



COUNCIL MEETING – 18 January 2023

Questions by the Public **under Council Procedure Rule 15(1)**

- Each questioner will have 2 minutes in which to ask their question. The order of the questions to be asked is as set out below and an officer will pass a microphone to the questioner when their name is called by the Mayor.
- Please note that following the response given by the Councillor, the questioner may also ask a supplementary question which must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- The total time allocated for questions will *normally* be limited to 20 minutes. For any question which cannot be dealt with at the meeting, a written answer will be provided, normally within one working week.

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| | From: |
| 1 | David Killeen |



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 18 January 2023

Questions by the Public
under Council Procedure Rule 15(1)

[This link](#) will take you to the precise part of the video recording of the meeting dealing with public questions and includes any supplementary questions and response provided.

(<https://youtu.be/4sBVWFnFnuo?t=2175>)

QUESTION 1

From: David Killeen

To: The Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan (Cllr Porter)

“The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove MP has announced his intention to make several changes to the planning regulations including housing targets. Will Winchester City Council pause their local plan process including announcements for building on green field sites across the Winchester District until the changes become clear in the legislation?”

Reply

“The Secretary of State stated on 5 December 2022, in a letter to Conservative MPs, and in a Written Ministerial Statement on 6 December 2022, that the current housing targets should be ‘an advisory starting point, a guide that is not mandatory’ and promised to consult on changes to bring this into effect in an upcoming National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation (<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-12-06/hcws415>).

The public consultation on these and other proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) runs from the 22 December 2022 until 2 March 2023.

The government has made it very clear in this public consultation that the standard method for assessing local housing need, remains the clear starting point for the plan-making process. The government are not proposing any changes to the standard method formula itself through the public consultation.

Local authorities will be expected to continue to use figures for local housing need, assessed through the standard method, to inform the preparation of their plans; although the ability to use an alternative approach where there are exceptional circumstances that can be justified will be retained. As part of the public consultation, the government is seeking views on the sort of demographic and geographic factors which could be used to demonstrate these exceptional circumstances in practice.

In addition, they list three specific 'exceptional circumstances' listed which might enable adjustment of planned housing numbers:

- If housing need can be met only by building at densities which would be significantly out of character with the existing area.
- If it would require an alteration to Green Belt boundaries
- If there has been significant over-delivery in an authority's area in the recent past

These do not appear to be applicable to our local situation, although they combined with the Levelling Up Bill's planned removal of the Duty to Cooperate may reduce the risk that we are required to build more houses than we need to meet the surplus housing demand in the PfSH area.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy#chapter-4--planning-for-housing>

Both the WMS and the proposed changes to the NPPF are an expression of government policy and, therefore, capable of being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and local plan examinations.

However, the proposed changes that are outlined above are only just being consulted upon rather than being immediate changes to government policy. This means that until further details are provided in the form of an updated NPPF, there is no robust legal justification to alter our current housing requirement that was consulted on in the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan and risk having an unsound plan and losing control of the planning process.

The City Council will, of course, be responding to the public consultation but given the numerous announcement of changes to the plan making process over recent months, it is in the best interest of our communities that we continue to prepare a local plan that provides a wealth of housing, employment, green space and exemplary climate conscious policies as soon as we possibly can."