



## COUNCIL MEETING – 28 August 2024

### Questions by Councillors under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

- Each questioner will have 2 minutes in which to ask their question.
- If a questioner who has submitted a question is unable to be present, the Mayor may ask the question on their behalf, or invite another Councillor to do so, or indicate that a written reply will be given and published on the website following the meeting. or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be dealt with.
- Please note that following the response given by the Leader, a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair, the questioner may also ask a supplementary question which must arise directly out of the original reply.
- The **total** time allocated for Councillor questions will normally be limited to 40 minutes.
- Written answers will be published to questions submitted (but not supplementary questions) following the meeting.

	<b>From Cllr:</b>
<b>1</b>	Godfrey
<b>2</b>	Miller
<b>3</b>	Horrill
<b>4</b>	Lee 1
<b>5</b>	Cunningham 1
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**Winchester**  
City Council

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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1**

**QUESTION 1**

From: Councillor Godfrey

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

“Following the announcement by the Government of proposals to change the calculation of mandatory housing targets in the NPPF, Winchester will soon have to allocate land for at least 4,800 additional homes over and above the current Local Plan number. Apart from advancing the timetable of the Local Plan submission, what steps has the City Council taken to protect Winchester District from the large-scale development that might be needed to meet these new housing targets?”

Reply:

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Godfrey.

As you know, the current proposed formula for housing numbers in the NPPF consultation is not yet agreed – and there is no guarantee that the formula will not change as a result of the current consultation. It would be foolish to do too much detailed work until we know the final number.

It’s clear though that it’s likely to increase – and so the best first step we can take – and we’ll be asking the council to take it this evening – is to put in place a Local Plan with a carefully planned and considered increase in allocation – to ensure that we continue to have a 5-year land supply against any new target in the immediate future, while we commence plan-making in the new plan-making system at the earliest opportunity to address any remaining shortfall in housing need.

The second thing that we can and will be doing is responding to the NPPF consultation to ask that some of our policy concerns with the proposals are properly addressed.

One question is how National Parks are handled, for example. Our district is being given a figure that assumes we can build at scale in national parks – while the NPPF also makes clear that won’t be possible. We believe that National Parks are a national asset and their housing demand requires a regional or national response.

If there are any points you think need making, I will be very to hearing them.

At some point though a number will be agreed – and it is likely to be higher. And what matters then is that we take the same kind of disciplined and considered approach that we've taken with this Local Plan. We will present considered options to local people. We will consult. We will expect the highest environmental standards, strong provision of social housing, high quality design and robust infrastructure. And we will work with the people of our district to make sure we have a plan that our area justice.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1**

**QUESTION 2**

From: Councillor Miller

To: The Cabinet Member for Business and Culture (Cllr Lucille Thompson)

“If the local plan allows brownfield sites to be developed, this will effectively reduce the amount of land available for employment. How is the Council going to ensure that enough employment sites are provided in the right locations, to cover the extra employment that will be needed for the extra houses that will be built under that plan.

How do they plan to provide enough employment sites given the revised number of houses that will need to be built under the numbers announced by the Labour Government?”

Reply:

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Miller.

As outlined in the previous answer, the new NPPF housing numbers have not yet been agreed – although we do have a positive programme to address them as and when they are agreed, by commencing plan-making in the new plan making system at the earliest opportunity after agreement of the Local Plan before us tonight.

As part of that we will need to review the necessary level of employment land allocations needed to ensure that employment and housing increase as needed – homes and jobs need to go hand in hand.

However those are not the allocations we are discussing this evening.

The allocations we are discussing today are being made under the current NPPF and are based on an up-to-date Employment Land Study which you can find on the Local Plan website at [localplan.winchester.gov.uk](http://localplan.winchester.gov.uk).

The plan before us tonight has enough land allocated to meet all of the need outlined in the Employment Land Study.”



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### Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

#### QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Horrill

To: Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management (Cllr Martin Tod)

“As you know the Conservative group has been fully supportive of the administration’s desire to move the local plan process forward - that involves the Cabinet last week and the Council meeting today. The purpose of the timetable change will be to allow us a more considered approach to the new requirements of the Labour Government to provide an additional 4800 homes in the plan period in our District, as part of their drive for 370,000 additional homes across the country.

Do you also embrace the housing numbers in the Liberal Democrat manifesto for 380,000 new homes in the same period and if so, where do you propose those other homes will go in our District? Have you written to our MP to recommend the top-down approach to housing numbers proposed by Labour is unsatisfactory and that a different approach and methodology should be adopted, which better supports local representations and knowledge to ensure the delivery of the correct housing need in our area?”

