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On 11 December 2023, the Horsham District Draft Local Plan 2023 – 2040: Regulation 19 Consultation was recommended for approval by the council's Cabinet and considered and approved at the subsequent Extraordinary Council Meeting.

The consultation will run from Friday 19 January 2024 to Friday 1 March 2024.

<https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=2535>

<https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=188&MId=2536>

Transcriptions of these meetings, below, were made from the video recordings accessible at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljatPsTOKC0>

Cabinet Meeting of Horsham District Council, 11 December 2023, 5.00pm

[On the recording the MEETING OPENS 16:05]

[16:05] **Cllr Martin Boffey [Lib Dem, Trafalgar]**: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this Extraordinary Cabinet Meeting of the Horsham District Council Cabinet. Before the business of the meeting commences I have some housekeeping announcements. Please note the location of fire exits, which I believe are there, there. Please make sure that your mobile phones and other devices are switched to silent and note that an audio recording of the meeting is being made and will be published on the council's website. Before going any further I'm aware that obviously there are more than the usual members of the public here, so just to give a little bit of background so everyone understands this evening, this is the cabinet meeting five o'clock. It will then, should the recommendations be approved, be followed by a full council meeting at six o'clock, so I will be chairing this meeting of the cabinet as leader of the council, the full council meeting, if it takes place, will be chaired by Dr David Skipp, who's the chairman of the council. So this meeting is to determine whether the recommendation to publish the local plan is then passed on to council for council to make the full decision. Apologies for absence Item One. We have one apology from Councillor Mark Baynham. Item Two Declaration of Members Interests. Does any member of the cabinet have an interest to declare? No, Excellent. Item Three Public Questions. We've received questions from five members of the public, one of whom will be asking their question in person tonight, with the remainder receiving a written reply. The question this evening is from Karen Park. Please could you come forward. You have two minutes in which to ask your question.

[18:10] **Karen Park**: Thank you. My question is based on the Draft Appendix One Horsham District Council Local Plan page 43, Strategic Policy 7 Appropriate Energy Use. Paragraph 5.16 – I'll only read a small section of it – the development of renewable and low carbon energy is a key means of reducing the District's contribution to climate change. Renewable and low carbon energy can encompass a wide range of technologies, including – and then there's a long list, one of which is energy from waste. And my question is what evidence does Horsham District Council have to support energy from waste being considered as a renewable energy and a contributor to its low carbon targets, compared to the evidence

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supplied by UK Without Incineration Network to the Horsham incinerator planning appeal, which was a document called *Evaluation of the Climate Change Impacts of the Energy From Waste Plant Proposed for Weald and Brickworks in Horsham*. This report was based on incineration of 180,000 tons per year. However the new owners, Care, have said they plan to incinerate 230,000 tons per year, which would further increase the climate change impacts. Thank you.

[19:27] **Cllr Martin Boffey**: Thank you very much. Councillor John Milne will be taking this question, I believe.

[19:33] **Cllr John Milne** [Lib Dem, Denne]: Thank you, Chairman. And first I'd let me apologise my voice, which is – I'm recovering from a sore throat, so I hope I get through the evening . The reference to waste heat sources in Policy 7 is not a direct reference to Energy from Waste. Instead, it refers to a means of delivering low carbon heating, such as District Heating schemes where excess heat from municipal buildings can be used to heat homes rather than requiring additional carbon-based energy sources. I do, however, note that Paragraph 5.16 [in the draft Local Plan] does refer to energy from waste. Whilst this paragraph is a list which simply seeks to set out a list of possible low carbon sources of energy, I accept that with the forthcoming implementation of food waste collections, this form of energy generation may be not be such a low carbon source of energy than initially envisaged. If the plan is agreed this evening, I am content that officers could consider proposing the deletion of this particular reference to a Planning Inspector as a minor modification to the plan in due course. It may be helpful for you to note that the matter of the Horsham Incinerator is the responsibility of West Sussex County Council as the waste and minerals planning authority, and this Council is not the decision maker in relation to this matter. Thank you.

[21:06] **Cllr Martin Boffey**: Thank you very much, Councillor Milne. Thank you, Ms Park. Item Four Horsham District Local Plan 2023 to 2040 Regulation 19 Consultation from page three of the agenda. I invite Cllr John Milne, Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure, to introduce this report.

[21:32] **Cllr John Milne**: Thank you, Chairman. Now, we're going to be hearing from myself and indeed all other councillors shortly – it's going to be a long evening – so I won't hold things up now. The Local Plan has been a long time in the making and all councillors have been involved to some degree. I think everyone accepts that we have a desperate need for an up-to-date Local Plan. As a council, for the sake of our residents, we must not delay any further. I commend this report to Cabinet.

[22:10] **Cllr Martin Boffey**: Thank you very much, Cllr Milne. Are there any other comments from other Cabinet members? No. In which case I invite other Cllrs present to comment on the proposal. I'd like to remind you that the full debate will take place at the Extraordinary Council Meeting, where all members will be able to speak and vote on the proposal. Cllr Circus.

[22:37] **Cllr Philip Circus** [Con, West Chiltington, Thakeham and Ashington]: Thank you, Chairman. I just wanted to say a couple of things, or ask a couple of things, about transport – sustainable transport. I notice in paragraph 8.8 there's mention of the 20 minute neighbourhood concept. That seems to me to be coming – or representing a more rural area – is a concept that shows no recognition, no recognition at all, of the needs of the more rural community. When you were in opposition, you made a big thing of the fact that we apparently, the Conservative Administration, governed in the interests of the rural areas and ignored the town. It looks to me as if it might we might now see a reverse situation where this Administration is more concerned with those who live in a more urban setting, as opposed to those of us who live and represent more rural parts of the District. The second question: if we're talking about sustainable transport, one of the most important elements of a sustainable transport system are the railways. And the government has offered all sorts of financial incentives to conduct feasibility studies on the reopening of railways that were, mistakenly in my view, mistakenly closed back in the 1960s. It's one of the issues that I've raised periodically – sadly have not got much enthusiasm for it in the past. I'm wondering whether the administration would therefore look seriously at the issue of railway reopening.

There is a campaign organisation seeking to the re-opening of the line from Guilford to Horsham, and from Horsham to Shoreham. And given the financial – the government's – support that is on offer, and just before Cllr Fletcher gets annoyed with me about this subject, I can assure her that it's quite possible to reopen the railway line and maintain the cycle, the Downs Link cycle route. So, can I ask whether in instead of warm words on sustainable transport ,there's a possibility that the administration might be interested in something really tangible which is to show some real enthusiasm for the railway sector and the possibility of the re-opening of railways that have been closed. It would make a fundamental contribution to transport in this District. Thank you, Leader.

[22:56] **Cllr Martin Boffey:** Thank you very much, Cllr Circus. I'll allow John, and possibly any officers, to comment further in a moment, particularly on the second part around, about railway transport. On the, on your first point, others will know better than me, but when you look at the scale of development put for— ,proposed in this Local Plan, I think we could probably agree that the vast majority of that expansion is in urban extensions to urban areas, so I think that should probably be born in mind, but I'll allow Cllr Milne to comment.

[26:34] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you, Chairman. Yeah, 20 minute neighbourhoods: I feel they get a rather confused press, but basically it's simply the concept that that you should have, community should have, in so far as is possible, everything they need for their basic day-to-day life in easy walking distance or cycling distance, you know, to the concept of the corner shop in a sense. So, as Martin said, the, you know, most of the plans here are for larger settlements anyway, and it's about designing them in the future, so that this is possible. What we don't want to do is build car-centric suburbs – dormitory suburbs – where there really is no alternative except to drive, even for a pint of milk. So, that's what that's about really. I don't see it as being in conflict with anything rural. In indeed many villages you'd be pushed towalk for more than 20 minutes to get out of the village, because, you know, that's as big as it is. So, I don't see any conflict there at all, and really I think it's a very desirable lifestyle. For your second question about railways, as I'm sure you know, that's fairly considerably above our pay grade – we don't have any direct authority over the rail system. If a proposal was put to us, or if we were invited to join in with a consultation, we would certainly do so and we'd be very interested to. The line, as you say, to Guilford always has been as a keen group promoting it, certainly got nothing against it in principle, but it's in all honesty, in all honesty not really for us to initiate it, because it's not under our control. Thank you.

