

**FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 8 JANUARY 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING**

1. From Mr Chester to the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, Councillor Lury
2. From Mr Chester to the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Yeates

**FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW**

Note, the Chair will:

- invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution.
- confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question;
- state that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.
- Outline that if in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer the question relates to the terms of reference of a Council committee, the question is to be accepted by Full Council and be automatically referred by Full Council without discussion or debate to the relevant committee and that the questioner would have been advised of this at the time they submitted their question

## **QUESTION ONE**

**From Mr Chester to the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, Councillor Lury**

### **Question**

Will the Leader of the Council set out the implications for the Council and its precept payers of the recent outcome of the judicial review between Arun and the Littlehampton Harbour Board?

### **Response**

The Council received formal notification of the judgement from the judicial review brought by the Littlehampton Harbour Board on the 18 December 2024. It is unclear at this stage exactly how much additional funding the Harbour Board will demand from the Council but based on previous documentation shared with Council Officers, we understand that it could be in the region of £18 million. This would result in additional borrowing costs of approximately £1 million per annum over a 40-year period. The Council's current net revenue budget is £28 million, and the burden of these costs would be extremely damaging. It would probably mean cuts to other valuable public services provided by the Council and probably result in redundancies. Officers are currently seeking legal advice as to what the Council's options are in light of the disappointing judgment received. The Council will inform the public as soon as we are able to share further information.

## **QUESTION TWO**

**From Mr Chester to the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Yeates**

### **Question**

Will the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee set out the implications for Arun District of the new National Planning Policy Framework?

### **Response**

The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was published on 12 December 2024 and has a very wide scope covering all facets of the planning system. Officers are still working through the documents to fully assess the implications of the new NPPF and PPG on plan-making and determining planning applications. However, it is of note that the content and text in the Framework that came out on 12 December was little changed from the draft version that was published in July 2024 and which, together with various other proposed planning reforms, was the subject of

a consultation that attracted almost 11,000 responses in total, including 387 representations from local authorities.

Arun's response to the consultation was formally submitted to the Minister for Housing Communities and Local Government in September 2024, following a detailed debate at the Planning Policy Committee at a Special Meeting held on 18 September 2024. The agenda and minutes from that meeting setting out our response, based on anticipated implications for the district from the changes that had been proposed, can be viewed on the council's website. Disappointingly, the various and numerous shortcomings with the draft document we raised at that time with the government do not appear to have been addressed in the final Framework. Particularly, one of the Council's key concerns related to changes to the new standard method for calculating housing need, which has now become mandatory, and the requirement for local authorities to demonstrate a 5-year supply of delivering housing sites against these targets at all times - even where there they have a recently adopted Local Plan. The main change since the summer consultation to now is that Arun's housing target has now actually increased from 1,342 to 1,476 dwellings per annum, which makes our housing supply position worse and will create even further pressure to build on previously undeveloped land within the district. It does not properly recognise existing constraints, such as having a National Park to the north, the sea to the south, and significant challenges around flood risk and the capacity of our infrastructure to cope with this level of growth.