#### Reply:

“Thank you very much indeed for your question, Cllr Horrill. And thank you for your support for the approach that Cllr Porter, my Liberal Democrat colleagues and I are putting forward.

Of course, the Government’s new NPPF is yet to be adopted – and I was discussing the challenges that it may face before it is with one our three local MPs – actually one from your party – a week ago last Friday.

There are a lot of questions that remain unanswered. While Labour’s top-down approach to setting targets is pretty much a continuation of the top-down approach put in place by the Conservative administration, the formula they propose is quite different and I do have major questions about it. The proposed approach doesn’t properly account for the impact of National Parks, for example. It doesn’t allow for any transition period to the new level of development. And it’s not clear how it will reflect the impact that the Lyons/Barker review is going to have either.

We will be responding to the NPPF highlighting the policies we support and would want strengthened, the policies where we have concerns and suggesting some

pragmatic adjustments that could be made. And we will be asking our MPs – all three of our MPs – to support us.”



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**QUESTION 4**

From: Councillor Lee 1

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

“Organizations and individuals have found it challenging to review their Reg 18 inputs and the corresponding responses or comments.

Comments received are categorised alongside the Local Plan policies, after analysis under the relevant Local Plan chapter. This is done for each individual response with a unique allocated reference number. A list of the reference numbers, name of responder and organisation are available. The reference number is then used to review the input against the relevant policy that the comments was made against.

Currently, this set-up prevents a speedy and efficient CHAT PT or equivalent search of inputs and officers’ comments, especially when there are so many. Using analysis tools seems impossible.

**For Reg 19, can this process be improved to allow a more Open and accessible search process for organisations and individuals to find their comments with Officers’ responses?”**

Reply:

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Lee.

We will be publishing all the responses to the Reg 19 Local Plan via Citizen Space as soon as possible after the close of the public consultation.

The requirement for officers at the next stage will be to summarise the main issues raised and forward this summary along with the original representations to the Planning Inspectorate.

Unlike the Reg 18 consultation response there is no requirement or expectation that each comment be responded to. The response and discussion of the main points and issues raised happens during the inspection process.

In addition to the original representations, the officer summary will also be available on the Local Plan website.”



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**QUESTION 5**

From: Councillor Cunningham 1

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

“Even if we can get the Reg 22 submitted and accepted in time by the November deadline, the increased number of dwellings of 4,800 imposed by the new Labour Government will still be hanging over all Winchester residents like the sword of Damocles as we enter the process for the next local plan due to start next year. Given that 4,800 additional dwellings amounts to 2 and a half more Kings Bartons and the pressure that will put on outward urban expansion, can the portfolio holder advise what impact this is likely to have on the District’s Strategic Local Gaps, Green Belts and Public Open Spaces.”

Reply:

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Cunningham.

As mentioned in several previous answers, the Government’s new NPPF numbers are not confirmed and there is still an opportunity to respond to their consultation. There’s no point in doing detailed work on the new numbers until those numbers are confirmed.

The deadline for responding is September 24<sup>th</sup>. The City Council will be responding, and I urge all Parishes, public bodies and Councillors to submit their views to that consultation as well.

The Local Plan in front of us today contains a wide range of policies to protect biodiversity, nature and our green spaces, and public open spaces – and also highlights how we will aim to create new settlement gaps if we make any significant new allocations.

If we did have a Green Belt, it might be under pressure as a result of the Government’s new Green Belt policies, but we don’t – so their proposed change of policy on green belts makes no difference in our area.

Our commitments to our countryside, our nature and the public open spaces necessary to support successful development remains undimmed and our starting point will be to maintain them in any future plan.”





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**QUESTION 6**

From: Councillor Langford-Smith

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

“Can the Administration assure residents that they will focus development for housing on Brownfield Land rather than allocating our agricultural land for development?”

**Reply:**

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Langford Smith.

The plan before us tonight focuses development on brownfield land – both in allocations and in timing – although some greenfield sites have, inevitably, been allocated in order to achieve the housing numbers set by the previous government.

We will, as far as we are able, want to continue with our brownfield first principle in any future plan.

As Cllr Langford-Smith knows, the reference to brownfield land is often used as if it is a magic bullet that can solve all our housing problems, but, at least in the Winchester District, those highlighting it as an opportunity are often surprisingly vague about where any brownfield land is that has not been allocated.

If there are any brownfield sites that Cllr Langford-Smith believes should have been allocated and haven't been, I will be very interested to know about them. Similarly, I look forward to seeing whether the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan is able to achieve its housing objectives using only brownfield land.”



## COUNCIL MEETING – 28 August 2024

### Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

#### QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Lee 2

To: The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency (Cllr Kelsie Learney)

“Embodied carbon emissions are increasingly becoming a larger fraction of the total carbon emissions from construction, often 20-50% of the whole life carbon emissions of a new building.