[28:30] **Cllr Martin Boffey:** Cllr Circus.

[28:33] **Cllr Philip Circus:** Can I thank the Cabinet member for his response. It sounds to me as if he is acknowledging that the principle of the 20 minute, if I got it right, the 20 minute neighbourhood concept is more appropriate to urban areas rather than rural areas. And can I also say that the idea that the weight of housing development has fallen disproportionately on urban areas is not something that my residents in Thakeham would recognise, since they have experienced proportionately more housing development than Horsham town has. Thank you very much, Leader.

[29:26] **Cllr Martin Boffey:** Yeah, thank you very much, Cllr Circus, because I would also just like to know that, as John said earlier, in terms of what 20 minute neighbourhoods really is, is the principle that you can actually access everything you need from where you live within 20 minutes. I find it confusing to suggest that that is not something that you would like to see in rural settlements as well. Yes, do you have anything else you want to add, John.

[30:00] **Cllr John Milne:** Not really. It's not going to be feasible everywhere, but that's the mission that we're under: to, in so far as possible eliminate the need, or take cars from being an essential to life, to being an option.

[30:19] **Cllr Martin Boffey**: Any other comments from any other members present, please? No. Excellent. In which case could I ask a show of hands, please, from Cabinet members if they are in favour of the recommendations to council published on page three of the agenda. That is unanimous. Thank you very much. Item Five is to consider matters of special urgency. There are no urgent matters to consider this evening, so the business of this meeting is completed. We will now break until the time comes for the convening of the Extraordinary Council Meeting, which is at 6pm. Thank you very much. [MEETING CLOSES 31:16]

Extraordinary Full Council Meeting of Horsham District Council, 11 December 2023, 6.00pm

[1:16:17] **Cllr David Skipp [Lib Dem, Forest]**: Good evening and welcome to this Extraordinary Council Meeting, and I hope you will be able to hear me. Before we begin the meeting, members may be aware that we have received the sad news that Cllr Malcolm Eastwood, member for Henfield, has passed away. I sent our sincere condolences, on behalf of the council, to his family, but can I ask that all members stand as we hold a minute silence in memory of Cllr Eastwood. Thank you. Please be seated. I'll just take you through the usual notes. Location of the fire exits: please ensure that you know where they all are, or where they are. Please make sure your mobile phones and other devices are switched to silent. The meeting is being live streamed and an audio recording being made. Please switch your microphone on and speak clearly when addressing the council. And you may remain seated when you are speaking. In relation to all points of order, members will need to indicate first the rule and second the way in which it has been broken, to allow me to rule accordingly. This may be a longer meeting than usual given, the Regulation 19 agenda, therefore I would ask that members speak directly to the point and that you act in a courteous and professional manner at all times. We will have a break around 7 o'clock and further comfort breaks if required. I have apologies for absence from Cllrs Mark Baynham, Tony Hogben, Jonathan Taylor, and Tricia Youtan. Are there any other apologies that you have? No? Thank you. Item Two is to receive any declarations of interest from members. So, I will kick off and say that I'm a playing member at Ifield Golf Course and I think it ought to be mentioned at this meeting. Does anyone else have declarations of interest? Yes, Ma'am.

[1:20:08] **Cllr Claudia Fisher [Green, Storrington and Washington]**: Claudia Fisher. I have a non-registerable interest to declare, as I met the proprietor of a parcel of land in Storrington which may be allocated in the Local Plan. I have had one conversation with the said proprietor, as we intended the same business function, and therefore consider that I am of an open mind and able to participate in this evening's debate. Thank you.

[1:20:27] **Cllr David Skipp**: Thank you. Anybody else? Excellent. That brings us to Item Three, which is questions from the public. We have received questions from seven members of the public, six of whom will be asking them in person tonight, with the remainder receiving a written reply. So, firstly would Trevor Leonard please come forward. Thank you. You have two minutes in which to ask your question.

[1:21:11] **Trevor Leonard**: Thank you, Chairman. Good evening Cllrs, and my sincere condolences on the loss of your colleagues. A multitude of groups representing the Billingshurst community, including Billingshurst Parish Council, the Billingshurst Sports and Recreation Association, the Billingshurst Community Partnership and, importantly, a range of other environmental and supportive groups, such as BilliGreen, Sussex Green Living, Save Little Daux, and the Sussex Wildlife Trust have all written to Horsham District Council to give their support or preference for development to the west of Billingshurst, as opposed to proposed development to the east. Together, these groups represent thousands, thousands of residents and members of the Billingshurst community. Whilst the developers to the east have consistently rejected attempts from the community to engage with them, the developers to the

west have not only fully engaged, but have entered into a legally binding agreement to ensure that commitments made to provide much-needed community infrastructure are delivered at an early stage of any development. Given this, and the very clear, and possibly unprecedented, level of community support for the west of Billingshurst, added to the symmetry between the requirements of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, which requires new development to be, I quote: “shaped by local people's democratic wishes,” and the 2023 Lib Dem Manifesto pledges with the slogan “a Lib Dem victory means the council will be listening to you,” can you please confirm that you will not be supporting the Regulation 19 Local Plan in its current form as drafted, which proposes to totally ignore the overwhelming and clear community support, but instead simply amend the plan in order to allocate land west of Billingshurst, rather than development to the east. Thank you.

[1:23:03] Thank you, Mr Leonard. That's fine. I'm going to ask Cllr Milne to respond to your question. Cllr Milne.

[1:23:15] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you for your question. Just to say at the start I'm losing my voice, so I will share some of these answers with my colleagues. For clarity, a Local Plan is a matter for the whole council to decide, not just myself or the Cabinet. All the sites in the plan face at least some level of local opposition, but at the same time we're obliged to choose at least some of them. So, from the start it's clear that not every public wish can be granted. However, in practical terms the consultation was very helpful. Officers have made numerous changes to the plan to reflect the concerns of communities across the District, within the constraints of national planning law. Many of those changes are detailed in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet Council Report. With any site, the primary consideration, by far, is that it meets planning law and stands a strong chance of approval by a national planning inspector at examination. In the case of Billingshurst, while I note the claims that there is more support for the proposal to the west, we have received no clear evidence one way or the other. In the Regulation 18 consultation, we received 11 supportive comments for the allocation of west and 243 objections. The east received 33 comments of support and 279 objections. That is the only formal evidence we have available, and it shows public opinion divided roughly 50/50. It was also apparent when myself and officers met with the parish council recently to discuss the plan, that there were supporters and opponents of both options. I would add a majority of residents and the parish council would prefer no development at all. The west side allocation is for half as many houses again as the east – a very considerable extra difference. As we've successfully reduced our overall District target, this is many more houses than we actually need. In the long term, allocating the west would open up the west side of the A29 to such an extent that further large-scale development would be very, very hard to resist on planning grounds. There's just no obvious limit to the growth of Billingshurst once you break that barrier. I question whether that's what residents really want. I hope to arrange a meeting with the parish council in the New Year, to discuss additional civic investment in Billingshurst using funds outside the local planning process. Thank you.

[1:26:00] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Milne. Thank you very much. The second question is from Melanie Holliker [*sp.?*]. Please could you come forward.

[1:26:24] **Melanie Holliker:** Thank you.

[1:26:24] **Cllr David Skipp:** You have two minutes in which to ask your question.

