

# QUESTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

## 12 NOVEMBER 2021

### PUBLIC QUESTIONS RECEIVED AFTER DESPATCH OF THE AGENDA

#### EEP1

Paul Stevens has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### Question

Why have Wokingham Borough Council chosen to ignore the views of local residents as expressed in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan regarding the site of a new "Garden Village" at Hall Farm?

I refer specifically to the following key policies: IRS1, IRS2, IRS3, but also the view that Arborfield and Barkham have no local need for further housing and we have already made significant contribution to the wider need for housing through the SDL at Arborfield Garrison, otherwise known as Arborfield Green.

#### EEP2

Nigel Penford has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### Question

Why do WBC insist on building on green field sites? with global warming any green space is valuable. Building on green fields is bad; grass absorbs CO2 all the year round and stores it in the soil. British trees do a good job but only for half the year. Housing also accelerates flooding as grassland absorb water, houses/roads etc, do not.

Another problem is services as long as I have lived in Winnersh the water pressure has slowly gone down, with the new high-tech boilers installed in new build need good water flow. Keep tacking more houses on old infrastructure is bad; sewage, power etc, once the builder has gone, it is the house holder who is left with the problem. I am a retired gas heating engineer of fifty years' experience.

#### EEP3

David Lyons has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### Question

What is the more important for the Council and Executive Members; maximising house builders profitability by destroying green open spaces, more flooding of the river Loddon up and down its reaches, **or the existing** paying and contributing local residents health and wellbeing, local agriculture production, the environment and habitat in which is being damaged and lost by these swathes of soulless new build estates. Surely all brownfield sites should be exhausted and redeveloped before green virgin land is covered in concrete. Brownfield sites have not been exhausted in the slightest.

#### **EEP4**

Laura Clarke has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### **Question**

How will the impact of the proposed garden village at Hall Farm be assessed in light of the extensive development already underway in Shinfield and Arborfield and how will any cumulative effects be mitigated?

#### **EEP5**

Colin Watts has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### **Question**

The scale of the Hall Farm/Loddon Valley SDL is quite extraordinary. It is less than two years since an application for a single dwelling within this area (Ref 193337) was refused in part because of "the effect of the proposal upon the character of the countryside", yet now 4,500 homes are being proposed in the same area.

Why was the character of the countryside important in 2019 but is not important in these proposals in 2021?

#### **EEP6**

Mike Heard has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### **Question**

Why was Hurst not considered a suitable location for the new garden village given its close proximity to rail links?

#### **EEP7**

Michael Holdstock has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### **Question**

Are the Council aware that 4.6 hectares of land, forming part of the original Bentley Lane Piggeries (adjacent to the Council's own land at Winnersh Farms) is capable of delivering 100+ housing units and of being accessed and delivered without any impediment from flooding and of the community benefits of including this land, in a wider application as previously proposed?

## **EEP8**

Paul Townsend has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

### **Question**

Given the absence of any evidence to support 4,500 homes at Hall Farm, on a number of key topics including transport, infrastructure, flooding, biodiversity, climate change, and viability; on what, exactly, will members be basing their decision on the Revised Growth Strategy (as opposed to alternatives) being recommended for approval?

## **EEP9**

Jim Murphy has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

### **Question**

Officers state that from work they have undertaken assessing the potential sites; Hall Farm / London Valley, displays the most deliverable and sustainable strategic option. I question how this can be when it offers so little in comparison to other a more suitable and better located sites.

Except for the fact that this site offers the benefit for WBC to deal with only one readily compliant landowner, I cannot see what other factors cause this site to be selected with such high suitability as to warrant it more suitable than other potential sites. I appreciate that the ability to be able to deliver the plan is one of the key requirements but feel in this instance this one factor must have been disproportionately applied in comparison to the weight give to the other equally important factors.

Therefore, can you please tell what weight, in percentage terms of the overall decision-making criteria, has the benefit of only having to deal with one compliant landowner been the deciding factor in this instance?

## **MEMBER QUESTIONS RECEIVED AFTER DESPATCH OF THE AGENDA**

### **EEM1**

Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### **Question**

My apologies as I cannot attend the meeting, but the Executive proposed plan identifies a new garden village on land south of the M4 between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham, referred to as Hall Farm / Loddon Valley and the identification of a significant area of additional housing within the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location.

My question is why has Hurst been omitted from consideration when its location perfectly fits the Council's criteria in very many ways for a new garden village as against Hall Farm with its proximity to the flood plain and all its associated risks, not forgetting climate change?

### **EEM2**

Andrew Mickleburgh has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### **Question**

Given the imperative of tackling our Climate Emergency, can you please provide a couple of illustrative examples of how the proposals in the Revised Growth Strategy have been informed by the Climate Emergency?

### **EEM3**

Stephen Conway has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### **Question**

The second draft of the local plan includes many sites that appeared in the first draft. Will the comments made by residents on those sites in the first consultation be carried forward or do they need to submit comments again as part of the second consultation?

### **EEM4**

Lindsay Ferris has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

#### **Question**

There are a total of 15,513 homes within the consultation to cover the period of the draft local plan to 2036. This is extremely close to the number required within the timeframe. Can you advise how the Council would proceed if a significant number of the housing developments being proposed received significant objections?

## **EEM5**

Jim Frewin has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

### **Question**

Can the Executive please explain why the impact on the local plan Grazeley proposal of the AWE Planning Exclusion Zone expansion was unexpected?

## **EEM6**

Rachel Bishop-Firth has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

### **Question**

It is clear that residents want the necessary infrastructure in place earlier rather than later. You have miserably failed to get the infrastructure in place before the houses are occupied under your current Local Plan. What can you point to in this new document that will get the infrastructure in place next time?

## **EEM7**

Jackie Rance has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

### **Question**

The Executive summary clearly states that local plans must be prepared in consultation with the local community and local stakeholders. As a local Councillor I am not aware of any consultation beyond limited consultation on Halls Farm. Could the Executive please provide a list of all sites on which local community consultations have taken place (except Halls Farm) and how they were evaluated?

## **EEM8**

Peter Dennis has asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

### **Question**

How does this local plan update with the proposed sites within it, impact current and forthcoming planning applications on those sites, especially ones where prior applications have been rejected?

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