

## **Council – 27 February 2020**

### **Item 8. Public Questions**

#### **2. Question from Mr. A. Woodward**

“When will Spelthorne Council follow the lead of Parliament, Surrey County Council and numerous other local authorities in declaring a climate emergency and ensure that future decisions and actions of the Council are subject to environmental impact assessments and are in line with reducing carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change?”

#### **3. Question from Mr T. Bailie**

“As a pupil at Thamesmead School I am seeing disposable plastic bottles and all sorts of single use plastics ending up in bins or even on the floor after only being used once. This goes on every day in schools across the local area, and on a large scale is not only very harmful for wildlife, but also unnecessary when they could be replaced by reusable bottles.

I would like to ask the question “what is the council doing to counteract the unnecessary plastic waste in local schools?”

#### **4. Question from Mrs C. Nichols**

“Responding to the Grenfell enquiry: - Building Safety in Spelthorne

Lord Porter is Spokesperson on building safety at the Local Government Association. On 26th January, the eve of phase 2 of the Grenfell Enquiry, he spoke to Radio 4’s Broadcasting House programme of his concern that many high-rise buildings across the UK are still grossly inadequate with regards to fire safety.

Lord Porter says that ACM cladding as used on the Grenfell building is not the only problem. He believes that the cladding material HPL (high pressure laminate) will be a bigger problem to eliminate and only 99 high rise blocks with HPL have been identified so far. In his view, the UK is suffering a legacy of bad construction since the 1960s and a relaxation of building regulations by all political parties in this century. He urges that all high-rise buildings are looked at across the country for fire safety as a matter of urgency, and that people with complicated needs are only housed in buildings which can be evacuated quickly.

Can the Council provide a progress report for Spelthorne residents to confirm that -

- 1) That there are no buildings (publicly or privately owned) of 11 metres or more in Spelthorne and properties owned by Spelthorne in other boroughs, that have petroleum-based cladding whether this is ACM or HPL. 11 metres is the height standard operating in Scotland, which is more stringent than in England
- 2) That all buildings of 11 metres or more in Spelthorne and in Spelthorne-owned properties have passed stringent safety tests including the ability to evacuate them quickly and safely.”

#### **5. Question from Mr C. Hyde**

“At the Cabinet meeting on 29 January, the response to petitions submitted by residents from Charlton Village, Shepperton, Sunbury and Stanwell, which raised issues about the Local Plan Green Belt proposals, was to note the petitions and ask the Local Plan Working Party to review the matters they had raised. Also, in responding to these petitions, Councillor Beardsmore said he could not answer the petitions specifically because more analysis was needed. When will the Local Plan Working Party report back to the petitioners and when will local residents see the results of the analysis of the submissions?”

#### **6. Questions from Ms. M. Mulowska**

“1. To the leader of the council Ian Harvey - Spelthorne came bottom of the Friends of the Earth rankings of every single council in the country for your environmental record - what are you going to do to take action on the Climate and Ecological Emergency?

2. To the leader of the council Ian Harvey - There is a legal obligation on pension fund managers to get the highest returns, so now that fossil fuel investments have been shown to perform poorly against non-fossil fuel investments, what action will Spelthorne and Surrey councils be taking to divest their £150 000 000 of fossil fuel investments away from fossil fuels? Both in the interests of financial sense and to avoid making already dire Climate and Ecological Emergency even worse.

3. To the leader of the council Ian Harvey - will you work in partnership with Extinction Rebellion to secure a just transition into a zero carbon future, as Wakefield council recently decided to? Please give reasons for your answer.”

#### **7. Questions from Mr. U. Kleinitz**

“Thank you for the opportunity to submit questions to Spelthorne Borough Council. I would be grateful for an opportunity to discuss the following areas regarding proposed release of green belt areas in SBC:

1. What is the council doing to actively encourage developers to offset negative environmental impact or build with a positive environmental impact?
2. When assessing and identifying areas for development, what environmental impact assessment criteria does the Council apply?
3. Specific to the 19 green belt areas proposed for release, what action does the council propose in order so the awarding is based on the application of environmental and sustainability criteria such as Life Cycle Assessment/Circular Economy recyclability of components, and offsetting lost habitat on site (such as vegetated roof areas) and carbon neutral performance?

These questions are in anticipation of:

- carbon neutrality becoming the prerequisite for continuous economic growth and job creation in the area,
- an increasing responsibility and accountability towards the public to meet real and significant commitment towards greenhouse gas reductions and maintaining biodiversity."

#### **8. Question from Ms S. Molloy**

"As one of the 5,000 people who signed the recent petition that demanded that Spelthorne Borough council not build on green belt sites, I understand that the initiators of the petition have asked the council (as is their right under the Council's own policy on petitions) to call a public meeting to discuss this issue. When does the SBC plan to hold this public meeting?"

#### **9. Question from Mr M. Beecher**

"In response to Surrey County Council's commitment to plant 1,200,000 new trees across the county to mitigate increasing carbon dioxide levels, Spelthorne borough would be expected to accommodate planting approximately 109,000 trees over and above any commitments by Spelthorne Borough Council to plant and replace trees associated with developments and ash die-back. This new commitment will require at least 40 hectares of land and maybe even 100 hectares depending on the species to be planted.

"In light of this, please can you confirm how engaged the council is with this pledge and what target Spelthorne Borough Council is proposing for planting of new trees in the borough, both in terms of land area and numbers of trees to be planted:

A) In total?

B) What land has already been identified to the council's knowledge, including any land that is owned, leased or managed by the council?

C) Alongside the budget set aside by Surrey County Council what budget and/or other resources has Spelthorne Borough Council allocated to this?"

## **10. Question from Mrs K. Sanders**

“TO: Cllr Beardsmore - Portfolio holder for Strategic Planning

RE: Local Plan proposals to release some of Spelthorne's Green Belt for housing & economic development

I support all work being done to reduce the proposed housing requirement of 603 homes per annum to a much more manageable and sustainable level. However, my concerns for Spelthorne's Green Belt remain.

Spelthorne Borough Council stated in its consultation document, that only 1.6% of Spelthorne's Green Belt would be required to be released under current proposals. Please could the Council give an estimate of what percentage of remaining "potentially developable" Green Belt land this represents? Please exclude all waterbodies, flood zone 3b ("1 in 20 year event") land, any other non-developable land AND land previously developed or with planning consent under "very special circumstances" e.g. schools, Spelthorne Gym & Shepperton Studios.

Also, please could the Council clarify which additional Green Belt sites the Council has identified in its latest SLAA as likely to be "susceptible to acquisition" by Heathrow expansion. It seems to state in its Local Plan document that this piece of work had been done (see SLAA, July 2019, section 2.10) and it would be good to have an understanding of the likely extent of these.

My overriding concern is for the sustainability of current proposals and I believe answers to the above would help inform residents and other stakeholders as to the most likely current threats to Spelthorne's Green Belt. It would also give a more realistic picture overall of the challenges facing the borough, especially if the likely effects of Heathrow expansion on the transport network and air pollution were to be taken into account - I don't think this has been done in the latest published Strategic Highway Assessment.”