[1:26:30] **Melanie Holliker:** Melanie Holliker representing BilliGreen Billingshurst Environmental Group. This question is also regarding the draft proposal to allocate the east of Billingshurst for development rather than the west. The developer proposing to develop the east site makes little effort to meet the criteria in Strategic Policies 8 and 17 Sustainable Design and Construction, and Green Infrastructure and Diversity. It will build to current building regulations only. It would remove a significant Green Space valued by residents, and commits to only 10% biodiversity net gain. In contrast, the developer proposing to develop the west site does much to fulfil Policies 8 and 17. It proposes to build to the Future Home

Standard, above and beyond current building regulations, sustainable design using the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods, and to approximately 50% biodiversity net gain by rewilding 90 acres of land to create a nature reserve to be placed in public ownership, improving access to nature for all Billingshurst residents. In our current climate and nature crisis, can you justify your decision in the light of Policies 8 and 17? Thank you.

[1:27:54] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you. Cllr Milne?

[1:27:58] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you for your question. any development must be compliant with our new Local Plan policies. That includes Strategic Policy 8 Sustainable Design and Construction, and Strategic Policy 17 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity, which sets the requirement for 12% biodiversity net gain, or BNG. Land east of Billingshurst, therefore, must meet all policy requirements and that includes the points you itemise. While I understand that new developments can cause adverse environmental impacts, there is a fundamental issue at stake: people need houses. All the large locations proposed to us are on greenfield sites. There's no way an area like Horsham District can avoid greenfield development under current government rules. I also stress that the Local Plan hugely increases our ability to insist on carbon neutral building standards, as well as new protections for the wider environment. Without an up-to-date Local Plan and a 5-year land supply, speculative developments will continue to come forward. Key policies, such as the restriction on building outside the built-up area boundary, carry little weight. For example, HDC was obliged to accept an application for 83 Homes at Duck Moor, near Billingshurst, even though it was against District policy, and that's far from the only example across the District. Land east of Billingshurst is a logical extension to the village, with defensible boundaries to inhibit further development. Much needed affordable homes can be delivered in a timely manner, alongside a number of community facilities, such as a new primary school, informal recreation space, and a community hub. Its proximity to village facilities and services, including the railway station and secondary school, in conjunction with the proposed pedestrian and cycle routes, all combine to make the ambition of a 20-minute neighbourhood genuinely achievable here. This site is therefore well placed to meet Strategic Policies 8 and 17, if not exceed them. Thank you.

[1:30:15] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Milne. Thank you for that question. the next question is from Andrew Bardot, please.

[1:30:30] **Andrew Bardot:** Good evening, chairman. Good evening, Cllrs. I'm here as a representative of Save Rural Southwater, but I'm actually addressing a District-wide problem: it was the local plan related to water neutrality. Policy 9 paragraph 1 concerning water efficient design provides, in sub-paragraph A, that new residential development is designed to utilise no more than 85 litres of main-supplied water per person per day. As HDC and Natural England are aware, 85 litres is a purely aspirational and entirely theoretical target for actual consumption. It flies in the face of readily available actual water use data for this District, and nationwide, which is very considerably higher than, and in many cases almost double, the 85 litres figure. The company which HDC, Crawley and Chichester retained in 2022 to retrofit 100 council properties in Crawley with flow-restricted devices provided HDC with its own actual use data for all properties fitted with its flow-restricted devices from 2020 to 2022. This data shows that after installation of water flow restrictors, there is an average consumption of 166.52 litres per person per day – almost double the 85 litre target. Furthermore, HDC has publicly stated in the Woodfords application that contrary to the very clear requirement and direction from Natural England, it will not monitor water use and new build properties nor ensure proper enforcement of the 85 litre target. Why does this matter? it matters because the lower the target water use figure for new builds, the easier it becomes for developers to have their applications approved, which will inevitably result in the building of houses across the District which will be very far from water neutral. This will increase the very real threat to our District's finite water supply, till a permanent solution to sustainable water supply in our District has been devised, implemented and tested. So, our question is: why is HDC bending over backwards to benefit the house builders by endorsing and adopting this absurd 85 litre per day figure, needlessly exposing our District to the real risk of exhaustion of its finite water

supply, when it should be requiring and enforcing a realistic daily water use target for new build development and challenging government housing targets? Thank you.

[1:32:37] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Mr Bardot. Cllr Milne?

[1:32:53] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you for your question, Andrew. There are two aspects to water neutrality. First, we have to ensure new development is as water efficient as possible. Second, any additional water use must be offset against existing supply. Our policy will require that new developments are built to a much higher water efficiency standard than applied in the past. In joint consultancy with Crawley and Chichester, the other affected areas, a new average usage figure of 85 litres per person per day has been agreed. I stress the 85 litre standard for new builds is separate from our off-setting strategy for existing properties. We're not attempting to get all homes working to an 85 litre average, and it wouldn't be possible anyway. Older properties are inherently less water efficient. It's correct to say that in the Crawley pilot, water use after retrofitting remains high at 166.52 litres per person per day. However, before the installation of flow restrictors, these properties used an even higher average of 199.85 litres per person per day. Therefore, retrofitting has cut that by 30 litres, which can be used to offset new development elsewhere. The trial has been a positive experience for residents. They continue to use their appliances as normal, while benefiting from a significant cut in both their water and heating bills. Although that wasn't the reason for doing it, it has turned out to be a useful contribution to the cost of living crisis. It might even catch on with private households in the long term. This joint strategy was agreed with Crawley and Chichester, and endorsed by Natural England last year. It's important for the council to honour its commitments. Crawley's Local Plan is currently at examination stage and no relevant issues have been raised by the inspector. Over time, the water neutrality check on development is reducing. Applicants are increasingly able to demonstrate their own water neutrality schemes. There's no doubt this is going to happen more often and with much larger sites. For this reason, we recognise that we're in somewhat of a race against time to get the Plan passed and regain control of District planning. Further delay with no clear objective in mind risks having much higher housing targets imposed on us, potentially two or three times higher in the early years. Thank you.

[1:35:42] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr. Thank you very much. David Brown, please.

[1:36:00] **David Brown:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Cllrs. First of all I'd like to congratulate you on reading the plan and all the appendices, and the numerous objection letters. You must be word blind by now. My question representing the land west of Ifield development: why has the lack of transport infrastructure for the development of the land west of Ifield been ignored against the advice from multiple transport studies by both Horsham and Crawley councils on the aspirational concept of a 15-minute community? The published Horsham transport study to support the Local Plan identifies land west of Ifield as the largest development in the area, with no mitigation for traffic uptake where previous studies identify the needs and mitigation.

[1:36:59] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Milne?

[1:36:59] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you, Chairman. As I said earlier, to save my voice I'm going to share some answers now, but just to say they are – I have written them and scripted them with officers, so they are my responses. But if I could pass over to Cllr Fletcher to answer. Thank you.

[1:37:18] **Cllr Ruth Fletcher [Lib Dem, Denne]:** Thank you for your question. As part of the preparation of the Horsham District Plan, Horsham District Council has undertaken extensive transport modelling to ascertain the impacts of the Plan. This is a mandatory requirement. We have used the County Council approved methodology. It would be difficult to diverge significantly from their assessment. This document is available to view on the Local Plan evidence-based pages. It identifies mitigation measures designed to accommodate levels of increased traffic in the area. These include the measures set out in

Policy HA1 and the reference in paragraph 10.98 that require any impacts on Rusper to be taken into account. In addition there is an extension of the high quality Fastway bus services to serve the development. An active travel design concept will offer direct attractive walking and cycling links to Ifield station and village and into Crawley Town Centre. If the Plan is agreed this evening, further work on the detailed transport impacts arising from the scheme would still be necessary to support any eventual planning application. Officers will continue to seek the necessary detail from Homes England, and will challenge this data if they consider that impacts on Rusper Road, or indeed the road network more generally, have not been adequately addressed.

[1:38:44] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Fletcher. Thank you. Chris Poland, please.

[1:39:06] **Chris Poland:** Good evening, Cllrs. I'm the chairman of Horsham Hockey Club. Despite responding to your local consultation with over 120 letters of support being included in your own playing pitch strategy actions recommendation as a club in need, receiving two letters of support from Sport England and England Hockey, we appear to be unsupported by this proposed plan. I understand the council has taken the decision not to include Horsham Golf and Fitness Village within the draft Local Plan and therefore deny Horsham Hockey Club the opportunity to secure a fully funded new home at no cost to the council or the club. Given this decision, please can the council explain how it intends to deliver the sport and leisure facilities identified as being needed within the District, specifically new facilities of the Horsham Hockey Club, which were proposed to be delivered as part of Horsham Golf and Fitness Village, and are not included in any other scheme, and why no politician or officer from the council is actively engaging with my Club to support us and our 320 members. Thank you.

