

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on 23 September 2021

Present

Councillor: A Carew (Chairman)

Councillors: A Agate, D Ashcroft, B Bentley, G Boxall, S Burns, J Butler, P Davies, S Dolan, N Drew, D Evans, M Gass, A Glass, C Hatter, G Hill, S Hunt, M Johnson, P Langley, C Louisson, T Maroney, J May, D McKinney, R Millard, R Mocatta, K Moon, B Moulard, R Oppenheimer, R Platt, S Pond (Vice-Chairman), N Taylor, D Tennyson, P Wigman, A Williams, E Woodard, Hanrahan and Sear

12 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman provided an overview of events attended since the last meeting.

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Keith Budden, Ken Carter, Tony Costigan, Jamie Matthews, Sara Schillemore and Ingrid Thomas.

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from the members present.

15 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Hill, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

16 Public Questions (Standing Order 27.5)

Questions from members of the public received under Standing Order 27.5 were received, with questions 1-3 being responded to by the Leader outside of the meeting.

Question 4 was answered by Cllr Mocatta as the respective Portfolio Holder.

The list of public questions with the associated answers is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

17 East Hampshire District Local Plan: Spatial Strategy Preferred Option

The Chairman advised the Council that, owing to his previously expressed strong views on the selection of potential development sites, he wished to avoid any appearance of a predetermined position on his part. Accordingly, he would vacate the Chair for this item. The Vice-Chairman took the chair and Cllr Carew did not participate in the subsequent debate.

The Mr Webb was invited by the Chairman to address Council in relation to this item.

The Chair informed Council that the Leader, as introducer of the item, had accepted an amendment to the recommendation that was published as part of the agenda, resulting in the new substantive motion that:

- 1 Members are requested to note the progress made by EHDC in the emerging Local Plan 2017-2038. Members further note that there remain many uncertainties in the Government's proposed changes to the planning system. Should more information become known on these uncertainties, such as revised housing numbers or further clarification on the removal of the 'Duty to co-operate', then the emerging Local Plan and its strategy will reflect those changes.
- 2 approve the preferred option (Option 2) for the spatial strategy to feature in the emerging East Hampshire Local Plan.
- 3 note the different spatial options for the EHDC Local Plan 2017-2038

The Leader Thanked Cllr Steve Hunt and Cllr Paula Langley for their involvement in the creation of the motion.

The Leader introduced the item and responded to Mr Webb's address.

A number of further amendments to the motion were discussed resulting in a further amendment to the motion being proposed by the Leader and seconded by Cllr Williams.

Following a vote, it was RESOLVED that:

- 1 Members are requested to NOTE the progress made by EHDC in the emerging Local Plan 2017-2038. Members further note that there remain many uncertainties in the Government's proposed changes to the planning system. Should more information become known on these uncertainties, such as revised housing numbers or further clarification on the removal of the 'Duty to co-operate', then the emerging Local Plan and its strategy will reflect those changes.
- 2 APPROVE the different spatial options for the EHDC Local Plan 2017-2038 for further consideration.

18 Cabinet and Committee Recommendations

Standards Committee – 13 September 2021

Appointment of the Independent Person Panel

The report to the Standards Committee had addressed the statutory requirement to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist the Council in the investigation of complaints made against councillors under the Code of Conduct. It was noted that the said Independent Persons would also form an Independent Remuneration Panel in accordance with the provisions of the statutory scheme for the payment of members' allowances.

Cllr Johnson introduced the item as the Chair of the Standards Committee and proposed a motion that the recommendations contained within the report be agreed.

Seconded by Cllr Drew and following a vote it was "RESOLVED that members:

- a NOTE the recruitment process of the Independent Persons (IPs)
- b APPROVE the appointment of Mr Andrew Kirk, Mr David Heck and Mr Peter Moore as Independent Persons as selected by the interview panel and detailed in this report pursuant to Section 28(8)(c)(iii) Localism Act 2011.

19 Portfolio Holder Reports to Council

The Chairman invited members of the Council to put questions to the Cabinet Portfolio Holders in connection with their published reports.

