



COUNCIL MEETING – 22 February 2024

Questions by the Public under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

- Each questioner will have 2 minutes in which to ask their question (or may simply state to “refer to the order paper”). The order of the questions to be asked is as set out below and an officer will direct the questioner to the microphone when their name is called by the Mayor.
- 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 Councillor, the questioner may also ask a supplementary question which must arise directly out of the original reply.
- The **total** time allocated for questions will *normally* be limited to 20 minutes.
- Written answers will be published to questions submitted (but not supplementary questions) following the meeting and all members of the public who have asked a question will be notified accordingly.

	From:
1	David Killeen
2	Denise Searle



Winchester
City Council

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QUESTION 1

From: David Killeen

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

Michael Gove recently announced that building homes on brownfield land will be turbocharged under a major shake-up to planning rules to boost housebuilding while protecting greenfield land.

Winchester and all nearby councils will be told that they will need to prioritise brownfield developments.

The bar for refusing brownfield plans will be made much higher for those city councils who are failing to hit their locally agreed housebuilding targets. Nearby planning authorities such as Southampton will be made to follow a 'brownfield presumption', if housebuilding drops below expected levels. This will make it easier to get permission to build on previously developed brownfield sites, helping more young families to find a home.

Where there is the highest demand and existing infrastructure to support new development, this focus on brownfield land and urban development is part of the government's plan to take a common-sense approach to delivering the housing that is needed, protecting the countryside and local food production.

Is it too late for this announcement to be integrated into the emerging Local Plan. Will this mean that Winchester will no longer need to plan to take the PfSH housing allocation?

Reply

Thank you very much indeed for your question.

The overall principle of 'brownfield first' is already deeply embedded in our draft local plan. The foreword states:

This local plan takes the approach of 'brownfield first' – both in prioritising the use of previously developed land over green fields, but also in the phasing of development.

And this is carried through into detailed draft Policy D6: 'Brownfield development and making best use of Land'.

That said, the national picture continues to evolve and the Secretary of State, Mr Gove, launched a consultation on new policies relating to the use of brownfield land or 'previously developed land' on February 13 which does change the national context, and we will be seeking to respond to it. In his proposals, he outlines two policies:

The specific proposal that applies to Winchester and other districts would expect us to give "significant weight to the benefits of delivering as many homes as possible, and to be flexible in applying policies or guidance on the internal layout of developments especially for proposals on brownfield land". In essence, "cram more houses and flats onto brownfield land". It's unclear whether it risks also putting limits on the amount of public realm and connectivity that we can require.

A second policy that only applies to major cities such as Southampton would be the 'application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development in respect of previously developed land' where their Housing Delivery Test score falls to 95% or below. This applies only to Southampton and does not apply to any of the districts.

At the current time, Southampton have not made a request of us through the duty to cooperate. And importantly, this would not affect any requests from any other districts to whom this rule does not apply.

It's also important to state that these new policies are only at consultation stage and, based on previous experience with Government, it's quite possible that they will run out of time to assess the results of their consultation and put their new policy into effect before any General Election. We are only able to reflect formally adopted planning policy in our Local Plan.

As far as the Partnership for South Hampshire is concerned, there is also no such thing as a 'PUSH Housing Allocation' to Winchester.

The latest Statement of Common Ground already assumes that any shortfall relating to Southampton's 35% uplift should not spill over into neighbouring areas. We and other authorities wrote to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities asking that policy be put in place nationally to support this.

The council's work with the Partnership for South Hampshire has also always worked on the assumption that the housing needs of South Hampshire will be met in South Hampshire and the policy announced at last Full Council on 'Broad Areas of Search for Growth' in the South Hampshire area works on this basis too.

The introduction of a new brownfield first policy for Southampton is unlikely to change that.

And the work in South Hampshire doesn't remove our ability to comment on neighbouring authorities' plans if we think their assumptions or allocations are unreasonable, if they haven't fully reflected national planning policy, and their case for us to take housing does not stand up to scrutiny.



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QUESTION 2

From: Denise Searle

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

“Can those responsible for planning please help me to understand what are the Gypsy and Traveller Policies in the new draft Local Plan. Where are the new sites for gypsies and travellers and how has the public been consulted on these proposals?”

Reply

Thank you for your question Ms Searle.

The Gypsy and Traveller Policies and sites were laid out clearly in the Draft Reg 18 Local Plan on pages 259 to 273 of the document available on the council's website.

The Gypsy and Traveller Policies aims to provide adequate accommodation to meet the need for the district's gypsies, travellers, and travelling showpeople – and overall criteria to achieve this are described in Policy H12.

Policy H13 safeguards current traveller sites

Policies H14 and H15 explain the criteria for increasing density of plots and expansion, and

Policies H16, H17 and H18 describe three sites in the district where there is capacity to provide more space for homes.

The Reg 18 draft Local Plan consultation was held in late 2022. It was well publicised -online, on the radio, in newspapers, via parish councillors and posters across the district – and public meetings were also held in person and

online, on the radio. Especial work was done to seek views from the Gypsy and traveller, and travelling showpersons community too.

There were thousands of responses and every individual response has been considered for possible amendment to the final plan (reg 19).

WCC will go out for the final Reg 19 consultation later this Summer before being examined by the Planning Inspectorate in 2025.

Since publication of Winchester's Reg 18 plan, the Government has extended the description of who is considered to be eligible for this description of need.

We are currently re-examining our policies to ensure that our original proposals provide the land use allocation necessary to support their housing options.