

COUNCIL

Date and Time: Thursday, 28 January 2016 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Fleet

Present:

COUNCILLORS –

Oliver - (Chairman)

Ambler	Crisp	Makepeace-Browne
Axam	Crookes	Morris
Bailey	Dickens	Neighbour (7.05 pm)
Billings	Forster S	Parker
Blewett	Gray	Radley JE
Burchfield	Gorys	Radley JR
Butler	Kennett	Renshaw
Clarke	Kinnell (7.30 pm)	Southern
Cockarill	Leeson	Wheale
Crampton	Lewis	Woods

Officers Present:

Patricia Hughes	Joint Chief Executive
Daryl Phillips	Joint Chief Executive
Gill Chapman	Committee Services

75 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2015 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

76 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Collett, Harward and Radley JE.

77 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

78 PRESENTATION

Mr Michael Watson, Managing Director of Stagecoach South, gave members an overview of the challenges facing Stagecoach South and its plans for the future.

Stagecoach were planning to invest in technology, generate passengers - especially younger travellers, improve reliability and grow the network to meet passengers needs, all whilst still being commercially viable. Unreliability impacted on passenger

retention, especially things like congestion and roadworks. Community engagement was ongoing and local help was needed. Bus services were of great value to the community, especially in rural areas, but funding cuts were impacting on people socially and commuting.

Members asked questions around passenger growth, services at Fleet Station, younger travellers, lack of services into the evening, Odiham services, the need for a Frimley Park hospital service, The lack of Yateley services were of especial concern to Members, who asked that Stagecoach look particularly at a link to Fleet Station and an evening service on route 3.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Technical Services encouraged members to let him know of any issues that could be taken to the Blackwater Valley Advisory Committee for Public Transport. He added that reliability was key, and looked forward to meeting with Stagecoach to pursue the issues highlighted.

Mr Watson thanked Council for the opportunity, adding that Members could take issues up him direct. The Chairman thanked Mr Watson for his attendance.

79 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 – QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Questions had been received from Mr Chris Cornwell and Mr David Turver, details of which are set out in Appendix A attached to these Minutes.

80 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14 – QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Questions put by Councillors are detailed in Appendix B attached to these Minutes.

81 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had attended the following events on behalf of the Council.

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 12 December | Basingstoke Deane BC Carol Concert, St Michael's Church, Basingstoke |
| 13 December | St John Ambulance Hampshire Christmas Celebration 2015 at Holy Trinity Church, Fareham |
| 19 December | Pantomime at The Harlington - Aladdin |
| 21 December | Festive visit to the Royal Mail Delivery Office, Waterfront Business Park, Fleet |
| 24 December | Christmas Eve Carol Singing round the wards at Frimley Park Hospital |
| 19 January | Lions WE Charity Dinner |
| 23 January | Eastleigh Burns Night Supper, Hedge End |
| 27 January | Havant BC Holocaust Memorial Day service at Havant Cemetery, |

The Vice-Chairman had attended the Pelly Christmas Concert at the Church on the Heath.

82 CABINET MEMBERS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, **Councillor Parker**, announced:

Devolution - Discussions about housing and governance, the matters most exercising the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in October, have been progressing. We also need to reassure the Government that a Hampshire solution without a mayor will have adequate democratic accountability. There is a further meeting tomorrow which will hopefully bottom this out. Housing however is potentially more difficult, particularly at our stage in the Local Plan process. I have informed Hampshire Leaders that there is little support amongst Hart members for the accelerated delivery which is being discussed. More news on this as it breaks.

Planning Policy - As mentioned during Questions, officers have made arrangements for the East Hampshire District Council to host and manage the plan making process in the future. Their planning team have recently completed a Local Plan through to adoption, which is highly relevant experience, and they also enjoy first class project management skills. Our own planning policy staff will work with them, in some cases co-locating with them. I am confident that this will strengthen our approach and processes, and help us to bring a plan in on time.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, **Councillor Burchfield**, reported:

With our contract for a range of outsourced services coming up for renewal in 2017, last year the Council started to consider its options for the future. We were approached by South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse who were seeking partners to procure the services in a way that would deliver good customer service along with better economies of scale. After some time, further partners were brought into the discussion, notably Mendip and Havant – all of whom had existing contracts with Capita which were due to expire around a year of each other.