Portfolio Holders answered questions from Members present in the meeting.

The Leader pledged to provide written responses to:

- Cllr Burns in relation to the swimming lesson provision for young people who cannot afford the cost of swimming lessons.
- Cllr Hunt in relation to the issue around the lack of ground maintenance of the Alton cemetery.
- Cllr Wigman in relation to a schedule of parking enforcement outside of schools in Whitehill & Bordon.

Cllr Glass pledged to provide a written response to Cllr Evans' in relation to the fire risk on buildings over 18m and the Gale's tower.

20 Questions under Standing Order 27.4.1

There were no questions received under Standing Order 27.4.1.

21 Questions under Standing Order 27.4.2

There were no urgent questions received under Standing Order 27.4.2.

22 Appointments to Committees

Proposed by Cllr Drew and seconded by Cllr Glass, following a vote it was RESOLVED that the membership of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee comprise of the following Councillors:

Chairman: Stephen Dolan (Lab)
Vice-Chair: S Hunt (LD)

Conservatives

Arthur Agate
Ben Bentley
David Evans
Graham Hill
Malcolm Johnson
Jonathan May
Bill Moulard

Liberal Democrat

Paul Wigman

Reserves

Neville Taylor (LD)

Proposed by Cllr Boxall and seconded by Cllr Woodard, it was RESOLVED that members APPROVE Cllr Steve Hunt as Climate Champion for EHDC for the remainder of the 2021 / 2022 municipal year.

23 Committee Minutes

Proposed by Cllr Drew and seconded by Cllr Moon it was RESOLVED that the minutes of Committees held since the last meeting of the Council were accepted.

24 Quarterly Report on Special Urgency Decisions (SO51.3)

Proposed by Cllr Millard and seconded by Cllr Louisson it was RESOLVED that Council NOTE the decision made in respect of the EHDC Leisure Centres Operator Support, as listed within the agenda.

The meeting commenced at 6.02 pm and concluded at 8.44 pm

COUNCIL MEETING 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

Item 5 – Public Questions Received under Standing Order 27.5

	Question From	Question to	
1	Mr Heelis	Cllr Millard	<p>In connection with Agenda item 6-1 of the subject meeting the Council is asked to "<i>approve the preferred option (Option 2) for the spatial strategy to feature in the emerging East Hampshire Local Plan</i>". The questionable sustainability of this site in the public view was identified per the additional Local Plan Regulation 18 Large Site consultation report specifically for Chawton Park Farm. Additionally, it is noted in the reports pack for this meeting at Page 11, Para 6.9 "<i>The preferred option still requires further testing through the plan-making process, most notably with respect to transport-related impacts</i>". This is a clear acknowledgment that this key issue alone places the Option 2 proposal at risk.</p> <p>It is requested that a reason be given as to why a key sustainability issue i.e. transport – has not been addressed <u>prior</u> to Option 2 being submitted for inclusion in the draft plan leading into Regulation 19 consultation?</p>
<p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>As will be reiterated as part of item 6, it is important to recognise that tonight's recommendation is not asking for the emerging Local Plan to be finalised and agreed, that would be further down the line when we get to the next formal Regulation 19 consultation in April 2022. We are well aware there is more work needed in regard to sites, policies and evidence to underpin the plan's content. Tonight's recommendation is simply being open about our current thinking on reasonable alternatives at this point in time. A considerable amount of work has been done and information collected to get to these reasonable alternatives, stemming from two formal consultations in 2019 and a progressive evidence base. At this point in time, the high-level assessments to date identify option 2 as the most sustainable way forward to meet the needs of the district. The next iteration of the Local Plan (Reg 19) will have more detailed assessments such as those associated with transport.</p>			

