

MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

6TH MARCH 2023 at 18:30

SUPPORTING PAPERS

Please note not every Agenda Item will have a supporting paper.

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Agenda Item 4

East Preston and Angmering Energy

On behalf of the council's Environmental Initiatives Working Party, Cllr Gunston will give a presentation on the *East Preston and Angmering Energy* idea.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 9

Minutes of Monthly Full Council meeting, 6th February

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 7th February, asking for suggested amendments by 14th February. None were suggested.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

15th February 2023

Agenda Item 10

Monthly Update Report

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Minute 093/23 – Planning & Licensing Committee**
- 3. Minute 096/23 – Personnel Committee – Dignity at Work Policy**

1. Introduction

This is the report covering items discussed during Full Council meetings up to and including the meeting held on 9th January 2023.

2. Minute 093/23 – Planning & Licensing Committee

Unusually, in the days immediate after the meeting two separate but known-to-each-other residents got in touch to ask why I had not copied the council's letter of objection to Planning Application K/56/22/PL into the Supporting Papers for the February Full Council meeting. I replied I had not as I had never copied a letter of objection into the Supporting Papers for a Full Council meeting. One accepted this straight away, the other has yet to respond to my explanation.

3. Minute 096/23 – Personnel Committee – Dignity at Work Policy

Ultimately, the troublesome wording was changed to, "Agency staff, or contractors are equally expected to treat council colleagues, and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect; following investigation, the council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are reports of harassment or bullying."

Cllr Gander and I hope councillors are happy with this wording.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

21st February 2023

Agenda Item 12

Committees

The following committee meetings took place in February. Amenities on the 13th, Major Events on the 27th, Personnel on the 20th and Planning & Licensing on the 13th. By the time of the meeting, Draft Minutes from these meetings will have been circulated with the exception of the Personnel Committee meeting, the draft Minutes of which have been circulated only to the members of that committee.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 12a

Amenities Committee

The committee met on 13th February.

Warren Recreation Ground Public Footpath – The stretch of the public footpath running from the car park to the north eastern corner of the Recreation Ground, has been made wider to improve access for larger buggies and wheelchairs. The work took place during February half term week, to cause minimal disruption for access to the preschool. Initial feedback has been very positive.

Two Acres Oval Bed – The oval bed at the western end of Two Acres is now complete. East Preston in Bloom planted daffodil bulbs around the edges and will be adding shrubs when the weather is more suitable. A memorial tree was positioned at the centre of the bed and the whole bed has been covered with a mulch topping.

Dawn Reid – **Assistant Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 12b

Audit & Governance Committee

The committee's next meeting is in March 2023.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

1st February 2023

Agenda Item 12c

Community Engagement Committee

The committee did not meet in February. Below are some updates.

King Charles III's Coronation, 6th May – Cllrs Linton and Gander have agreed the council should present all primary-school age children in the village with a Coronation coin. I am in touch with the company which Rustington Parish Council used for Platinum Jubilee coins as there is an order form online but no indication of what the coin will look like. I do not believe any of us would want to spend public money without knowing what the product will look like.

East Preston Warm Space – Cllrs Gander and Gunston have now led six sessions, always supported by one council officer and at least one community volunteer. The number of attendees has settled between 25 and 30, and I think the 20th February session was the first without any first-time attendees. Two sessions, to date, have offered live music, so thanks to John Scott-Cree and Cllr David Moore for that.

Village bus – Simon and I had a meeting with Rustington Parish Council and Compass Travel, and following this, on Thursday 16th February I met with Chris Chatfield the Managing Director of Compass Travel and Rob Torrance from WSCC.

With some reservation from me it was agreed the bus would park just inside Willowhayne Crescent as its southernmost stop in East Preston. A bus stop sign will be put on the post by the entrance to the car park.

We then walked to the area where the single yellow line will be drawn and agreed it would go north from the white line outside the gate and end just west of the pedestrian entrance to the north of the village green. A sign with the parking regulation will be attached to the dog bag dispenser and another on the post nearer to the gate entrance. Some vegetation needs removing on the east of Willowhayne Crescent which is the responsibility of WSCC and needs to be reported by the Parish Council. Chris confirmed that there was no need to remove overhanging

branches from the village green as they were high enough. Before Rob left he said he would do his utmost to ensure the TRO was agreed as soon as possible and said a start date of the 15th May could be possible. It is the date that Compass travel will work with as agreed by Chris.

