was due to 'unforeseen circumstances'
3. The decision was taken by Cabinet on 8 July 2019

Supplementary

Q Will this consultation be included going forward?

COUNCIL MEETING – 17 JULY 2019

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO
COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.3**

- A** No it will not be included for reasons that were discussed earlier on in this meeting.