[1:40:20] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Olsen.

[1:40:21] **Cllr Jon Olsen [Lib Dem, Forest]:** Yes. Thank you, Chris, for your question. The provision of facilities for Horsham Hockey Club is one of the council's priorities with regard to leisure facilities. Officers across both leisure and planning departments have actively engaged with the Hockey Club during the planned preparation process. We have established your requirements, which are summarised as two sand-dressed, floodlit artificial playing pitches, ideally as part of a sports hub with a clubhouse and associated ancillary facilities. There has also been correspondence between the Hockey Club and planning officers during the course of Plan preparation. Land at Horsham Golf and Fitness has been proposed as an allocation in the Local Plan. The results of this assessment are set out in Appendix 7A of the Cabinet report. Investment in sports facilities is always welcome, but that can't be the sole criteria. As a whole, this proposal fails to meet the tests of sustainable development as set out in national policy and is therefore not recommended for allocation. As you will be aware, separate to the Local Plan process a planning application has been submitted for development at Horsham Golf and Fitness, including hockey pitches. This application is yet to be determined and I'm therefore unable to comment further now. Officers have endeavoured to secure appropriate facilities within the allocated strategic sites and will continue to seek to actively engage in this respect.

[1:41:50] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Olsen.

[1:41:52] **Cllr John Milne:** Chairman, can I just but in there? There was a typo which reversed the meaning in a sentence; it should have said land at Horsham Golf and Fitness Village. Sorry, your village has not been proposed as an allocation – the word 'not' was omitted, which reversed the meaning. Thank you.

1:42:10] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Fenella Maitland-Smith, please.

[1:42:21] **Fenella Maitland-Smith:** Thank you, Chair. I'm here as a resident of Rusper Parish. With particular reference to a 30-year vision for the District, my question is this: what is the evidence that residents have been properly consulted during the drafting of this Plan, their Neighbourhood Plans

respected, and their concerns about overdevelopment in the District as a whole taken into account in the Olan? My concern is that the Plan is confused and not fit for purpose, is pretending to be one thing but at its heart it's something quite different. It does have strengthened environmental policies, and this is welcome. But it doesn't present a vision for a sustainable future. In fact, I've struggled to find a statement of a 30-year Vision at all and that's because at its heart it's still the same old plan for overdevelopment. This Plan perpetuates the existing rate of house building, pulling more and more people into the area. driving population grow at current rates which will cause house building targets to be even higher in the future. We now have the highest rate of population growth of any local Authority in Sussex or Surrey and double the national average. The council and the Plan need to acknowledge this and call it to a halt. But instead, the plan is full of aspirational policies and long lists of requirements on developers which are unlikely to be satisfied and I include the water neutrality strategy in this. There's so much uncertainty around at the moment, and such a lack of detail in the Plan, that I fear we're heading for a mess. Insufficient infrastructure, insufficient social housing and no end to developers and finance profiting at our expense. And nowhere is this more the case than in the west of Ifield site. Finally, Cabinet members have made no secret of the fact that they're rushing the Plan through in case water neutrality requirements are pulled and to stop speculative applications, but changes to the NPPF will be published in the next few weeks which could reduce risks like this, and potentially offer further opportunities to reduce housing targets, and have a properly sustainable plan for the future. Please don't vote for anything less. Thank you.

[1:44:40] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you. Cllr Milne, who's answering?

[1:44:45] **Cllr John Milne:** I will hand this on to Cllr Boffey, thank you.

[1:44:49] **Cllr Martin Boffey [Lib Dem, Trafalgar]:** Thank you very much, Chairman. I shall answer the question as submitted. I disagree with your list of givens, but to the question itself: in fact the council has actively consulted residents during the Plan process. Two rounds of consultation were carried out under the Regulation 18 in May 2018 and February 2020. In the second of these the council held public exhibitions, distributed 5,000 leaflets across the District and extensively publicised the consultation via email and social media. Over the last few years bespoke consultation workshops focusing on potential development sites were undertaken with every, with parish and neighbourhood councils, including in September 2021 and very recently in September 2023. Three open public events were additionally held in May 2022 in Horsham, Pulborough and Ashington. For the Local Plan to be found sound, we are legally obliged to meet the requirements of the NPPF – the National Planning Policy Framework – and I'll just insert that's the National Planning Policy Framework as it is, the one that is extant now. Not the one that we've had dozens of implications about what it might be at some as yet to be determined date in the future subject to however many elections and leaders of the government. That NPPF that includes sufficient provision to meet our housing target. Failure to do so means planning by appeal and would completely undermine our ability to enforce higher standards in respect of both the environment and net zero construction. I further note that parishes benefit from access to a senior neighbourhood planning officer at the council. Along with the strategic planning team, he has worked directly with parishes to align the Local Plan as closely as possible with both made and emerging Neighbourhood Plans across the District. Finally, even where sites are recommended for inclusion against public wishes this doesn't mean consultation makes no difference. There have been numerous improvements to the Plan reflecting community concerns, but often the local preference is for no development at all and this is impossible to follow. You can find many of these changes in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet and Council Report. Thank you.

[1:47:18] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Boffey. Thank you very much. That brings to an end the questions from the public and we'll now turn to questions from the Parish and Neighbourhood Councils. We have received questions from four Parish Councils, who will be asking them in person tonight, with the remainder receiving a written reply. Firstly, would the representative for Storrington and Sullington Parish Council please come forward; you have two minutes in which to ask your question.

[1:47:54] **Storrington & Sullington PC:** Many thanks. Good evening. Following the Regulation 18 consultation in 2020, there were 622 comments. The vast majority of these were objections, including from several parish councils and also from Andrew Griffith MP. The support, unsurprisingly, was mainly from developers. There was further consultation of parish councils in September of this year. Speaking for Storrington and Sullington, we have objected very strongly to the sites proposed for inclusion in our parish and offered alternative sites more acceptable to the public. We believe that other parish councils were equally dismayed. Given that the government has stated the development plan should be bottom up, can you please explain how you consider that this complies with that requirement, and what changes were made to site allocations. Following these meetings we were clearly told that our objections would be considered, yet, certainly for Storrington and Sullington, there have been no changes in allocation since the previous incarnations of this plan. We have we have made a Neighbourhood Plan which designates one green gap between Storrington and West Chiltington. The allocated site lies immediately within that gap. The Neighbourhood Plan is the most recent evidence of what the public will support and has been completely disregarded by HDC. How is this bottom up planning?

[1:49:16] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you for your question. Cllr Milne?

[1:49:19] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you. I'm going to hand over all the parish questions to Cllr Raby, but just before I do, there was a typo here on your question which you actually corrected: it's that we received over 6,000 representations not 662. But you've already corrected it so Sam, delete the first line.

[1:49:40] **Cllr Sam Raby [Lib Dem, Roffey South]:** As you'll be aware, Horsham District Council must prepare plans which are in accordance with the NPPF. Plans must be consistent with national policy and be based on proportionate evidence. They must also cover a 15-year period, starting from the date planned or adopted. Existing Neighbourhood Plans across the District cover the period to 2031; the new Local Plan, if agreed, will cover the period to 2040. This means the council must allocate a significant number of additional sites or we would end up with a 9-year hole in the numbers with zero allocation. This is an innate flaw of the planning process, as Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans have different obligations to be fulfilled over wildly different time scales. All allocations must meet NPPF requirements. As you know, we've worked hard with parish councils to consider whether the suggested alternatives meet the criteria for allocation. Where these have not been included, it's because officers concluded they could not demonstrate the minimum NPPF criteria of being suitable, available, and achievable. I realise this plan contains sites which will contradict local preferences and in practice it's hard to see why this wouldn't happen with every Local Plan, but we still incorporate your views where we can. For example, Draft Policy ST01 specifically requires an application must be supported by landscape and visual impact assessment. in the case of land north of Melton Drive, our strategy is to permit development, but only in the southern half of the site while landscaping the rest. We believe this to be the most effective way to create a long-term defensible landscape boundary. It's hoped that this will protect the parish against the concerning precedent set by an unwanted approval at appeal of a neighbouring site which might otherwise encourage further expansion towards West Chiltington.