	Question From	Question to	
2	Mr Heelis	Cllr Millard	<p>“In connection with Agenda item 6-2 of the subject meeting the Council is asked to “<i>note the different spatial options for the EHDC Local Plan 2017-2038</i>”. At page 11 para 6.10 it states: “<i>it should be noted that other options might also be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal process, if consultants advise that it is appropriate to do so.</i>”</p> <p>Why is the Council being asked only to note the “other” spatial options rather than endorse them, should the sustainability failings of Option 2 make this option unworkable?”</p>
<p>Reply</p> <p>Whilst the work done to date identifies four reasonable alternatives, it is considered option 2 is the most sustainable and flexible to address housing needs. The Sustainability Appraisal is an evolving, iterative, process and should further evidence change our thinking on the preferred option, or reasonable alternatives, then it will be reflected in any emerging work on the Local Plan.</p>			
3	Mr Heelis (not in attendance)	Cllr Millard	<p>In connection with Agenda item 6-2 as the build-out rate for Option 2 will be 120 dwellings per year for 10 years (Per Redrow Chawton Park Banners - copy enclosed), it is highly unlikely that the infrastructure will, in the early years, be in place to make Chawton Park Farm self-sustaining. Early move-in householders will therefore have to enrol their children in Alton schools, be using the retail, community, medical and other facilities of the Alton before they become available on the Chawton Park Farm site. It is doubtful whether the facilities on the Chawton Park Farm site, with a maximum catchment of 1200 homes could ever thereafter be viable, given the oven ready facilities in Alton.</p> <p>Are councillors aware of this fact, and should it be given significant weight in any decision for approval?</p>
<p>Reply</p> <p>The detailed nature of any development will be determined by the planning application process in due course. The Local Plan, by its very nature is strategic, but policies supporting any allocation can guide development, including phasing associated with infrastructure. As we saw with the Butts Bridge as well as the relief road and new secondary school in Whitehill & Bordon, the</p>			

	Question From	Question to	
			early delivery of infrastructure can be achieved. As part of the evidence base supporting the Local Plan, the viability of sites will be taken into account to ensure the delivery of the services and facilities needed to mitigate the impacts of development.
4	Mr Mullenger (not in attendance)	Cllr Mocatta	<p>At the 10th June 2021 council meeting Cllr Mocatta answered my question relating to tree planting. [I note that appendix A seems not to be attached to the draft minutes]</p> <p>The data I had received from my FOI request was said to not reflect the actual results, because my question was too tightly drawn. The figure Cllr Mocatta quoted was about 35,000 although he said that there may have been some double counting.</p> <p>I resubmitted my FOI with a slightly broader question but received the same figure of 100 trees in the 2020/21 planting season.</p> <p>Could Cllr Mocatta provide details of the 35,000 trees which have been planted, in terms of their location, the planting partner and EHDC's contribution to the project – financial or otherwise.</p>
<p><u>Reply</u></p> <p>The vast majority of the 35,000 trees have been pledged by a wealthy landowner, and we have a commitment to their privacy.</p> <p>The District Council has not provided any financial support to this landowner since there is no public access to the land identified, but are pleased to congratulate residents and landowners playing their part to tackle the climate crisis by planting trees.</p> <p>There is a proposal in hand for the coming planting season to secure council funds to coordinate the tree planting efforts of people across East Hampshire. We are working with The Tree Council, Local Tree Wardens, the Woodland Trust, and voluntary organisations who have been busy germinating saplings from our local native tree stock.</p> <p>East Hampshire District Council is committed to being accountable and generating appropriate and easy to understand metrics for the progress on tackling climate change.</p> <p>For large areas of more than a couple of acres, tree planting density for woodland creation is estimated, using Forestry industry standard principles, and is dependent on the soil type, topography and the tree species.</p>			

	Question From	Question to	
			<p>Counting trees is straightforward if they're all done in one place by one group of people, but of course the picture across the community is more complex with schools, individuals, enterprises and other public bodies all electing to play their part. In many cases East Hampshire District Council will not be aware of tree planting.</p> <p>Our approach is to include trees planted by other public bodies in our district area where we are aware of them. The crucial outcome is an overall increase in tree numbers and canopy coverage: much time can be wasted concentrating on accurately counting trees, when interest in increasing biodiversity is far more important.</p>