Following Cabinet approval to test the market based on a single specification, a project team was formed and guided by a Project Board consisting of Portfolio Holders/Leaders and Chief Execs. The team has since gone through an iterative procurement process through to the identification of preferred bidders.

Today I am happy to announce to members that Hart's Cabinet have agreed to go forward with this joint-council outsourcing deal. The other councils such as Mendip have already agreed; South Oxfordshire and Vale Councils decide tonight, and Havant (who are speaking for East Hampshire as well), will decide early next week. Upon Havant's approval next week, a joint press statement will be released to the general public.

To recap, the benefits to all Councils are as follows:

- **Better economies of scale** - The savings to the public purse are in the region of £50 million over the life of the contract with an improvement to our service.
- **The savings are the minimum guaranteed – not the maximum.** We have only counted the savings that underpin by the current proposal. Commercially this means that savings can exceed the underwritten amounts (which might for example in appropriate cases be encouraged through gain share mechanisms). I have done used these types of mechanisms in the private sector – they truly work. There are also mechanisms for additional savings and other financial incentives by adding more Councils to the programme.

- **Focus on us** - Hart will go from being one of the smallest contracts for Capita, to a contract that puts us well into the top 10 contracts for Capita Local Government Services – aligned with other contracts such as Birmingham, the largest Council in Europe.
- **Cheaper services returning to us** – When the contracts come back to us at the end of 9 years, there will be an **operational cost reduction of 25%**.
- **Our partners will invest** – with a contract of this size, both Vinci and Capita intend to invest heavily in new IT, which we anticipate will lead to an improvement of services to our residents, for instance helping many people who want to do things on line - to self-serve which is where we want to be as a Council in the 21st century.

At a time of continued austerity within Local Government, it is comforting to know that through collaborative working, Hart will see savings in the region of £5 million over a 9 year period as a result of the bold decisions taken by this Council. I would like to once again thank and congratulate all those involved for their dedication and hard work. We will soon see the cash benefits of our labour.

The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, **Councillor Crampton**, had no announcements.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, **Councillor Crookes**, had no announcements.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, **Councillor Forster**, announced:

The CCTV service continues to work effectively, and we have received praise for the ease and helpfulness of our officers from Hampshire Police, and the CCTV service should be commended on that.

We have been working on the Clean for the Queen project - a campaign to clear up Britain in time for the Queen's 90th birthday, officially celebrated in June. Councillor Morris is involved on the Blackwater front and we are looking to work with other parishes. Fleet Town Council already have something happening in April.

I would like to draw your attention to two consultations and one survey at this time. There is a train franchise survey around the potential rebid by SW Trains, and I encourage everyone to take part, particularly around the enhancements. I met staff working on the new bid from Stagecoach. Some of the other bidders have good ideas, and they would value suggestions from public for that survey. There is a consultation on bus services that are in the Blackwater Valley area and adjacent to Hart by Surrey CC, and as some of services come into our area residents' views would be relevant. In Hart news, coming out in March, we will be including a bus survey and would encourage residents to feed back so we have evidence to give to Stagecoach to say what we need.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, **Councillor Gorys**, reported

The Housing team continues to be busy across the service. There are ongoing viability challenges on a range of sites and as discussed at O&S on 19th January – where members considered this in the context of our Affordable Housing Policy and

achieving the right level of affordable housing with the right mix of tenure (or the right amount of off-site financial contribution where necessary).

An 'empty homes reporting tool' has been developed and included on the Council's website. This will enable anyone with an empty home, or who is aware of one, to notify Housing Services. This accompanies revised literature that draws together the expertise within the Private Sector Housing and Housing Options Teams in a way that we hope will encourage owners of empty properties to bring them back into use and accept tenants put forward by the Council's Housing Options Team. Well done to Louise Lyons and Vicky Atkinson for their work to make this happen.

The team have also opened up their housing options and homelessness casework for scrutiny by an experienced officer from Rushmoor Borough Council who is currently seconded in to the service to coordinate our sub-regional "Help for Single Homeless Project". The 'case-audit' has developed a range of recommendations that the housing management team will be considering. This will be with a view to contributing to the continuous improvement of the service and in the context of our commitment to the HART values (and the national "Gold Standard Challenge!"). Thanks to Claire Leivers for her help in providing us with a further healthy external challenge!

The Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, **Councillor Kennett**, reported:

At a meeting of the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel last Friday the Commissioner, Simon Hayes, presented his budget for next year. He proposed a 1.99% increase in the precept, and this was agreed by the Panel.

The increase will yield about £2 million whereas the grant from the Government for next year will be cut by about £10 million and the separate grant for the Marine Division will be abolished, so the Police will still have find considerable economies.

The Home Office is encouraging them to promote the PREVENT anti-extremism programme and I am going to a detailed briefing on this tomorrow.

They are rationalising their properties and the Estates Manager said he plans to sell the Fleet Police Station for redevelopment early in the new financial year (which should add to our SHLAA). Yateley station will be kept and will benefit from a minor upgrade.

The Cabinet Member for Town and Village Regeneration, **Councillor Morris**, reported:

All may have noticed that within Hart's Courtyard car park there are now 3 Police designated parking bays. These bays were negotiated under the contract between Hart and the Police to lease part of the ground floor area of Hart's Civic offices. No revenue is being lost as the police are paying the current season ticket costs for the privilege.

As mentioned by Councillor Burchfield, Cabinet on 21st January 2016 agreed to the Joint Procurement of Services and part 2 of this agreement involves outsourcing car park revenue collection. Further negotiations and questions will be brought about at

a future Preferred Bid Stage between the 5 Districts involved where items like Car Park Maintenance and Ticket machines will be discussed. As members are aware the refurbishment of Church Road car Park and the facilitating of upgraded ticket machines were put on hold awaiting the outcome of outsourcing decisions. It is hoped as soon as the Preferred Bid discussions have been finalised that these essential previously planned works can be carried out by who ever takes on the responsibility be it Hart or the outsourced company.

As part of the regeneration conversations I'm having with organisations within Fleet, I recently attended a Fleet Future meeting where much was discussed about initiatives to bring about better shopper footfall for retailers and the possible development opportunities along and around Fleet High Street. I was also able to update them regarding my conversations with the Hart centre management and how further progress has been made to revitalise the centre with additional empty units being leased.

The first formal Blackwater Retailer Association meeting will take place on 24th February 2016 in a local Blackwater Restaurant where I aim to form a committee with an elected Chairman. This will allow the retailers to take control of this association.

The deep clean of Blackwater's pavements adjacent to the shopping areas has now been agreed for 14th March 2016. The short delay has been due to legal agreements, funding and tendering for the best contractor. I'm pleased to announce that the company who will carry out this work are specialists in this field and I'm sure on completion will be the start of uplifting the condition of this area. Retailers and nearby Residents will shortly be informed of the planned work which will take place after 6 pm for 2 to 3 nights so that there is minimum disruption to normal daily trading. Much other work is continuing to regenerate Blackwater and as and when final details come about I will enlighten members.

83 JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES' REPORT

The Joint Chief Executives' report is attached as Appendix C to these Minutes.

84 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

Meeting	Date
Cabinet	7 January 2016
No questions asked.	
Audit Committee	8 December 2015
No questions asked.	
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	15 December 2015
No questions asked.	

Licensing Committee**5 January 2016**

After a question from Councillor Wheale on changes to the policy, Councillor Forster confirmed that there were no substantive changes to the on street collections policy.

Planning Committee**9 December 2015**

No questions asked.

Planning Committee**13 January 2016**

No questions asked.

Staffing Committee**18 January 2016**

No questions asked.

Minute No 17 - Pay Policy Statement Financial Year 2016-17**RESOLVED**

That the Pay Policy be approved.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee**19 January 2016**

No questions asked.

Cabinet**21 January 2016**

Councillor Southern made a statement on the awarding of the procurement contract to the successful bidder.

Minute No 103 - Joint Procurement of Services

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Parker and seconded by Councillor Burchfield.