[1:51:39] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Raby. Thank you very much for your question. The second question is from Itchingfield Parish Council, so will the representative please come forward.

[1:51:59] **Ian Walker [Itchingfield Parish Council]:** good evening, Cllrs. My name is Ian Walker, I'm speaking on behalf of Itchingfield Parish Council. I will ask my question, although I'm pretty sure I can anticipate what the answer is going to be. And my question arises from page 173 of the Draft Plan and the allocation of development sites in Itchingfield Parish. The preamble, to the section of the plan dealing with site allocation, reads, at paragraph 10.133, "the parish has made good progress with the preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan following a successful examination. At the time of writing the Plan has been unable to proceed to referendum in the light of the position statement on water

neutrality. the Plan is expected to enter the final stages of plan making and applicants should therefore be mindful of the content of the Neighbourhood Plan in this parish." So, with all that in mind, why does the District Plan allocate for development three sites, two of which were rejected by the parish after careful analysis, and which are therefore considered by the parish to be wholly unsuitable for development? Now, in this context it should be noted that Horsham District Council has, until now, fully supported the content of our Draft Plan, including the allocation of development sites and the number of homes to be delivered.

[1:53:28] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you Mr Walker. Cllr Raby

[1:53:32] **Cllr Sam Raby:** For clarity, as the page numbers you refer to won't match the page numbers on all printed copies, this question relates to Strategic Policy HA6 Barns Green. The existing Neighbourhood Plans cover the period to 2031. The new Local Plan, if agreed, will cover the period to 2040. This is to ensure it's in accordance with the NPPF requirements that a plan must run for 15 years from adoption. Therefore, the council must allocate a significant number of other sites beyond what's in Neighbourhood Plans in order to ensure delivery over the entire period, not just till 2031. In doing this we've taken account of feedback provided to us through both formal consultation and parish workshops, the most of which were held in September this year. We've specifically referred to the progress of your Neighbourhood Plan to take account of this feedback.

[1:54:29] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr Walker. Third question is from Southwater Parish Council.

[1:54:50] **Southwater Parish Council:** Good evening, Chairman and Cllrs. Thank you for listening to our concerns. Our question is regarding the long-term effect of the Local Plan, but secondly I'd like to ask something that has come up today. I recognise this is relatively short notice, but I think it's pertinent to what we're talking about. The question begins: the Local Plan designates Southwater as a village/small town suitable for development and a strategic site. The Plan states that the development of up to 2040 will be in an extra 285 homes, plus 450 homes in the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan: 735 homes plus the build-out and existing Berkeley site of Broadacre circa 300, over the Plan period to about 1,035 homes, and another an additional 265 for the period beyond 2040. At a build-out rate of 50 per year, this will take the development period to around 2045. Also, noting the impact of upon peripheral sites of Rascals Farm, Woodfords of just under 200, and additional rights on the boundary of Southwater, the Local Plan will effectively turn Southwater into a building site for the next 22 years. Is this fair to the residents of Southwater, and is it sustainable? My other part of this question is relatively recently, either on Friday or Monday, the review of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, the response from the Horsham planning team has been that we suggest that it is uh held up until the outcome of the government's announcement regarding the NPPF, and therefore not to take it further, not to take the review further. And I just wonder why we, as a parish council, are being told to hold fire with our review of the Neighbourhood Plan when the Local Plan is actually continuing as of today?

[1:57:36] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much for your question. I'll ask Cllr Raby to answer what he can of your question in the light of your recent, sort of, question.

[1:58:47] **Cllr Sam Raby:** Yeah, I'm very sorry I'm only going to be able to respond to the statement, your question, as submitted, because I'm just the mouthpiece, so I'm sorry that I'm not able to add in the supplementary information. But I will read out what Cllr Milne and the officers have prepared to your question. So, thank you for your question. First of all, Southwater is designated in Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, HDPF, November 2015 as a small town and larger village. Such classification, such locations are classed of settlements with a good range of services and facilities, strong community networks and local employment provision, together with reasonable rail and/or bus services. After Horsham, Southwater, along with Billingshurst, Broadbridge Heath, Henfield, Pulborough, Steyning and Storrington, was classed as one of the next most sustainable locations in the 2015 Local

Plan, and this remains the same today. Like local authorities across the country, we have a mandatory housing target requiring us to build thousands of houses over a very long period. I don't see how this can be done without implying continuous construction wherever it is, but only at a part of the site will be operational at any one time. Some of the houses we approve today won't even start for 20 years. Compared to earlier drafts of the Plan, we've managed to cut the number to 1,000 from 1,200, as it was in all previous versions, or indeed the 1,500 that was applied for in October 2022. 450 of this 1,000 are already agreed anyway in the Neighbourhood Plan. The development will be expected to provide new infrastructure, including a new secondary school, which will serve the needs of both the new and existing community. The policy requirement HA3 sets out a wide range of requirements to ensure the development, which takes place, is sustainable.

[1:59:47] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you. I believe that Cllr Milne would like to add further to that.

[1:59:51] **Cllr John Milne:** Yes, just to add to that we can only answer questions that are as submitted, but we're happy to come back to you after this meeting, and talk to you about your further question.

[2:00:03] **Cllr Davis Skipp:** Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Cllr Milne. The final question is from Thakeham Parish Council, please.

[2:00:15] **Thakeham Parish Council:** Good evening, again. For a small village with virtually no facilities or infrastructure, and poor highways and transport options, surely there needs to be a clear steer from planners on which option they favour: A) several less larger plots; or B) one large one which is not currently in the Plan, but will undoubtedly be put forward by the developer Bellway Homes. We are not against reasonable housing development, but it needs to be proportionate and clearly set out in the Plan. Currently, the parish council would like to know how Horsham District Council considered the appropriateness of setting a housing allocation of 65 dwellings across various plots in Thakeham parish, which, if development proceeded on at least two of them, would exceed the housing numbers by more than a 10% variance as listed in the Plan. Accumulatively, this would represent a very significant amount of dwellings – the 65, plus the 55 off Rock Road – when the possibility of hundreds of houses on the former mushroom farm is currently out for consultation, but not included in the Draft Plan. Therefore, in asking this question we seek an answer that would explain how these significant developments would impact on the capabilities accounted for in the proposed Plan, as there seems to be no contingency in place other than the objection to large scale developments due to the strains put upon infrastructure. As the delivery of infrastructure across Thakeham, our neighbours in the outline parishes, and the District as a whole, is predicted 65 plus 10% and not 620, which is our last count of potential dwellings.

[2:01:54] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you. Cllr Raby.

[2:01:57] **Cllr Sam Raby:** Thank you for your questions. With regards to the large site you mentioned, until it's actually promoted for inclusion in the Local Plan process, we can't comment. Clearly, sites not formally presented can't qualify as either available or deliverable. We've tested various options for growth in our sustainability appraisal process. This analyses the ability of the District to accommodate different levels of growth and where it might be located. This process was mostly carried out under previous HDC administrations and indeed the readying of sites for potential approval is a matter of many years, not months. It was decided that growth should be concentrated around Horsham, urban extensions, and some growth of villages and towns in accordance with the level of services and facilities to be the most sustainable option. A full appraisal of all options was then undertaken and the results compared to ensure that only the most sustainable mix of sites was taken forward to allocation. It is those sites which have been included in the Regulation 19 document. The council has sought to allocate two sites on High Bar Lane which together could deliver 65 homes. Our evidence indicates that as a settlement, Thakeham, as in The Street and High Bar Lane, is able to accommodate such growth. There were a number of other sites in the parish which would not have been recommended for allocation. In addition we recognise, too, that the site on Rock Road a proposed allocation for 55 homes is within Thakeham Parish. This is referenced in the draft Regulation 19 document, as well as in the evidence

documents, such as the site assessment report. However, as the site immediately abuts the settlement of Storrington, if developed it would form part of the Storrington built-up area. In assessing the site, the site assessment report recognises that any future resident would rely upon services in Storrington. Accordingly, we have identified the site in the Storrington section of the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

[2:04:00] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Raby. Thank you very much. That brings us to the end of the public questions and also the parish questions. And before we move on to Item Five I'm going to suggest we have a short break, or perhaps 20 minutes just to stretch our legs and prepare for the next section. Thank you.

