

Council – 27 September 2017

1. Question from Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox to Councillor Anne Whitehead

Are you going to ensure that the council tax levied on empty and second homes is finally - as promised for 17/18 - subject to officer report and then review by members before budget-setting time?

Councillor Whitehead replied that this was on the officers' to do list for the end of this year or beginning of next year in time to be reviewed for council tax next year.

Supplementary: *The 2013 charges partly subsidised council tax support. Will council tax support be retained?*

Councillor Whitehead said yes, that was the plan and a survey was being undertaken about it at the moment.

2. Question from Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox to Councillor Janice Hanson

Does the Government's proposed methodology for calculating the district's housing need, which sets a target of building 401 homes per year, give the portfolio-holder any reason to switch her support away from the 'emerging' target, based on Turley's work, of 675 homes per year?

Councillor Hanson replied:

The government's proposed methodology appears over simplistic and does not claim to take account of specific spatial needs to address demographic or economic growth challenges in any area. The draft guidance makes it clear that plans at an advanced stage of preparation should still progress and not be delayed. The methodology is still at an early stage of consultation, and given the widespread impact it would have nationwide it cannot be assumed that it will be implemented in this form.

Supplementary: *When do you think the district might achieve a 5-year housing land supply based on Turley's need assessment of 675 homes per year?*

Councillor Hanson referred to the timetable for the local plan and reminded Council that the government's proposed methodology was part of a consultation document which would go to Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group for initial comments and then to Council Business Committee to agree a response to be submitted before the deadline of 9 November 2017.

3. Question from Councillor Dave Brookes to Councillor Darren Clifford

Given that other solar farms in the district appear to be viable, when will the Council build out the planned solar farm at Middleton?

Councillor Clifford replied that in March 2017 it had been agreed to review the financial viability of this and over thirty other items. The assessment would take considerable expertise and investment. Original feasibility work in 2014/15 estimated the payback period for capital costs as 13-14 years, but the period had lengthened since then because of various factors.