Worryingly, the construction industry's knowledge of embodied carbon reduction strategies and calculations are inadequate. This Council can help the industry make better progress with benefits to the District by signposting the following in our Plan:

- London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) Embodied Carbon Primer which offers supplementary guidance to the [Climate Emergency Design Guide](#), for embodied carbon
- Environmental Product Design (EPD) guides and databases e.g., <https://asbp.org.uk/epd-product-database-asbp-members> can support project teams to design buildings that deliver ambitious embodied carbon reductions.

**Can we signpost the above guides and introduce a mandatory embodied carbon assessment with an annual or biennial rising % embodied reduction target for all design and build planning applications?**

This will avoid the current CN8 policy non-prescriptive suggestion that leaves developers to tell us what they have done without any guidance or targets. The embodied carbon assessment is currently not mandatory.

This could be an important contribution to changing net zero design and build behaviour along with contribution to our district carbon reduction targets plus wider wellbeing for Nature and Communities.”

Reply:

“This administration is setting the highest possible standards across all areas of carbon reduction in our plan, but, unfortunately, there are areas where the research base or other issues such as the lack of agreed national standards mean that we cannot move ahead as fast as we would like.

Policy CN8 on embodied carbon has been introduced in response to the Regulation 18 consultation. Our consultants advise that as it stands it has no impact on viability. Making it more prescriptive by introducing percentage reduction targets could lead to

a need to relax policy elsewhere by for example reducing affordable housing percentages or relaxing energy efficiency standards.

We do signpost to RICS guidance but currently there is no nationally recognised standard or government advice to calculate embodied carbon.

Professional bodies in the building industry are calling for the introduction of a consistent methodology and a national requirement for whole life carbon reporting on developments of over 1000m<sup>2</sup> or 10 dwellings by 2026 and national targets for upfront embodied carbon emissions by 2028. CN8 will allow us to implement the first phase and collect practical data to support what we hope will be a national requirement for the next local plan.”



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**QUESTION 8**

From: Councillor Cunningham 2

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

“The Littleton Strategic Settlement Gap already has an established SINC running through it. Post the Sir John Moore Barracks development, will the portfolio holder undertake to continue the current Local Plan iteration and ensure ongoing protection for both the Littleton and Sparsholt Strategic Gaps in particular?”

**Reply:**

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Cunningham.

If we pass this Council Plan today, we will be helping to secure the Littleton Settlement Gap through policy NE 7 on page 227 of the agenda pack – which makes explicit reference to the Winchester-Littleton gap within it.

Policy W2 which then outlines the policies for the Sir John Moore barracks allocation is also crystal clear – repeatedly - about the importance that it places on the settlement gap. The first policy bullet of W2 requires any masterplan to demonstrate how green spaces and settlement gaps will be delivered alongside any development.

As far as Sparsholt is concerned, there is no defined settlement gap because there are no developments in this Local Plan which would require it. The land between Sparsholt and neighbouring areas is protected by wider countryside policies.

As and when there are major new allocations made in the district – outside the scope of this plan – which might require a settlement gap to be established, then we would expect settlement gaps to be considered at that point.”



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#### QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Lee 3

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

“NE6 states: "The local planning authority will permit developments provided they avoid flood risk to people and property and comply with..." (See Page 224).

There is uncertainty that all drainage and flood risks in our vulnerable flood-prone areas will be resolved promptly by Southern Water and the Local Flood Authority, and there is doubt whether any solutions will be fully future-proofed against increasing extreme rainfall due to cost constraints.

Can we mandate in this Policy that rainwater and greywater harvesting, along with other sustainable water management systems such as SUDs should be used for new builds/significant retrofit extensions, in vulnerable surface and ground water flood areas?”

#### Reply:

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Lee.

Put simply, the answer is ‘no’. Because the Government has not mandated it or given us the powers to mandate it.

At present the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems, known as SUDS, is only mandatory for developments of 10 or more. The Conservative government indicated they *wanted* this to be valid for every property but the relevant section of the Flood and Water Act 2010 which contained the requirement *was* never brought into force.

In this proposed Local Plan, through policies CN1 and NE6, I believe we have set the highest standards possible within the limits of the current law.

Policy CN1 requires that:

Water use management and conservation (eg rainwater recycling and greywater harvesting ) has been fully considered as part of the design process...

and NE6 requires...

that measures have been taken to minimise the risk and impact of flooding and extreme weather conditions through the design of the building and reduce water run off through the use of SUDS and rainwater gardens.

Policy CN1 and NE6 are for every development, small and large, so once this LP is adopted we will have a higher standard than is currently required.”