[2:36:58] **Cllr David Skipp:** I hope everyone is refreshed and ready for this next part of the meeting. Item Five: on pages five to six of the council agenda, which refers to the Cabinet agenda, Horsham District Local Plan 2023 to 2040 Regulation 19 consultation. Just one or two things before we start the debate, because this is an extraordinary meeting and because there are a lot of Cllrs who may wish to speak, I'm going to allow members to speak once only for up to five minutes to ensure that all members have the opportunity to speak should you wish to do so. So, I would ask, as I pointed out in the beginning, that people direct their thoughts without rambling too much. I'm sure you won't. So, I'm going to ask the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure to introduce this item and move the recommendations. Cllr Milne.

[2:38:11] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you, Chairman. Before I say anything else I must thank officers for their amazing work in preparing this submission. Anyone can see it's been a tremendous task and they had to do it four times over. As a new administration, the Local Plan has been our number one priority since we took office, but by necessity what you see now is a revision, not a total reinvention. There's an old story about a tourist asking for directions, only to receive the unhelpful advice, "well if I were you, I wouldn't start from here." And that's how I feel about having to work with someone else's plan. So, what have we done differently? Firstly, there's the house building target. Nationally, we need more homes, but the strain of absorbing so many so quickly is hard to cope with. Therefore, I'm delighted to announce that if this Plan is approved tonight, our annual target for the next 5 years will be cut to just 480. That is Horsham's lowest target this century. Under the government's normal rules our target should be around 1,200 a year, but the constraints of water neutrality make it possible for us to negotiate a slowdown. It's a time for us to draw breath. Secondly, in another major improvement we're radically upgrading our eco-building standards. The Local Plan today takes us to Future Home requirements, but over the next year we will build an evidence-base to justify raising standards even further; enough to take us to true Net Zero for carbon emissions. At that point HDC will be among the top few performing councils in the country: no more costly re-retrofits. Thirdly, we will formalise and give legal enforceability to a host of environmental protections, such as nature recovery networks and urban green spaces. Fourthly, we have significantly rewritten the policies to make active travel a practical reality, something which lacked enforceability in previous versions. And fifthly, the Plan will make a vital local contribution to fixing a national housing shortage. Under this Plan, developments must deliver affordable housing rates of up to 45%. Homes for social rent will be prioritised and, for the first time, we're introducing support for Community Land Trusts – a new way to get round lack of government investment in housing. But cheaper housing isn't the only way we can help. Our higher eco-building standards mean that the annual energy bill for a typical household will be cut by over a thousand a year. Great for the planet, and great for the cost of living, too. let's now turn to site selection. Delaying the plan from January didn't help us. Today, we have to use the same rules as before to choose from largely the same sites as before. Government talk about favouring brownfield over greenfield was just that: talk. The fact is all the large sites proposed to us are Greenfield. To meet our target we've had to include three of them: west of Ifield, Southwater, and east of Billingshurst. But, we've been able to leave out Adversane, Bucks Barn, Kingsfold, Horsham Golf and Fitness Village, and west of Billingshurst. Mayfield and Rookwood were previously withdrawn by the developers. Why did we choose one site rather than another? It's true the same sites were shortlisted under the previous administration. Nevertheless, there are important improvements: all three provide much needed schools, in the places where West Sussex Education Authority say there's greatest need. I know there's a bad history of promised schools never seeing the

light of day, but after negotiations with the Education Authority, we believe those schools will go ahead this time. The next key factor is transport. Horsham's main routes are the railway, the A24, and the A29. Most new housing inevitably has to follow these lines. But the wider question that's always been brushed under the carpet is: what does this mean for the District in the long term? Our largest allocation today is 3,000 at west of Ifield. We have a duty to help with our neighbours' needs and Crawley Borough Council simply doesn't have anything like enough space for its growing population. Therefore, we have agreed that half of the affordable homes that we build here will be allocated to reduce Crawley's housing waiting list. 3,000 in one site seems a lot, until you realise it's 7,000 less than it was supposed to be. We strongly oppose the long-term strategy for 10,000 houses that was written into the January version of this Plan, and we've removed it. In terms of spatial planning, it's the biggest change we're making for the District. Our new west Ifield plan is exactly that: west, not south towards Horsham. Without anyone actually being prepared to admit it, long term we have been drifting into a merged settlement of Crawsham. Today, we're decisively rejecting that future. Looking at Southwater, the allocation is for a thousand. This is a significant reduction from the 1,200 in past versions of the Plan, let alone the 1,500 that was applied for last year. Our lower target means we've been able to remove some of the more sensitive parts of the site altogether. 450 of this total was agreed previously in the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, but if that's all we allocated it wouldn't deliver a secondary school. We need to be sure Southwater kids won't have to travel to Burgess Hill, Steyning and Crawley for an education, with all the family stress that causes. Ultimately, we're just a District Council and we can't tell the Department of Education what to do, but I can guarantee if we don't try it this way, Southwater will never get its secondary school. Turning to Billingshurst. There was a choice between two sites: 650 in the east or 1,000 in the west. We've gone for the smaller site, the east, which is much closer to the station. Natural boundaries are by far the most powerful check on urban sprawl. If we build to the west, and turn the A29 from a bypass into some kind of 60mph village High Street, the next defensible line is the River Arun half a mile away. There are no meaningful barriers at all north and south. In the Reg 18 consultation, the majority public opinion was for minimising the scale of development. There's no question that east, not west, is the site which best responds to that. There's much more I'd like to say, but there are hundreds of sites in the Plan and, of course, 40 or so other Cllrs queuing up to make their contribution. So, at the end of the day you might describe this Local Plan, like all Local Plans, as a compromise. With so many competing interests, it could never be anything else. But I firmly believe it's a better compromise than anything we can possibly hope to get at any other time. This is a window of opportunity and it won't remain open for long, and I urge all members to support it. Thank you.

[2:46:32] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Milne. Is there a seconder for the proposal? Cllr Boffey, thank you. Do you want to speak now or later?

[2:46:41] **Cllr Martin Boffey:** I'd like to speak at the end of the debate if that's okay, Chairman?

[2:46:45] **Cllr David Skipp:** Yeah, okay. Thank you very much. So, I'm going to allow the debate. May I remind you once for five minutes per member, and we will see how it goes. I anticipate that it may well take us two, three, four hours. I'm prepared to sit here for as long as you're prepared to sit there and talk to me. So, I'm going to open the debate and see how it goes.