RECOMMENDATION

That the following be agreed:

- 1 The establishment of a Joint Committee in accordance with the details outlined in Appendix 3 and to delegate authority to the Joint Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to be authorised to seek any minor changes to the Joint Committee terms of reference as necessary and be delegated to sign this agreement on behalf of the Council.
- 2 The establishment of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee with details outlined in Appendix 4 and to delegate authority to the Joint Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, be authorised to seek any minor changes to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny

Committee terms of reference as necessary and be delegated to sign the agreement on behalf of the Council

- 3 The Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of Standards Committee and the Three Group Leaders be delegated to amend the constitution accordingly

NB Para 25.1 of the Constitution states that 'Any motion to change the Constitution will, when proposed and seconded, be referred without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.' This item will therefore be deferred for discussion and decision until the next meeting, scheduled for 25 February 2016.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Chris Cornwell asked:

What is Hart District Council's transport strategy?

Councillor Forster responded:

Hart District Council does not have a transport strategy, as responsibility for development of the Local Transport Plan rests with Hampshire County Council, who are the Transport Authority for Hampshire. Chapter 5 of the plan details the Transport Strategy and challenges for North Hampshire which includes the district of Hart. A copy of this strategy can be found on Hampshire County Council's website.

Hart worked with the County Council on the development of the strategy and fully supports and endorses its contents. The Local Transport Plan is referenced from Hart's Local Plan.

Whilst Hart doesn't have a transport strategy, and being mindful of the current financial restrictions, the Council is keen to promote and support transport improvements. Examples include:

- Use of developers contributions to part fund additional parking at Fleet Station
- Co-ordinating a response to recent cuts to bus services and working with the operators and the County Council on development of an improved solution.
- Use of developers' contributions to fund a new cycle path in Blackwater.

Hart also promotes improved transport across the district by choosing to deliver certain services these include:

Highways Traffic Management - implementation and management of on street parking restrictions and road closures

Highways Development control - Providing comment on highway proposals for new developments.

Maintenance of Highway verges - Grass cutting and maintenance of roundabouts

On street parking enforcement - Control of on street parking restrictions

Provision of off street parking - To minimise on street parking and reduce traffic congestion.

I have also recently asked officers to investigate opportunities for installing Electric Vehicle charging points in Hart's car parks and will be taking a report to Cabinet in March considering this.

As can be seen whilst Hart has no strategic responsibilities for managing transport, the council does do a lot to support and promote improved transport around the District.

Mr Cornwell asked a supplementary question:

District Councils may not have direct responsibility for the strategic transport plan but most provide financial support for community transport initiatives. Hart were doing this until 2009/10 to the tune of around £50,000 pa. If the community can find what the District Council would regard as cost effective measures to improve the network, could they provide direct financial support?

Councillor Forster responded:

We do encourage sustainable transport for new developments, and often offer 'seed money' for new bus services, but this is always time limited - typically after five years commercial routes have to stand alone. Stagecoach would be delighted if we could help fund bus routes on an ongoing revenue basis, but financially we can't do that. We will look at any request, but bearing in mind the restrictions on our income this year we can consider, but I don't hold out too much hope.

NB Mr Cornwell clarified that his questions were around community transport initiatives. Councillor Forster suggested they meet and discuss the detail.

Mr David Turver asked:

- 1) Given that a) in October 2013, you were quoted as saying we would submit a new version of the Local Plan to the Inspector in Autumn 2014 and b) in each subsequent year this has slipped by a further year, with the current LDS indicating a local plan ready for submission in Winter 2016, will you now publish the detailed project plan to support this target, so we can be assured that project management processes have improved?

Response:

It was our intention to proceed with a revised Core Strategy after the withdrawal of the 2013 version. However, as many will well know, the Government changed the nature of Local Plans and we also had to address the issue of a new SHMA to overcome the defects found through the lack of cooperation of our housing market partners. At the time we explained to everyone that we had decided to take a more reflective approach to delivering what is now to be a more comprehensive Local Plan and given the SHMA implications, we could not now rely upon the previous Core Strategy approach in that the housing need had effectively doubled.

We recognised also that in light of the Governments change from the original Core Strategy concept to a full Local Plan approach we must now make our new Plan explicitly clear about **what** is intended to happen in the area over the life of the plan, **where** and **when** this will occur and **how** it will be delivered.

