

Public Document Pack

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A meeting of **Council** will be held **Virtually** on **Tuesday 21 July 2020** at **2.00 pm**.

MEMBERS: Mrs E Hamilton (Chairman), Mrs C Apel (Vice-Chairman), Mrs T Bangert, Mr G Barrett, Miss H Barrie, Mr M Bell, Rev J H Bowden, Mr R Briscoe, Mr J Brown, Mr A Dignum, Mrs J Duncton, Mr J Elliott, Mr G Evans, Mrs J Fowler, Mrs N Graves, Mr F Hobbs, Mr K Hughes, Mrs D Johnson, Mr T Johnson, Mrs E Lintill, Mrs S Lishman, Mr G McAra, Mr A Moss, Mr S Oakley, Dr K O'Kelly, Mr C Page, Mr D Palmer, Mrs P Plant, Mr R Plowman, Mr H Potter, Mrs C Purnell, Mr D Rodgers, Mrs S Sharp, Mr A Sutton, Mrs S Taylor and Mr P Wilding

SUPPLEMENT TO AGENDA

5 Public Question Time (Pages 1 - 2)

Public Question Time – Question and Answer Document.

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Chichester District Council

Full Council

21 July 2020

Public Questions and Answers Sheet

Questions from Mr Dicker:

On the 3rd March 2020 I raised a point of order and this has not been minuted. My point of order is that you the council voted on the 24th September 2019 on the plan for the delivery of the local plan. This included public consultation at the end of March 2020. This was the "will of the council" You have never voted to delay "the will of the council". Your own monitoring officer stated and I quote:

"Cabinet cannot work to undermine Council decisions, and must be what is Wednesbury reasonable". Have they been I will let you councillors decide.

Councillor Lintel told us that the local plan timetable was to be reviewed following Government advice.

Q1. I have asked under FOI for the Government advice. The disclosure copied to councillors and the press has no government advice but a report from local government consultants stating that, and again I quote:

"It is clear that the programme of work required to be completed before submission is extensive, and a number of key tasks are yet to be completed and in some case programmed for completion".

Who is responsible for the abject failure of the local plan work? Where is the so called Government advice quoted by Councillor Lintell and why has it not been made available under FOI.

Q2. Where is the revised timetable (not on your website) and when will the revised plan come for public consultation and when will the decision on the SDNP unmet housing need be made by this council. Especially in light of the failure of the previous plan what is your confidence in any new proposed dates being met?

Q3. DPIP is an untransparent decision making body. On 18th March 2020 the minutes should have been disclosed under FOI. The ICO stated that due to covid reasonable delays can be expected. Is 4 months reasonable and when will I see the minutes. What have DPIP and CDC got to hide.

I ask again who is failing you as councillors on the local plan. We the public have no faith or confidence in your executive or officers ability to plan let alone deliver against a plan in what is now a critical function to prevent random unchecked housing development. I hope the press are taking note.

Response from Cllr Taylor:

Thank you for your questions.

In response to your 1st question I would say:

Following the meeting last year with the Minister for Local Government and Homelessness, Council officers met with officials from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). To clarify, the PAS is part of the Local Government Association but is funded by a grant from MHCLG to provide advice to councils on planning matters. PAS is therefore the appropriate body to provide advice to Councils on progressing Local Plans to ensure they are capable of being found sound at examination. As previously explained, the process of preparation of a Local Plan is complex and iterative. It is also reliant on specialist technical evidence based studies to inform decisions about where new development can be located and the on-going input from statutory consultees to support this. We are making progress with the next version of our local plan and further information is available on our website about this. I would also make the point (and as advised at the Council meeting in March), that the Local Plan forms part of the Council's policy framework for which the full Council, rather than the Cabinet, is responsible. I understand that you have been sent a copy of the PAS advice which has also been made available to all members.

As to Question 2:

The Council website has a page "Timeline - Local Plan Review" which sets out the next steps and what needs to happen for the Plan to progress to the next stage. The timeline envisages that the Plan will be published for public consultation in spring 2021. However, this is subject to a range of factors, not all of which are in the Council's control. The decision on any unmet need arising from the South Downs National Park or elsewhere will be taken when the proposed submission plan is considered by Members. The Council is following advice from PAS to maximise the chances of bringing forward a sound plan in the most timely manner.

And as to Question 3:

You ask whether the time that your request has been reasonable. As you are aware the Information Commissioner advice was that Councils should properly prioritise urgent Covid related activities and that such requests be put on hold and on the basis of that advice I do consider that the delay has been reasonable in light of the wider pandemic.

The request for DPIIP papers under the Freedom of Information Act is, however, currently being actioned and it is anticipated that a decision will be made by the qualified person, i.e. the Council's Data Protection Officer, by the end of July. I have already outlined in my response to questions 1 and 2 the progress being made and timescales anticipated for the next stage of the Local Plan review and would add finally that with regards to your concern about unchecked housing development, the Council's Planning Committee has recently approved an Interim Policy Statement for Housing Development with which to guide proposals for development.