[2:47:28] **Cllr Philip Circus:** Thank you very much, Chairman. The reference was made to quote somebody else's plan and I think one of the things we should make quite clear from the start is that the Plan, or its genesis, or any part of it, can be said to be a Plan created or endorsed by the previous Conservative administration. It wasn't. It came before the Conservative Group; that's the Plan that was on the table at one stage produced by officers, it came before the Conservative Group and the Conservative Group decisively rejected it. It is not the Conservative Plan, it does not owe its origins to a Conservative Plan. It is in fact the Liberal Democrat Plan; it is the Plan of this new administration. One of the speakers made the point that a Liberal Democrat council will be listening to you, or at least that's what they were led to believe during the election. But that is not the feeling of those in my part of the world. It's not the Storrington Parish Council; well, you've heard from them – they don't think they've

been listened to. Thakeham Parish Council don't think they've been listened to. There are a large number of local communities who don't think they've been listened to. And what's more, where there are existing Neighbourhood Plans, in some cases their very clear provisions have been totally ignored. The classic example of that, which has been touched on by our speakers, is Melton Drive, where the planning committee, Planning South, turned that application down when it came as an application to planning, turned it down twice, it went to the government inspector and a government inspector said that site was wrong. And it's been slipped into the Plan, slipped into the Plan against the wishes of West Chiltington Parish Council, Storrington Parish Council, and it clearly creates an issue of –

[2:50:12] **Cllr Nick Grant:** Coalescence

[2:50:12] **Cllr Philip Circus:** Coalescence, yes, thank you. That's the word I'm looking for. My members of my group are going to touch on other important issues, such as the water usage figures of 85 litres, which is – I don't know where that's been plucked from, but I suspect it may have been plucked out of Alice in Wonderland. Finally, Chairman, the point was touched on why make a decision tonight? The government, through the Secretary of State, are going to make a statement – I believe it is imminent – on the NPPF, and don't forget we have to have a District Plan that is consistent with the NPPF. An imminent statement from the Secretary of State is coming and yet we can't wait what may be only a couple of days to hear what the Secretary of State has, when it could have a powerful implication for those communities represented in the public gallery, who have spoken so lucidly this evening about the effects on their communities I think, Chairman, that's all I can say at this stage, except to say that I will listen to the rest of the debate, but I'm not minded to vote in favour of what is on the table. Thank you, Chairman.

[2:51:43] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Circus. Is there anybody else who would like to... Cllr Manton.

[2:51:53] **Cllr Alan Manton [Con, West Chiltington, Thakeham and Ashington]:** Thank you, Chairman. I would like to echo what my colleague has said. Also, the Liberal Democrat Manifesto was talking about listening to communities from the ground up, and I feel from what has been said here earlier this evening, once again Storrington and Sullington and Thakeham clearly feel that they have not been listened to. Coming to the Local Plan and the, what I would consider, inappropriate target there of 85 litres per person per day, I feel we should be including a pragmatic water usage target of 110 litres per person per day in the new Local Plan, and it is a critical stance that reflects a commitment to both environmental sustainability and the well-being of residents. While an aspiration to reduce water consumption is laudable, imposing an arbitrary and unrealistic limit of 85 litres per person per day could inadvertently compromise essential aspects of daily life. At 110 litres we strike a nuanced balance, one that promotes responsible water management without sacrificing hygiene standards and practical necessities inherent to modern living. Adequate water usage is indispensable for maintaining cleanliness, conducting daily activities, and safeguarding public health. Attempting to adhere to an overly stringent limit risks creating a situation where residents struggle to meet their basic needs, potentially leading to a compromised hygiene and overall dissatisfaction. Moreover, a more reasonable target facilitates widespread compliance and garnering the support of residents and stakeholders. This collaborative approach is crucial for the success of any sustainable initiative. By advocating for a realistically achievable goal we can ensure that our commitments thrive – sorry – we ensure that our communities thrive both environmentally and socially, fostering a sustainable future that prioritises not only water conservation, but also the essential needs and comfort of our residents. Thank you.

[2:54:22] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Manton. Yes, Cllr Roger Noel.

[2:54:32] **Cllr Roger Noel [Con, Bramber, Upper Beeding and Woodmancote]:** Thank you, Chairman. I, along with probably all the Cllrs here tonight, understand and agree the importance of getting a Local Plan made as soon as possible. Progressing to Regulation 19, and therefore protecting the future of our

District. I fully agree that the majority of the Plan is exactly what this District needs, particularly chapters five and six with regard to the future environmental health of our District. However, I can detect a slight whiff of desperation in the speed with which this Plan has been prepared, particularly chapter 10. Possibly, in order to prove the efficiency of this administration, and possibly to favour any future election hearing by the planning portfolio holder, the fact is the last Plan to be presented to the Conservative Group was rejected outright, and by a very large majority, for the simple reason that that has been an obvious lack of consultation throughout the neighbourhood and parish councils, as well as directly with our local communities. Consultation, I believe, is the fundamental principle on which we are all elected in order to represent our residents. This plan is all about our community and it is essential that our residents views are taken into consideration when we make our decisions tonight. I was therefore very pleased to hear that Cllr Milne proposed, back in the summer, to consult local communities with his parish and neighborhood council workshops. I attended my local workshop in Steyning to see how our officers would react to the enthusiastic local parishioners and their suggestions. To say I was extremely disappointed on how these consultations were run is an understatement. After a short speech by Cllr Milne, which described the many ways that nothing could be much changed due to the national government constraints, our officers proceeded to tell us what was going into the Plan and appeared impervious to suggestions of any changes. I hope it's not just me who has to reassess what the Lib Dem idea of local consultation actually means, but it's definitely not what I understand it to be. Now, I know there have been many tweaks to chapter 10 over the past couple of months, but the Lib Dem Manifesto at our recent election promised a thorough shakeup of relationships with our communities, and this plan has proved just how different the reality of these election promises have been, with a total lack of attention to detail. I will finish by citing a section of this Local Plan's chapter 10 that deals with a site in my ward, and which illustrates just how lax the attention to local detail has been. Over two years ago in the village of Small Dole, just south of Henfield, the residents suffered, at dawn, an arrival of two large mobile home units in New Hall Lane, which is a very secluded country lane in the village. With a local Gypsy family cutting down overhanging trees to access a field with these units, and which has now become one large established, single story house, totally without any planning permission. For over two years various appeals have played out between HDC and the occupants, culminating in a PIN's decision a few months ago ruling against any further appeals, with the result the family are obliged to move out within a set period and the building totally removed. Fair enough; and I congratulate our enforcement officers for all their hard work to achieve this. Reading through the Local Plan, I looked at page 149, or 182 in the most recent bundle, and blow me down I see a Gypsy and traveller site allocated the very land that has been twice refused by inspectors for any form of planning allocation. Surely, we need further explanation on this particular detail in the Plan, as well as many others that have been complained about tonight. This Local Plan has to be looked at again and the detail re-examined in order to satisfy the promises made by this administration and by our individual Cllrs, and then brought back to this council as soon as possible. We would also benefit from any changes to the NPPF due to be announced this week, as mentioned by my colleague Cllr Circus. And for this reason, and depending upon the rest of this debate, I do feel inclined to vote against this version of our Local Plan when it comes to the vote later on this evening. Thank you, Chairman.

[3:00:12] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Noel. And Cllr Landeryou.

[3:00:17] **Cllr Richard Landeryou [Con, Rudgwick]:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I was actually looking forward to this Plan being presented, because, as I understood it, west of Ifield was going to be dropped, Southwater's numbers were going to be restricted to the Neighbourhood Plan, lower numbers for Billingshurst, and houses numbers in the rest of the District in line with Neighbourhood Plans. Yet, that with what was promised last April/May this plan, therefore, is worse than the rejected Plan by Conservative Cllrs this time last year. Seems to me that paleface wearing yellow rosette speak with forked tongue. This Plan has been made in undue haste and could have been so much better. Officers have evaluated this site, as we've been told, of these sites at least four times since 2019, and should have made changes which, and could, have produced the same numbers without obvious controversy. Cllrs have not had a direct involvement with site selection; this has been done by the Cabinet Member

