

Council – 25 February 2021

Item 6 - Public Questions supplement

7. Question from Mr C. Hyde

Given that 46% of Surrey's carbon emissions are produced by transport, and a major proportion by cars, encouraging a shift towards travel by walking and cycling is an important means of achieving a reduction in carbon emissions and air pollution as well as bringing health and other benefits.

The government and Surrey County Council support walking and cycling improvements and funding is available for Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Other local authorities in Surrey have made significant progress in developing LCWIPs and securing funding, including neighbouring Runnymede Borough Council.

Has Spelthorne Borough Council developed a LCWIP and sought funding from Surrey County Council, or are plans in place to progress this and to work with Runnymede Borough Council to ensure that plans are coordinated?

8. Question from Ms K. Sanders

GL Hearn's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA 2015) calculated an Objectively Assesses Need (OAN) of 552-757 dwellings per annum (dpa) for Spelthorne (versus the existing plan target of 166 dpa until 2026) - see SMHA Nov 2015, p177 (section 10.42). Cllr Nichols made some very relevant points in his response to the SHMA Consultation at the time although I understand he wasn't a councillor then - he comments on the large increase in the housing need numbers versus the current official Local Plan and its likely impact (please see the response document on the Council website (p. 64-69) for his full response). Would the Council agree that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggesting a 4-fold increase in the rate of demand vs. the previously adopted plan has helped to create the pressure from developers that we are now witnessing in favour of development?"

9. Question from Ms K. Sanders

Does the Council agree that, when arriving at the OAN, the SHMA leaves aside issues relating to land supply, infrastructure, Green Belt and other constraints but that the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) says these are relevant for the plan-making process at a later stage (as indicated by the SHMA 2015, Section 10.9)? Does the Council also agree that, in arriving at a specific OAN of 603 dwellings per annum (dpa), the SHMA Update Report (Oct 2019) also does not factor in the relevance of Green Belt or the other constraints mentioned above and hence leaves those issues for the Local Plan process we are in now?

10. Question from Ms K. Sanders

Would the Council concede that Green Belt policy as set out in national planning policy is one area which can restrict development and hence the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) as acknowledged by ARUP's Green Belt Assessment (Stage) 1 Report, Section 3.1.3 (Ministerial Statements)?

11. Question from Ms K. Sanders

The Council has restated its "deep concerns" about the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) figure of (now) 606 dwellings per annum while saying in its Preferred Options Consultation Response document that it ultimately has to accept government targets. However, would the Council concede that GL Hearn's Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (October 2019), also states (in section 1.8) that it is possible to adopt an alternative approach to calculating the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) if exceptional circumstances can justify it?

12. Question from Ms K. Sanders

Given that the OAN hasn't previously factored in major policy constraints but that the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) allows for this at the Local Plan stage and national guidance specifically mentions that Green Belt policy can restrict the OAN, why can't the Council now factor in these major policy constraints i.e. a 65% local adjustment factor to the OAN on the basis of Spelthorne's Green Belt (or failing that, at a minimum, its PHYSICAL environmental constraints such as its high proportion of reservoirs and functional flood plain)?

13. Question from Ms K. Sanders

At last February's Council meeting you provided the table below showing that the Local Plan Preferred site allocations on Green Belt equated to 53 hectares of Spelthorne's total Green Belt area (so 1.6% of 3,324 hectares) and the areas subject to major policy constraints (e.g. reservoirs, Flood Zone 3b etc) totalled 1,665 hectares so pretty much exactly half of Spelthorne's Green Belt leaving 1,659 hectares of Green Belt which are not reservoirs or subject to other major policy constraints.

As also mentioned in your answer at the time, you didn't have a measure for the proportion of previously developed Green Belt land (PDL) bar the land that had planning permission (extant, under construction or recently completed) which was approximately 70 hectares. It was suggested that work would be done on this.

a) Does the Local Plan Working Group now have an answer for the total area of Spelthorne Green Belt which is already considered "Previously Developed Land"?

b) Please could you split out the area of Flood Zone 3b?

c) Given that Shepperton Studios, the "Eco Park", a number of schools such as Bishop Wand (together with Spelthorne Gym) and other infrastructure are already on Green Belt land, would the Council concede that the preferred Green Belt site allocations in Local Plan proposals represent a considerably greater proportion of the borough's "developable" Green Belt than the 1.6% of Green Belt mentioned in the Preferred Options Consultation document?"

Evidence provided for written response, Feb 2020

Area	Size (ha)	Comments
Total Spelthorne Green Belt	3324	
Reservoirs, Flood zone 3b, SSSI, SPA, Common Land	1665	Included within GB
Land with Planning permission (extant; under construction; or recently completed)	70	Commercial – 61.88 (all PDL except part of Shepperton Studios) Residential – 7.60
Preferred allocation sites	53	

14. Question from Ms K. Sanders

In a written response in October 2020, Cllr McIlroy said that tenders from seven consultants had been considered before awarding the Green Belt Assessment to ARUP. Please can the Council provide the names of the other consultants considered?

15. Question from Ms K. Sanders

ARUP's Green Belt Assessment Stage 1 Report (Feb 2018) states that it is an independent and objective assessment of Spelthorne's Green Belt. Is the Council aware of the "Perspectives" article on ARUP's website "Is Green Belt Policy Fit for Purpose?" in which the author states that they 'believe that green belt needs a fundamental re-think because it holds some of the answers to the UK's housing crisis'?"

16. Question from Ms K. Sanders

In the responses to the Issues and Options Consultation, Montagu Evans stated that their client Angle Property (the owner of the Bugle Nurseries and Croysdale Green Belt sites) met with ARUP at the Council offices in January 2018. What was the purpose and outcomes of that meeting and which other stakeholders were invited to that particular engagement session?