

Item 11 – Questions Received under Standing Order 27.4.1

	Question From	Question to	Question
1	Councillor Kennett	Councillor Lloyd	Why is Havant Borough Council still working on developing a Local Plan at a time when dozens of other councils have stopped developing theirs?
<p>Reply: Councillor Kennett, like all Members, you will be aware that Government is considering a number of potential changes to the planning system. These are detailed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. It is important to note that at this time the Government has not confirmed what, if any, reforms will be implemented and by when.</p> <p>The Council is aware that other local authorities have delayed moving ahead to the next stages of plan making pending further clarity on the reforms. This is very different from abandoning a plan altogether. No authority to our knowledge has abandoned their local plan entirely.</p> <p>Havant Borough Council considers it a key priority to ensure that a new Local Plan is in place to provide certainty to our residents and potential investors on what development and change will be supported in the Borough. It also allows us to better coordinate infrastructure delivery across the Borough and to set out a positive vision for the places which we control.</p> <p>Our new Local Plan will also provide an up-to-date framework to determine applications and it will include the significant environmental safeguards, development quality standards and low carbon design requirements that we wish to see and which we know our residents want to see too.</p> <p>Having a plan in place also enables the Council to better fend off speculative developments which it does not support. If we were to stop developing our local plan, it would be open season for developers looking at greenfield sites. As you know the Council does not currently have a five year supply of housing and as such it is vulnerable to speculative applications on green field sites. The appeals granted in Bedhampton demonstrate the impact of not having a plan in place and the weight inspectors give to not having a five year supply of land.</p>			

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			<p>Therefore, while Havant Borough Council is keen to get a plan in place, it is doing so thoroughly, to ensure the need to co-operate with other planning authorities in the sub-region of southeast Hampshire, is fully tested. We are taking a cautious approach to the project creating the Local Plan so that reforms to the planning system which may be announced in the short term, can be taken into account. As part of the development of the Local Plan we will examine very carefully the requirement for new homes in the Borough and robustly test Havant's ability to meet those requirements.</p> <p>There are difficult choices ahead of us in the Local Plan (not least in potential sites for development). However, I sincerely hope that we can all agree on one point. The best way to provide an optimistic vision for the future of our borough, resisting development schemes which do not share that vision and protecting our natural environment, is to move forwards with our local plan, engaging with our residents and get it in place as swiftly as we can.</p>
2	Councillor Rason	Councillor Lloyd	<p>Housing provision within Havant borough is not meeting the need of our residents. We have 1700 plus on the housing waiting list and this number is rising due to increasing interest rates.</p> <p>The houses being built here are 10 times the average annual wage and are mainly on greenfield sites. The members of the council find they are unable to counter the developers who are not building homes that residents need. The government has removed the allocations for councils to build new homes.</p> <p>Is HBC continuing to keep these targets and if so why? And if not, why not?</p>
			<p>Reply: You, like all Members, will be aware that Government is considering a number of potential changes to the planning system. These will be detailed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. Despite these anticipated changes, the Government has not removed allocations for Councils to build new homes, known as the Standard Method. Government has though reiterated that the Standard Method is the starting point for planning for new housing. It is essential that we get the right housing policy framework in place in the Building a Better Future Plan. Our consultation document was clear last year setting out on page 20: <i>"The Government requires 516 new homes per year as a starting point, but having regard to the extent of housing need that exists alongside environmental constraints, it is unlikely that the Borough will be able to address its housing</i></p>