Chris and I then walked the route and agreed three stops in Sea Road on either side and two on either side in Vicarage Road.

All we need now is a TRO.

Community Speed Watch – the village Community Speed Watch team reported the speed gun was malfunctioning. The gun was sent off to its manufacturers for investigation. No fault could be replicated but the company suggested a recalibration whilst they had the gun with them. As there is money in the traffic calming measures budget, Steve T. and I agreed the gun could be recalibrated. The gun is expected back any day now.

The committee's next meeting is on 27th March.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton –

28th February 2023

Chairman of the Community Engagement Committee

Agenda Item 12d

Finance & General Purposes Committee

The committee met on 20th February.

The committee agreed to a request from East Preston Village Preschool to fence off an area on the northern side of the Warren Recreation Ground cricket pavilion to create a forest school area. In response to me informing the preschool of this, we received the following email, "That's brilliant news, thank you Simon and we will keep you updated with any developments."

In response to a request from the Personnel Committee, the committee agreed to provide replacement office chairs for the council's four officers and a smaller desk for Alison. The latter will require some shelving to be installed alongside Alison's desk in due course, but will restore some accessibility to the office.

In response to a request from the Planning & Licensing Committee, the committee agreed to waive the council's Financial Regulations in order to select the committee's preferred supplier to work with on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. This supplier worked with the council on writing the Neighbourhood Plan so knows the document well and knows the village. Both committees felt his experience would make the review easier and more effective.

The committee agreed all budget-holding committees could, in future, decide to ringfence amounts within their own budget lines without seeking agreement from the whole council. The committee was happy this would not be abused by committees.

The committee agreed the council should be represented at a tripartite meeting with the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall Foundation and East Preston Men in Sheds, about the proposal to site a cabin in the Village Hall car-park.

Cllr Gander attended the meeting as Secretary of East Preston in Bloom. The committee considered the group's request to make more of the £5,000 agreed in March 2022 available

now, ahead of the 31st March cut-off date. The committee agreed to release the rest of the £5,000 as the group has done good work around the village and plants and suchlike need to be purchased now. Cllr Gander said the group's attempts at fundraising were stalling because of the current economic situation.

Cllr Wilkinson, having agreed to undertake a review of the Council Plan 2022-2025, said he would like to incorporate much of the East Preston Action Plan from 2012.

Cllr Wilkinson also questioned whether or not the council should be paying income tax on rental of the flat, events income and long-term leases to local organisations. I said four different internal auditors had served the council since I joined and none had raised an issue with this. On the morning after the meeting, I contacted our current auditor, Mulberry & Co., and received the following reply, "Parish Councils are not liable for any income tax as they are neither persons nor corporations. The only 'tax' element to any income received relates to ensuring you've declared VAT received (if any), otherwise there is nothing for you to declare."

The committee's next meeting is on Tuesday, 16th May.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

22nd February 2023

Agenda Item 12e

Major Events Committee

The committee met on 27th February. The first part of the meeting was attended by four members of the public. Amongst the topics discussed by the meeting –

Remembrance Sunday, 13th November - The committee considered information provided by Nick Ward, Chairman of the British Legion branch, regarding revised proposals for how Remembrance Sunday should run, with particular emphasis on being at the War Memorial for the two minutes' silence at 11:00. Three other members of the public attended, concerned at the proposals and particularly questioning the need to change the format of something which has run the same way for many years. I stated the council's role is to administer the road closures under instruction from the British Legion branch and that it is not the council's place to mediate between differing British Legion opinions. Mr Ward agreed to take on board the comments raised by the members of the public and to discuss those at his committee's next meeting. Mr Ward agreed to provide the council with a final proposal in time for the committee's meeting on 24th April.

End-of-term party, 14th April – all progressing to plan. Invites to be issued imminently. In the case of a contested election taking place in May, I stressed the need for any speech made by the Chairman to concentrate solely on the good works of the volunteers around the village. Only in the case of an uncontested election could the Chairman's speech reflect upon the council's own achievements.

Funday Sunday, 30th April – ticket sales are already much better than the event we cancelled in October. All progressing to plan.

Big Coronation Lunch, 7th May – all progressing to plan. The event will run from 12:00 to 17:00, and the council is providing live entertainment, catering vans and toilets. More information to follow in due course.