We also made the decision that rather than simply identify broad areas for growth as suggested in the original Core Strategy we would now take a much more comprehensive approach to identify a supply of specific and developable sites for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15. This is in line with the approach as outline in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 47.

This now is a far more complex and challenging piece of work not least of which is because we recognise that the Plan must now explicitly meet the objectively assessed development and infrastructure needs of the area, *including potential unmet needs of neighbouring areas* where this is consistent with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole. A failure to deal properly with the latter is now shown right across the country to be a failure of many Local Plans.

The Local Development Scheme is the council's three-year project plan that identifies which local development documents will be produced, in what order, and when. We do not propose to publish more background information on internal workings because that offers no practical advantage to anyone. There is already proper scrutiny of the Local Plan progress with all members of the Council having the opportunity to be actively engaged.

We also last summer enlisted the support of Chris Dorn to lend project management support. His work has been invaluable and he gave positive and independent feedback to the Hart District Association of Parish and Town Councils.

Finally, we have now full project management arrangements from our neighbours at East Hampshire District Council, who have recent and relevant experience of bringing a local plan through Examination to adoption.

- 2) Given that in January 2015, HDC commissioned work to test the proposed new settlement and urban extensions with the objectives to test the “deliverability of a new settlement and/or urban extension (ie [sic] suitability, availability and achievability)”, including a land use budget; provide “indicative costing of the major infrastructure items needed”; and consider viability including the “infrastructure requirements of sites to identify likely infrastructure impacts, subsequent costs and potential funding sources”, can you explain if these objectives have been met, and say when the results will be published?

Response:

The current position on testing is set out in the Refined Housing Options Paper. It specifically highlights and comments on where we have got to with the issue of testing. As paragraph 12 we say:

“The testing we decided to undertake is still ongoing as is the testing of all other options. The testing will go on in some form or other right up until we finalise the submission Local Plan. There is still much work to be done, but we have reached a point where we can now ask you if we are on the right track”.

We then go on to summarise on pages 9 and 10 what outcomes have been received from the testing that we have carried out so far.

The outcome of the testing will therefore, inform both the draft Local Plan and will inform the submitted Local Plan in that it will comprise part of the evidence base. All these documents will be published at the appropriate time and everyone will have the right to comment upon them when the Local Plan is independently examined by an Inspector appropriated by the Secretary of State.

Mr Turver asked a supplementary question:

All of the sites identified to make up the new town are listed in the SHLAA as “Not currently developable”, we have no costing of roads, bridges, railway improvements, sewage, sports or community facilities and we have no land use budget SANG, so why are you consulting on a new town that is not deliverable, as well as excluding brownfield sites for the same reason?

Response:

This is part of the consultation. Brownfield sites are only deliverable if the landowner puts them forward for development. Brownfield sites may not be deliverable for other reasons, but once they are put forward as a SHLAA site they can be considered.

- 3) Given that an FOI request to elicit the evidence to support the assertion made at cabinet (Paper E 5.2) in September 2015, and in Hart news (p2), that brownfield capacity for the district was 1,800 units has failed, are we to conclude that the council and public were misled in September, or will you now produce the evidence and ensure that any new consultation includes a proper stand-alone option for brownfield sites?

Response:

Nobody was misled by this council. The FOI request did not fail.

The Freedom of Information requests were dealt with openly and properly in accordance with the legislative context that was sought to obtain information held by the Council and the questioner is mistaken in his interpretation of that response. The answers properly explained the background to the Council's answers and nothing more should be interpreted from those answers other than the legal context of the answers to the question.

The Refined Housing Options consultation document also makes it absolutely clear that brownfield land development is a priority. We totally disagree with downgrading it to merely an option. Our position on the priority approach to brownfield land development is referenced throughout the Refined Housing Options Paper but if there is any doubt I refer you to paragraph 49 on page 27 which says:

"We think that whatever future approach for growth is adopted the emphasis should firmly be first on using previously developed land (the 'brownfield land' approach) but only where it is suitable for homes, where it can be viably developed and the necessary infrastructure can be provided. It must be accompanied by robust infrastructure delivery to make sure that adequate provision for schools, open space, community, health care, transport and other support services are already or can be put in place."