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<p><i>need in full over the plan period. This will mean working with our neighbouring authorities to ask whether they are able to plan for additional homes over their own need. The Council will continue to discuss this with neighbouring and nearby local authorities.”</i></p>			
3	Councillor Rason	Councillor Lloyd	What is the progress on the local plan?
<p>Reply: A great deal of work and progress is being made on the Building a Better Future Plan, as set out in my Cabinet Lead report. In relation specifically to housing targets, extensive engagement has taken place recently with our neighbours through the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) and the Statement of Common Ground is being updated to reflect this. It is expected that a Spatial Position Statement will be considered by the PfSH Joint Committee by the end of the year setting out how housing need is being addressed across South Hampshire. However, individual discussions with our neighbours continue to be needed as our local plan progresses. As already highlighted, Government are considering a number of potential changes to the planning system. It is important to note that at this time the Government has not confirmed which, if any, of the reforms will be implemented and by when. So, although Havant Borough Council is keen to get a plan in place, it is doing so cautiously to ensure that we fully take into account the potential reforms to the planning system that may be announced in due course. As part of the development of the Local Plan we will examine very carefully the requirement for new homes in the Borough and robustly test Havant’s ability to meet those requirements.</p>			
4	Councillor Rason	Councillor Robinson	Considering the complexity of issues around providing the homes we need for residents, would the council consider, before the end of the year running a workshop for councillors about our housing policy and the development of the local plan and then this to be followed by holding an open meeting for all councillors to debate our housing policy?
<p>Reply: Havant Borough Council is developing its local plan by taking a cautious approach to ensure that we fully consider the potential reforms to the planning system that may be announced in due course by Government. As part of the development of the Local Plan we will examine very carefully the requirement for new homes in the Borough and robustly test Havant’s ability to meet those requirements. Part of these considerations will include the outcomes of a developing Housing Strategy which will consider the numbers and type of housing required to meet demand. The Housing Strategy will be considered & debated by all members as part of the council’s democratic processes. Once the strategy has been adopted, the council can arrange workshops for members.</p>			

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5	Councillor Rason	Councillors Robinson	RSPCA has alerted councillors to the fact that very few councils have a policy in place to ban the sale of live animals or giving live animals as prizes at shows or fairs within the local council area. Does HBC have a policy to prohibit the use of live animals in this way?
<p>Reply: Havant Borough Council takes the welfare of animals very seriously and our teams work closely with the RSPCA. Fortunately, the sale of live animals/or giving of live animals as prizes at shows is not known to be a significant issue in the Borough. The Council will remain vigilant and investigate with partner agencies should reports be received regarding events held within the Borough where animals may be given as prizes.</p>			
6	Councillor Kennett	Councillors Lloyd	<p>Houses and businesses in Emsworth Ward are served by the Thornham Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW).</p> <p>While much of HBC's attention is necessarily focused upon the Budds Farm WWTW, it is becoming increasingly clear from the number of already approved and planned developments by Havant BC and Chichester DC that the Thornham plant does not have capacity to support additional housing and will not for many years. What are the implications of this for our Local Plan and in particular for development in Emsworth?</p>
<p>Reply Havant Borough Council has been absolutely clear that even though we are not a regulator of Southern Water we are holding their performance to account. We have questioned every aspect of Southern Water's performance – from calling them to Overview & Scrutiny on several occasions, requesting verification of their data regarding capacity to manage the borough's wastewater, being hands on in the calibration of information on water quality at Hayling Island seafront, to facilitating a public meeting where residents were able to ask questions directly to the company about their water recycling proposals. There has been numerous and continued correspondence between the Council and Southern Water including meetings at executive level.</p>			

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			<p>Havant Borough Council is working to ensure that new development only takes place with a reassurance that there is sufficient capacity in the wastewater network. The Council is also engaging with Southern Water in preparing the Local Plan because Southern Water operates the sewage network in the borough.</p> <p>We have commissioned an independent third-party review of the information and data which Southern Water provide us with, to inform the Local Plan's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Ultimately, if it were the case that there is insufficient capacity in the wastewater treatment network, and such capacity could not be put in place within an acceptable timescale, then a relevant site would not be allocated in the local plan. In the meantime, planning applications that come forward are subject to the information we receive from Southern Water.</p> <p>It should be highlighted that there is no verified, published information which suggests that Thornham Wastewater Treatment Works does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate new development. The Chichester District Council - Southern Water - Environment Agency Statement of Common Ground also concludes that there is capacity. We will though, of course, continue to engage with Southern Water, critiquing their approach along the way, on this matter.</p>