East Preston Food & Drink Festival, 26th August – most pitches have been taken, and Alison and Andrea are chasing up the remaining few. As usual, there is a good selection of old favourites and new stalls.

East Preston Christmas Celebrations, 25th November – I will be the event lead. Andrea will oversee Father Christmas’s Storytime, Lisa will oversee lanterns and badge-making, Christine will look after the Village Hall, John, Steve T. and Simon will float as necessary. The committee is keen to tighten the area the event covers, so nothing north of the junction of Sea Road and Fairlands, and to this end, Simon will talk to the library.

Cllr Elizabeth Linton –
Chairman of the Major Events Committee

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 12f

Personnel Committee

The committee held an extraordinary meeting on 20th February and discussed a staffing matter. This matter is not yet in the public domain, but councillors and officers have been provided with a confidential update.

Cllr Lisa Duff – **Chairman of the Personnel Committee**

27th February 2023

Agenda Item 12g

Planning & Licensing Committee

In February, the committee only met on the 13th. The meeting scheduled for the 27th was not needed.

The committee considered four East Preston Applications, one in Angmering and one in Ferring, both on behalf of the respective parish councils.

The committee agreed not to object to two of the East Preston Applications and to object to the other two. For an Application in Nursery Close, there was a concern a proposed balcony would overlook one set of neighbours; for an Application in Lashmar Road, there was a concern about the impact a new house built on the side of an existing house would have on the existing house’s amenities.

The committee agreed to support the objections raised by Angmering and Ferring parish councils to proposals to build estate on land at Ham Manor and Highdown Vineyard respectively.

The committee’s next meeting is on Monday, 13th March.

The council’s chosen contractor for assistance with a review of the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan has called an inception meeting which will hopefully be attended by the

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning & Licensing Committee and will have taken place by the time of the March Full Council meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 13a

Finance & General Purposes Committee – ringfencing

Council is asked to agree budget-holding committees can control their own ringfencing.

Cllr McElroy to lead on this item.

Prior to the beginning of each financial year, the council agrees a budget comprising lots of individual budget lines, each with their own sum of money allocated. Sometimes, projects take longer to complete than expected and, at those times, committees wish to ringfence money unspent on a project in one year so it can be spent against the same project in the following year. Currently, committees seek permission for this from Full Council.

The committee considered this at its meeting on 20th February, and agreed this is an unnecessary administrative step. The committee agreed to propose to Full Council all budget-holding committees can ringfence their own monies as necessary.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 13b

Finance & General Purposes Committee – ADC election charges

Council is asked to agree to pay any ADC charges for the May 2023 election when the time comes.

It's Local Election year. Although I tried to get an estimate from ADC before budgeting time, not unreasonably ADC did not provide us a figure. The agreed budget for 2023-24 contains £1,000 in the budget line for an election.

For the 2019 Local Election, East Preston Parish Council was charged £205 as the election was uncontested.

With twelve of the existing thirteen councillors standing again, at the time of writing, there is a possibility this year's election will be contested, something we will not know until after the nominations and withdrawals shared closing date of 4th April.

A contested election would be far more expensive and may cost more than the nominal £1,000 in the budget line. The figure charged by ADC would not be one we could challenge, so all I am looking for here is agreement we can pay whatever sum charged as soon as billed, rather than needing to present it to a Full Council meeting. Should the sum be over the £1,000, the excess will be taken from the council's reserves.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 14

Working Parties

None of the council's Working Parties met during February.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 14a

20mph Working Party

Keith Harris has drafted an article for inclusion in All About East Preston and Kingston. This should be published in the April edition.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 14b

Conservative Hall Working Party

The Red Book valuation report promised by the middle of February has not yet been received. I am chasing it.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 14c

Environmental Initiatives Working Party (EIWP)

Nothing to report beyond my presentation at the beginning of the meeting.