One key point that seems to be missed in the question is that there can be no standalone option for “brownfield sites” because the evidence suggests that there is not enough deliverable ‘brownfield land’ available to meet all our need for new homes because too few suitable sites are being promoted as being available by developers or landowners.

We have made this point a number of times but we can only count sites that are deliverable and that means the site must be available for development now or in the

near future, where we have evidence that the **owner would be willing** to make the land available for new homes. We cannot therefore promote something that is simply not supported by evidence. We make this point specifically clear that and it reflects government 2015 proposals. It is also specifically addressed in paragraph 54 of the Refined Housing Options Paper where we say:

“We can say with some certainty that at least 450 new homes will be built on brownfield sites with a further 116 potential new homes already counted as ‘deliverables’. In practice there will be much higher delivery (perhaps up to 1,800 new homes) but it cannot be reasonably quantified with any certainty for the time being because additional sites are not being promoted by developers or landowners so there is no way of demonstrating that the sites are both deliverable or developable. In our view we think that it would be unacceptable to a planning inspector to give a misleading impression that we can deliver something that we cannot guarantee. More work is needed but we are already positively planning for greater brownfield land development. We are pursuing a new initiative whereby we are looking to identify ‘zones of residential opportunity’ on land that landowners and developers may be otherwise unaware that we would support the principle of residential development.”

Until the point of deliverability is dealt with I think most members would agree with me that discussion on the brownfield option has been explored to its full extent and is now only a discussion of academic interest rather than an informed discussion that will deliver a practical and deliverable land supply. However, we continue to engage with landowners where we believe there may be a potential for residential development, and in any event I remain open to ideas regarding additional brownfield sites – hence the call for sites in the consultation document – and constructive contributions to development of such sites consistent with good planning practice.

- 4) You will recall that I wrote to you on 20 November 2015, highlighting discrepancies between the consultation materials and SHLAA, the most important point being point 4 (and appendix) showing the very different site capacities in the New Homes Booklet compared to the official evidence base, the SHLAA; can you now give an explanation of those discrepancies and will they be corrected before any new consultation is carried out?

Response:

I understand from the Council’s Planning Policy Manager that you have already received an explanation about the differences between the SHLAA and the New Homes Sites Booklet regarding site capacities (email from the Planning Policy Manager sent on 23rd December 2015).

That response explained that:

"In preparing the consultation papers we drew on not only the SHLAA but also more recent information where it was available. Such information includes the high level site assessments prepared by Adams Hendry and the shortlisting exercise work (available at <http://www.hart.gov.uk/Evidence-base>), pre-application plans, recent planning permissions, and any recent changes to site boundaries. These can all influence the sites that are shown in the documents. The SHLAA itself will be updated next year."

The plan is to publish an updated SHLAA in the summer of 2016 to reflect the best information available at that time including data on annual completions which becomes available around June each year.

- 5) Given that the SHMA (section 9.33) calls for 60-70% of our 7,534 housing need (or around 4,900) to be met from 1 & 2-bed properties, can you give a breakdown by number of bedrooms, of the 4,500 or so dwellings built or permitted since 2011 and tell us how many more 1 & 2 bed homes need to be built out of the remaining ~3,000 to be permitted to meet the need expressed in the SHMA?

The Chairman responded:

This is a technical research question and does not form part of any current Council workstream. This is not the proper forum to be used to elicit the use of Council resources in pursuit of your own personal research. I say this because the information that you seek is already published.

You can obtain the information by accessing all the planning application details of applications submitted and determined which is published on the online Public Access system.

I would also point out that section 9.33 of the SHMA relates to affordable housing and not general housing mix. It may be you have missed out a few words which fundamentally alters the meaning of your question

- 6) Given that the SHMA (Figure 10.15) calls for around 2,500 specialist units for the elderly, split into various categories to be built in Hart under the Local Plan, can you tell us how many of these units have been built or permitted since 2011, how many remain to be permitted and what you consider to be the best types of location for these types of accommodation?

Response:

The part of the question seeking statistics is appropriate to an FOI request and thus specifically outside the scope of a question at council. I have therefore asked that this request is handled under FOI rules. You will thus receive a formal response under that protocol.

