

## **CABINET – 16 OCTOBER 2017**

### **AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIRMAN WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING**

1. From Mr D Chester to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
2. From Mr M Tristram to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown
3. From Mr M Waller to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Mrs Brown

#### **QUESTION 1 - From Mr D Chester to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown**

Will Arun be responding to the Government consultation on proposals to implement provisions in the Housing White Paper, where and when will the response be discussed? Will he share my concern that after millions of pounds and thousands of officer hours spent on the submitted Arun Local Plan these proposals seem to suggest a review after 5 years leading to a unachievable housing need figure of 1200 per annum?

#### **Response**

Thank you for the question.

I think the consultation document you refer to must be the “planning for the right homes in the right places” consultation, which finishes on 9 Nov.

I and a small officer group from the District Council Network have prepared a draft response on behalf of 201 district councils, which we have sent out to all our Council members asking for comments. We will then send that collective response to Government.

But we are also, at the same time, encouraging all Councils to make their own representation as well. Arun will certainly be doing this and our response will be considered by the Local plan sub-committee on 30 October.

#### **QUESTION 2 - From Mr M Tristram to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown**

Before taking its decision under item 9 of today’s agenda, on its consultation response for the Arundel A27 Improvements Scheme, will the Cabinet please comment on the following points?

- Environmental charity MAVES conducted professional ecological surveys during 2015-17. These have been adopted into the National Park Authority’s evidence base for Arundel. Highways England had this data but chose to use only older data for their appraisal. Highways England’s consultation information has been wholly inadequate as regards ecological and other impacts of 5A. The newer data

shows that Option 5A is the most ecologically damaging option for habitats and for protected species.

- Option 5A is the worst for impact on rural communities. It devastates Binsted's land-based community, deprives walkers of Binsted's tranquil historic landscape, and, severely increases local road traffic in Walberton.
- Option 5A will be over budget as soon as mitigation, revealed by the newer data as essential, is added in, leaving only Option 1 within budget.

### **Response from the Leader**

Firstly your query regarding the ecological data I would recommend that you take this up directly with Highways England. From the Council's perspective the recommendations that are being considered later are based on the information provided as part of this non-statutory consultation

Secondly this Council recognizes that all options will have some measure of benefit and some measure of harm.

The recommendations that the Cabinet is being asked to consider are based on what would be most beneficial for the local community and the wider area as a whole having regard to the potential impacts.

Indeed this very analysis has led to a proposed change from the long standing support for what is option 3 to option 5A

However when the preferred option has been selected then a lot more study, investigation and design work will be necessary to mitigate everything that needs sorting out, including the issue of Ancient woodland, before work can start.

### **QUESTION 3 - From Mr M Waller to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown**

My Question tonight relates to Agenda Item No. 9 – which is the report on the A27 Trunk Road Improvements at Arundel. I very much welcome your Officers' recommendations, and particularly that the Bypass commissioned in support of the Government's Road Programme should follow the Highways England route Option 5A. This is undoubtedly the very best Option from the transport point of view, and it would create the most benefit in terms of reducing the amount of traffic which rat-runs through the South Downs National Park in order to avoid the ever-increasing traffic congestion in and around Arundel.

There is however a problem with all three of the Highways England route Options, because all of them will go through the National Park, and because all of them are therefore affected by the statutory constraints which apply to road building within such important areas.

In essence, the legislation means that no major infrastructure, including roads, may be built in a National Park unless there is a wider public interest, and unless there are no alternative routes that could possibly avoid the Park.

In this instance, both of these exceptional conditions apply, but I note that neither is specifically included in your report tonight. My question therefore is to ask that you please consider emphasizing them in your proposed response to Highways England, pointing out:

- First, that the majority of the traffic using or avoiding the A27 at Arundel is nothing to do with the town whatsoever, and therefore that the need for a Bypass is not simply a local problem. It is a national and regional one as well.
- And, second, that Highways England have looked for route Options outside the National Park and, as stated in their Consultation Document, they have determined that there are no suitable alternatives which are within the Government's already very generous budget for the new road.

This therefore means that despite certain views to the contrary, the National Park rule book should not be able to be used as a significant barrier to the building of this long-awaited, essential and very welcome Bypass.

### **Response from the Leader**

Thank you for your question.

As I indicated in my response to the last questioner the Council recognizes that all options will have some measure of benefit and some measure of harm. The recommendations that the Cabinet is being asked to consider are based on what would be most beneficial for the local community and the wider area as a whole having regard to the potential impacts. In arriving at these recommendations the officers have given consideration to the issues you raise regarding the impact upon the South Downs National Park. It is not considered necessary at this stage prior to any debate which might take place when the Agenda item is heard to make any amendments to the recommendations.

Could I just take this opportunity to thank you and the other residents we have heard from tonight for your efforts in stimulating engagement and debate amongst the public at large. Regardless of whether, one is a supporter or an objector it is vitally important that people have their say, and for people in the community to come forward and encourage others to make their voices heard. Thank you very much for all your efforts.