Cllr John Gunston –
Chairman of the Environmental Initiatives Working Party

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 14d

Flat Working Party

Nothing to report.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 14e

Leases Working Party

Nothing to report at this time.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 15a

Sussex Police

Council is asked to note any report from Sussex Police should one be received.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Item 16

Clerk's Report

1. **Introduction**
2. **Police matters**
3. **Anti-social behaviour matters**
4. **Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**
5. **Mervyn Howdle, 2nd February**
6. **Disability Action Group East Preston, 7th February**
7. **Sussex Police Unauthorised Encampments workshop, 9th February**
8. **ADC Elections Briefings, 22nd February**
9. **Social media**
10. **MailChimp stats**
11. **A selection of things we have been asked since the last meeting**
12. **Recent bouquets and complaints**
13. **Leave**
14. **February meetings and events**

1. Introduction

This is the report mainly covering February 2023 and matters which may not arise elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Police matters

Overnight on the 18th/19th February, a resident of the Angmering-on-Sea estate had her purse stolen from her car. Somehow a red van was associated with this incident and the resident contacted the council as the red van was later seen parked outside the Council Office at the time the suspect used the resident's credit or debit card in a local shop. I duly checked our CCTV footage and found the red van arriving outside the office, the driver behaving suspiciously, apparently spending the night in the van and then going to the shop at just the time he was suspected of using the resident's card. Immediately after that, he drove off. Armed with the resident's crime number, I let Sussex Police know we had this footage and then sent it to them when requested.

On 25th February, at about 18:45, a teenage boy was beaten up at Angmering Station by a group of about six to eight others. As this is at the junction of Angmering, Rustington and East Preston parish councils, I contacted Neighbourhood Policing Inspector Neil Durkan to ask him to let all three councils know anything we could pass on to our residents when he could. I also contacted the Deputy Head at Angmering School, Matt Whatford, to let him know in case one of his pupils was behaving unusually on the Monday.

At the time of writing, both Insp Durkan and Mr Whatford have thanked me for alerting them to this incident.

3. Anti-social behaviour matters

There are no updates on previous reports nor new reports of anti-social behaviour in the village.

4. **Freedom of Information / Data Protection requests**

No Freedom of Information requests received since the last report.

No Data Protection requests received since the last report.

5. **Mervyn Howdle, 2nd February**

The council's representatives at the funeral of former councillor, Mervyn Howdle, were Cllrs Linton and Mathias, Tracy and me. Former councillors Celeste Amoo, Joop Duijf, John Heaven and Philip Sherwin had all sent their apologies.

As agreed at the last meeting, we have ordered a commemorative plaque to be added to the blue bench outside the office.

Mervyn's widow, Myra, was very grateful for the support the council showed at Mervyn's funeral and for the short article in the Winter 2023 Newsletter. I provided Myra with a couple of extra paper copies and an electronic copy, and can confirm the Newsletter has been seen by Mervyn's son David in Australia. Myra wrote, "Thank you so much for dropping off three more copies of the newsletter. I very much appreciate your kindness. David also asked me to thank you for the electronic copy. That was so thoughtful."

6. **Disability Action Group East Preston, 7th February**

Where possible, Dawn and I are trying to go alternately to Disability Action Group meetings.

Seven members of the public were present. I had made it clear I was only available for the first half an hour.

Alan Hultquist chaired the meeting and appreciating my availability was limited to half hour he let me give updates on the council's intention to improve access to East Preston beach for all; basically, I explained about the meeting Cllrs Toney and Wilkinson and I had had with ADC's Joe-Russell Wells on 17th January.

Alan then allowed others to ask me questions whilst I was there. These included questions and suggestions about the Village Green, the Sea Road toilets, fundraising, the proposed 20MPH Zone in the centre of the village, and the group's idea to make the eastern part of The Street one way, allowing WSCC to widen the pavements to make The Street easier to navigate.

Relevant points about council-owned areas will be forwarded to the Amenities Committee in due course.

7. **Sussex Police Unauthorised Encampments workshop, 9th February**

I attended this meeting for Arun town and parish councils, arranged by Neighbourhood Policing Team's Inspector Neil Durkan, supported by this Chichester counterpart, Inspector Ross Wickins and their boss, Chief Inspector Nick Bowman.

The idea of the meeting was for Sussex Police to explain to clerks (and a few councillors) the process Sussex Police has to follow when made aware of an Unauthorised Encampment (UE) within the county.

The following councils were also represented: Angmering, Kingston, Bersted, Patching and Aldwick Parish Councils and Littlehampton and Bognor Regis Town Councils. Rustington Parish Council hosted the meeting at the Woodlands Centre.

Neil talked us through the process Sussex Police follows and the forms needed to be completed each step of the way. As an example, Neil used the forms from the UE at Langmeads Field in July 2022. Neil explained he partly used this particular incident as an example as it had been possibly the largest UE he had ever been involved with, including his time working in Brighton, over 80 vehicles and over 100 members of the community.