As for the last part of your question about locations, we will ensure that our Local Plan policies recognises the diverse types of housing needed from across the housing market area and, where appropriate, identify specific sites for all types of housing to meet the anticipated housing requirement. This could include sites for older people's housing including accessible mainstream housing such as bungalows and step-free apartments, sheltered or extra care housing, retirement housing and residential care homes.

The current Refined Housing Options Paper specifically seeks Hart's residents' views on these specific issues and gives local communities an opportunity to identify local sites for developments that may be acceptable. Local parish councils also have a role to play. Through the Neighbourhood Plan process local communities can direct what form the growth local communities should plan for and how that should meet local needs. Neighbourhood Plans are being prepared in the Parishes: of Winchfield, Hartley

Wintney, Fleet, Hook. Odiham, Crookham Village, Dogmersfield and Rotherwick, and we understand that both Yateley and Blackwater & Hawley are considering going down the potential Neighbourhood Plan route too.

Where local communities through the Neighbourhood Plan process do not consider it appropriate to allocate such sites, we will ensure that there are sufficiently robust criteria in place in our Local Plan to set out when such homes will be permitted. This might be supplemented by setting appropriate targets for the number of these homes to be built.

This approach is exactly in accordance with government policy as set out in Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 12-003-20140306 of the updated September 2015 National Planning Policy Guidance.

Mr Turver asked a supplementary question:

How can the young who need the affordable 1 & 2-bed dwellings and elderly have confidence in the Local Plan process when the leader doesn't know what we need to build to meet their needs?

Response:

This will be dealt with under the FOI request.

- 7) What are the risks that a second consultation "anticipated to be run again from late January", will be a further waste of Hart residents' money, when the revised SHMA is due in "early in 2016" and a revised employment land review is also being prepared, thus meaning that the evidence base is likely to change significantly during the consultation, leading to a further consultation being required?

Response:

It would be premature to speculate on the outcome of the refresh of the SHMA. Data sets change all the time and all we are looking at is one single snap shot of a combination of changing data sets at one particular moment in time. There can never be anything other than a degree of uncertainty. Whatever the case we do not believe that changes to the current data sets mean that the implications for the objective assessed housing need will change to the extent that we can rely upon brownfield land alone. Indeed, the need for new homes can rise as well as fall.

The consequences are that any development that cannot be built on 'brownfield land' will have to be delivered elsewhere. This will essentially be on new 'greenfield' sites outside of our towns and villages. Important choices need to be made about how and where the 'greenfield' growth should be distributed. Questions 4 and 5 of the Refined Housing Options Paper identify some possible approaches but they may have to be combined if we are to meet all our need for new homes. That is the practical reality of the current housing need position within a Hart.

- 8) Who instigated, who authorised and who will take responsibility for each decision to repeatedly change the materials in the recent consultation part way through?

The Chairman responded:

I am directing that this question is not to be answered. This is because, as Mr Turver knows, it forms the basis of a separate investigation by Overview and Scrutiny and

indeed, Mr Turver has been party to representations made pursuant to that investigation. It would therefore be wholly inappropriate to enter into discussions in public without all the facts surrounding the events that resulted in the early curtailment of the Refined Housing Options consultation having first been investigated by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Turver asked a supplementary question:

We've heard tonight that you have failed with the last consultation, haven't got a grip on, the timeline, project management or the quality and content of the outputs, isn't it time that you and the rest of the Local Plan Steering Group did the decent thing and resigned?

The **Leader** responded:

I do intend to do the decent thing and deliver the local plan.

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Blewett asked:

Leaving aside the impact to the Council's reputation (such as it is under this administration) and the cost/inconvenience to third parties of engaging/re-engaging the public in this pre-consultation process; what is the estimated financial cost to the Council of withdrawing this pre-consultation and re-launching it later this month?

Councillor Parker responded:

I will not “leave aside” this council’s reputation to a side-swipe such as this. I am sure that Cllr. Blewett regularly canvasses residents’ views across the Hart area as I do. So far this year I have done so in Yateley East and West, Fleet Central and Crookham West & Ewshot. Whilst a few residents have raised the issue of the consultation, all agree that the Council’s reputation generally is high, expressing satisfaction with the way it is run and the services provided. Members on all sides of this chamber can take credit for the generally amicable way we all seek to serve the residents’ interests. As for the cost of rerun, I am advised it is of the order of £13,000.

Councillor Blewett asked a supplementary question:

If question 4 on the website had not been corrected would the consultation have been valid?

Councillor Parker responded:

Yes it would have been.

Councillor Blewett asked:

What was the system for reviewing by administrative and political management important prepared information and questions to be published for public participation, which everyone depends on for accuracy?

Councillor Parker responded:

The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Bailey, is conducting an investigation into the processes around the local plan consultation. During the course of that he will review both the processes in place, their adequacy and whether they were followed. I do not intend to comment until he has completed this piece of work.

Councillor Blewett asked a supplementary question:

I do not believe it is fair to members of staff who make an honest mistake not to be protected by the system. Do you agree?

Councillor Parker responded:

I certainly agree that staff should be protected from undue scrutiny from outside, and will wait for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review.

Councillor Wheale asked:

Would the Cabinet Member for Regeneration support me in continuing to allow the organising committee of 4 volunteers who run the Hype disco in the Harlington which attracts hundreds of young people from Fleet and the surrounding Hart area, to continue to use the storage container which is situated next to the Harlington in the Victoria Road car park. The container is used for storing their equipment which is necessary until a more appropriate and closer location can be found. The project has been running for 17 years and has to continue to be self sustaining.

I understand the Committee has used this container for many years. Over this period the event cost has risen to £2,600 and this month by a further £70.

Hype has supported young people by offering teenagers a regular social event in a safe and friendly environment, and have developed a good relationship with the local police. Over the years Hype has relied very much on volunteers including some former attendees.

The role for Volunteers after the disco finishes at 11pm is to ensure the hall is cleared by midnight. Therefore, the container needs to be close enough for volunteers to clear heavy equipment, signage, barriers and first aid equipment safely at night in all weathers. Many of the original volunteers are older now, and carrying heavy equipment any significant distance is difficult.

Without the container being close by, the Committee would have to hire a vehicle each month on a Friday and then return it on a Saturday. This would be unfair to the volunteers who have already worked all evening.

Having to pay an additional £3,000 a year for the use of the parking space would, I believe, make this event unsustainable and consequently, result in a great loss to the community. Any small profit Hype makes is earmarked for the Lea project and the summer project on the Views.

Councillor Morris responded:

I thank Councillor Wheale for the question and enlightening me to the circumstances that has brought about her concerns. I also thank her for her personal perseverance regarding the resolution of this matter.

I am fully aware of the good work over the last 17 years Hype Fleet has done for our young community and how this well attended club event is managed by enthusiastic volunteers. Their professionalism ensures a safe and welcoming environment for those who attend from all over the district. I am also aware of the need for the volunteers to store essential event equipment safely and in close proximity to the Harlington Centre. To this end, myself and the Joint Chief Executive, Mrs Hughes, have agreed to allow the container to remain in its position under the current agreement until a more permanent arrangement can be found.

**Chief Executives' Report to Council
28 January 2016**

January has been a busy time at the Council;

Following on from the provisional budget settlement on the 17th December, the Joint Chief Executives, supported by the Head of Finance have spent considerable time understanding the impact on the Council and the opportunities to ameliorate the impact. Council will consider the budget for 16/17 at February's meeting, but Members may be aware that it is, in broad terms, a balanced budget. Following this, Officers working with Members will be looking at opportunities for further savings.

The joint procurement, which was subject to the Cabinet report which appears on your agenda, came to head this month with final evaluation of the various bids. News is travelling fast on this, with the LGA tweeting about it on Tuesday.

In other news, Members may be aware that the transfer of the Leisure Services to Everyone Active takes place next Monday, and the main structure of the new leisure centre is now 'rising from the ground'.

Additionally, earlier this week we received confirmation that HDC and Fleet Pond Society have been successful in a bid to the Environment Agency for £50K towards additional works as part of the Fleet Pond Restoration Project. We anticipate that this will be the final grant aid and that this will bring the project to an end in the next six months

And finally, we were pleased to find that we have been identified as one of the most accessible and mobile enabled local authority websites, by the SOCITM, the society for IT practitioners.