A question for Cllr Linton – according to the detail on one of the forms over 40 dogs were seen to be present. Of those seen, what was the most prevalent breed?

Neil is going to share blank copies of the forms with clerks, and I can talk interested councillors through those when they arrive. Let me know if you would be interested.

Neil also said he would like to undertake visits to vulnerable sites within towns and parishes, so he can advise on additional security measures which could be implemented. He said councils would definitely need to be setting money aside for this. After the meeting, I said this council had already set money aside, had ideas of how to improve security and would be very happy to be a pilot site for Neil's visits. Neil responded positively as he could probably visit Angmering and Rustington on the same day, and he has good working relationships with these three councils already.

8. ADC Elections Briefings, 22nd February

I attended consecutive meetings at the Civic Centre. At 15:00 an elections briefing for clerks (although some councillors attended) with extra flavour from WSALC's Trevor Leggo, and at 16:00, ADC's main elections briefing for district, town and parish councillors and a few clerks.

Trevor had a few main points to raise. Firstly, it is his considered opinion councillors take office on 10th May; all current councillors will cease to be councillors only on 9th May. His opinion is also the first date council meeting can be held in the new council term is Monday, 15th May, which is we have set for ours. First item of business to be election of a chairman, no different to usual.

The pre-election period starts on 20th March. During such a period, the council must be careful with how it promotes individual councillors and the council as a whole. In case we are a contested election this year, by the time you read this, the Major Events Committee will have discussed the precautions needed to ensure the End-of-Term Party does not fall foul of the pre-election period, i.e. focus on the achievements of the guests rather than the council. Should we have an uncontested election, that would not apply.

Trevor's third main point was the disappointment across the sector only 10% of town and parish councils had contested elections in 2019. I heard what he and others had to say about this, but then challenged that by saying maybe there are communities where other candidates do not stand because the council is stable and existing councillors are seen to be doing a good job. This appeared to be something nobody had ever suggested before. Trevor said it was an interesting thought but not all councils were as stable as East Preston.

For the 16:00 briefing, I was joined by Cllrs Bowman, Mathias and Moore, and candidate Helen Hill. By the time you read this, you will have attended your own session and there is nothing I can add.

9. Social media

This month, only one of the council's Facebook posts was seen by more than 500 people:

- Found tennis racquet – 904 people
- † Food & Drink Festival page
- ▲ East Preston Business Community page
- * East Preston Christmas Celebrations page

(posts up to and including 28th February)

The number of Followers is currently 1,796, an decrease of 4 on the last report.

10. **MailChimp stats**

Since the last papers were issued, the council has sent out the following emails to local residents on the council’s main e-mailing list:

Parish Council news – 2nd February – sent to 900, opened by 630 (70.1%)

Parish Council news – 23rd February – sent to 899, opened by 607 (67.7%)

11. **Things we have been asked since the last meeting**

Not a question as such, but the council was invited to attend an open day at HMP Wymott in Leyland. “On Thursday 2nd March, we are hosting an employment day for our Horticulture workshop. We are inviting local employers down to check out our workshop, see the experience that our men gain whilst in Wymott and get the chance to meet some of the men due for release. This is all in aid of our aim to reduce reoffending and increase the number of the men we release, moving into sustainable employment. We would love to have you along!” (I replied we would have definitely attended if we were not on the West Sussex coast rather than anywhere near Preston in Lancashire.)

“We are looking to purchase a defibrillator for the [sports club in Littlehampton] and I was wondering if you could point us in the right direction.” (Start with contacting the Community Heartbeat Trust for a wealth of advice and information.)

“Appreciate it’s probably broken record levels of contact you are getting on this, but, is anything going to be done about illegal parking in the south end of the village?”

12. **Recent bouquets and complaints**

(In addition to anything reported above)

Said to Cllr Linton, “Simon’s like a virus, he’s everywhere in the village.”

From a resident who attended the last Full Council meeting, “One of the beneficial consequences of my appearance before the PC on Monday was the opportunity to walk out with a set of the papers for the meeting which I have now read in their entirety. Quite how you keep so many plates spinning without any of them falling off their stick is quite remarkable ! It’s been said many times before by many others but we are lucky to have you to steer the ship.”

From the croquet club resident, “Many thanks for the information. It will be very useful.”

From the resident about parking, “Thanks for the quick reply [...] Thanks for everything you do in the village, appreciate it.”

In response to the Winter 2023 Newsletter, a resident of Golden Avenue (the Kingston part) wrote in, "Just wanted to thank you for giving the level crossing/engine fumes issue a decent mention in the latest EPPC newsletter - really hope it leads to more people doing the right thing. Apart from the environmental consequences, it never ceases to amaze me how many people let their engines run when the cost of fuel is so high! Actually, I enjoyed reading all the newsletter, including discovering more about councillors ("Who knew?!") and the floral club - their creations in church have been incredible for years."

13. **Leave**

Dawn is on leave for the week beginning 6th March.

Alison is on leave for the week beginning 13th March.

I will be on leave for the week beginning 20th March.

14. **March Meetings and Events**

This list may be incomplete and is subject to change.

- 2nd ADC / Arun District Association of Local Councils (10:00, Arundel Town Hall) (EL and SC only)
- 6th Neighbourhood Plan Inception Meeting (09:30, online) (GM and CB only and maybe SC)
Regular Sussex Police, Inspector Durkan meeting with councils (11:00, online) (SC only)
Full Council (18:30, East Preston Infant School)
- 8th Meeting with Rustington Parish Council and Compass Travel (09:00, Rustington Parish Council) (EL and SC only)
WSALC *Latest Developments in Planning* session (18:30, online) (DM only)
- 13th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Audit & Governance Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)
- 27th Planning & Licensing Committee (18:00, East Preston Infant School)
Community Engagement Committee (19:00, East Preston Infant School)

N.B. where committee meetings fall on the same day, the timings of these meetings may be subject to change.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

28th February 2023

Agenda Items 17a-b

Other meetings and events – Part 1

Council is asked to note the following reports:

East Preston Youth Club Annual General Meeting, 24th January

online

The briefing was given by Steve Tilbury, it lasted 2½ hours and was on ZOOM.

Cllrs Duff and Chapman will provide a verbal report on this meeting.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

27th February 2023

WSALC Latest Developments in Planning webinar, **8th February**

online

The briefing was given by Steve Tilbury, it lasted 2½ hours and was on ZOOM.

This is a brief outline of what was discussed, it was very open and the participants could ask questions at any time.

Beauty; Infrastructure; Democracy; Environment; Neighbourhoods

Current proposals are designed to allow those themes to operate

- more emphasis on 'beautiful' development that will be welcomed by local communities (is the hope)
- revisions to the NPPF to rebalance the rules in favour of Local Plan led decision making
- the message to local authorities – get your local plan in place and you will see the benefits in managing development
- the message to communities – support local plan making if you want to have control and certainty

Levelling UP and Regeneration Bill

- changes in the way that five year housing land supply is calculated
- NO CHANGE to the expectation to the way OVERALL housing numbers are calculated
- additional emphasis on design quality
- (even) stronger protection on Green Belt
- Stronger role for Neighbourhood Plans
- more scope for Local Plans to be 'the strategy we want' rather than the 'strategy we have to put up with'
- faster and simpler plan making
- strengthening the status of the development plan over material considerations
- National Development Management Policies
- Infrastructure Levy
- New approach to assessing environmental outcomes

All the above were discussed at great length.

National Planning Policy Framework

- no big change of direction – that might come later
- limited but important amendments
- use of the 'standard method' as a starting point to calculate housing requirements is UNCHANGED
- Green Belt and density – when an LPA can say 'we can't find sites for the numbers we need'
- amendments to the way housing delivery is calculated

- neighbourhood plans given more emphasis
- some measures to encourage building out of planning permissions
- more emphasis on 'beauty'
- 300,000 additional homes every year is still government policy
- the 'standard method' is still very clearly a starting point for arriving at a local housing requirement
- green belt land will not need to be considered
- density can be a consideration – but a little confusing as to how
- if a Local Plan is up to date there will be no requirement to demonstrate a five year land supply
- important changes to the way that LPAs calculate whether they are 'on track' to deliver the housing in the Local Plan

A 'sort' of summary

The provision of sufficient, decent housing remains a national priority; does government want direct control or believe in flexibility? Ambition for housing delivery, will quite literally, decide what happens 'on the ground'; the drive to net zero is a major consideration nationally and locally; the economic outlook will impact on development projects of all types; uncertainty is a major cause of problems with new development and plan making.

It is worth downloading the 'National Model Design Code'

Cllr David Moore

26th February 2023