for Planning and Infrastructure, Cllr John Milne. And it is his Plan. And it's a bad one. We urgently need a Plan, as without one we are in danger of having speculative developments agreed. We're told that changing sites would have taken too long. I ask why? These sites apparently have all been evaluated four times before since 2019, so I don't see why it should take so much longer. We've not had a 5-year land supply for two years. This District has not been covered in concrete due to the breathing space allowed by water neutrality. To date, appeals have been turned down on water neutrality grounds, except for one Grampian Clause decision, which still does not guarantee that the development will go ahead. Developers are coming up with new schemes for water neutrality, however most of them are dubious and do not fill requirements. We can still use this breathing space to make a much better Plan. Water neutrality, I feel, the emerging policy is flawed and unenforceable; indeed there is no plan to enforce it. A test in Crawley with flow restrictors showed usage reduced to 160 litres per person per day. We've opted for 85 litres per person per day. Is this really practical for an average household? Private owners will still be free to replace flow restrictors if they are dissatisfied with them, and there is already evidence that this is being done. Infrastructure is of great concern. Infrastructure improvements not in our gift to make leave part of our policies merely aspirational wish lists. Laudable, but not enforceable. we cannot improve or build new roads; that's County. We cannot improve bus or train services; that's down to the operators. We cannot guarantee that schools will be built. For instance 10 years since the first house at Wickhurst Green, still no sign of the original planned school. Will Southwater get a school in the next 10 years? Is anybody going to guarantee that? We cannot insist on provision of new doctor surgeries. Why are we still using the West Sussex Highways parking matrix and not the one brought forward by Overview and Scrutiny last term? Numbers of cars on our roads are set to increase, like it or not; also the number of delivery vehicles. In a rural district a car is an essential mode of transport. We need to provide more off-road parking spaces to prevent development roads being blocked, prevent on-pavement parking, and allow emergency vehicles and refuse trucks unhindered access. Any condition we bring forward in our policies that are not in the NPPF can be challenged and may not be enforceable, so what we have is an aspirational wish list, not policy. Horsham has built the largest number of affordable houses in West Sussex, but never met the 25% target. Developers always watered down their commitment to building affordable; this is recognised in Policy 39. This needs to be more robustly resistive than in previous times if we're to get anywhere near this new target. I fully support policies on environment, housing mix, social/affordable housing policies, however it's up to the developers as to whether or not the targets and aspirations are met. Overall, I think that Cllr Milne's Plan is a bad Plan, produced in haste and I will not support it.

[3:05:11] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Landeryou. Cllr. Potts.

[3:05:16] **Cllr Josh Potts [Con, Henfield]:** Thank you, Chairman. Chairman, I will reiterate the concerns of many, if not all, of you in this room. There has been insufficient consultation. It is incumbent upon us to scrutinise the processes that shape our community's future. Unfortunately, the recent consultation on the Local Plan, and its resulting actions, has fallen short of the standards we deserve. Firstly, transparency is the bedrock of democratic decision making. A lack of comprehensive information and meaningful public involvement mars the credibility of the entire process. Our community deserves a transparent and inclusive dialogue that empowers residents to actively participate in decisions that impact their lives. Secondly, the rushed nature of this consultation has deprived our community of the time needed to understand and assess the proposed Plan thoroughly. Meaningful engagement requires adequate time for reflection and consultation, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and considered. Furthermore, the absence of genuine collaboration with the community raises questions about the legitimacy of the local plan. It is imperative that local residents, as the primary stakeholders, are not just informed, but actively involved in shaping the vision for our shared future. Evidence is rife throughout this document. I have left it to others to highlight deficiencies involving their Wards. I will highlight the inclusion of a minimum of 55 houses at land at Sandgate Nursery in my ward of Henfield as an example. The potential for allocating this site was considered thoroughly in the preparation of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan, but was rejected. this Plan passed referendum with more than 90% of voters supporting it. The site assessment for Sandgate Nursery showed that it would negatively affect heritage,

ecology, sustainability, and transport. In a public poll, this site was rated 29th out of 32 proposed sites in answer to the question “would you support the inclusion of this site in the Neighbourhood Plan?” Moreover, the inspector concluded at the recent appeal involving the nearby Sandy Lane that, and I quote, “development of the appeal site would run contrary to community aspirations as expressed through the Neighbourhood Plan to allow this appeal would significantly undermine public trust and confidence in the planning system. the community has engaged positively with the government's Neighbourhood Plan agenda by agreeing a quantum of development with the council, and through local consensus, identifying housing sites that would cause the least harm to planning interests. The proposal would drive a coach and horses through the community-led process,” end quote. Sandgate Nursery has a long planning history that consistently lays out reasons why this site is inappropriate. The community has also consistently put this site towards the bottom of the pile. The inclusion of this site in this document also drives the coach and horses through the community-led process. Where was the transparent consultation process on this? Was it a meeting with the parish representatives to ask their thoughts on numerous sites included in the SHLAA, a meeting which facilitated one-way conversations with minimal feedback and no indication whatsoever of site inclusion in the Plan? Surely, we cannot hide behind this exercise as proper democratic consultation and engagement. I will find it difficult to support a Local Plan forged through inadequate consultation. Let us stand united in our call for transparency, time for reflection, and genuine collaboration. Our District deserves a Plan that truly represents the aspirations and needs of its people. The council has to do better. Thank you, Chairman.

[3:09:27] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Potts. Yes, Cllr Fletcher.

[3:09:40] **Cllr Ruth Fletcher:** The Local Plan has been hanging over us since I was elected in 2019. During the first four years that I was in council, the lack of public consultation, as indeed for the HDPF that preceded it, was absolutely overwhelming and incredibly frustrating. Also, at times it felt like the Local Plan was being treated by the administration like an unexploded bomb that was being passed on to someone else as fast as possible, in case they ended up holding it at the vital moment. It was repeatedly pulled the previous administration found it totally unable to take the decisions that needed to be taken. As a result, we were left without an up-to-date plan and without a 5-year land supply, rapidly deteriorating towards becoming one of the worst in the country, and becoming increasingly beset by speculative developments that we've been unable to resist, building the wrong homes in the wrong places. So, I have been really proud to be part of a team who has approached this vital and difficult subject with positivity, and a recognition of the urgency of getting an up-to-date plan in place, before the rules change. And I'm not just talking about the forthcoming changes to the NPPF that might be out any day now. Our planners are very well aware of what those are likely to be; we've been consulted on them and they have been given good thought to how drafting this Plan can take account of any likely changes there. And talking about wider planning changes, if we do not go ahead with a Plan now, then we will not be able to make it under the existing rules. There really is no breathing space there. So, we are working within the constraint of a national planning system that is fundamentally quite broken. The standard method we all agree, I think, does not work for our District, but that is the system we are working within. Critically, as well, we are already up to the Regulation 18 stage of the plan-making process. Regulation 18 was developed under the previous administration; it's not a final Plan, but it was a Conservative Plan. It did have substantially more houses in it than this current Plan proposes. The sites are as they are; we can only choose from the sites that were put forward at that point. It is not possible to go back and start again. It would cost too much time and it would also cost an extraordinary amount of money. But, principally, it would take too much time whilst we're open to speculative development. So, within the constraints that we've been operating in, I am pleased that we have been able to make some real improvements to the Plan. I'm sure other members will talk about what's happened in their areas, but in my portfolio of local economy and place I would like to just mention that water neutrality has given us an opportunity to constrain the number of houses being built, but it has also, as a side effect, caused massive problems for the construction industry. It's stopped work on the houses that we need – the houses that people have actually agreed and want to have. And it has caused problems with staffing within the industry; it is causing businesses to go bust. It has forced other businesses in sectors

across our economy to put on hold their expansion funds, because of being unable to operate. The new affordable homes and the infrastructure that our local economy relies on in the absence of a plan have grounded to halt. So, in passing this Regulation 19 draft tonight, we will be making a huge step towards creating greater certainty and fairness for everybody within our local economy. As far as sustainable transports concerned, I'm delighted that this new policy will change the dial and streets must now be designed around people not vehicles. Active travel, primarily walking and cycling, reduces carbon emissions, it improves the local environment, and helps communities become healthier and more inclusive. This should become the natural first choice for short trips. The policy will also—

[3:15:03] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Fletcher, you exceeded your five—

[3:15:05] **Cllr Ruth Fletcher:** I'll just finish now. Seek to ensure sustainable forms of transport, including public transport are considered in the first instance. Thank you very much.

[3:15:17] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you. Cllr Brookes, you've been waiting patiently.

[3:15:24] **Cllr James Brookes [Lib Dem, Broadbridge Heath]:** Thank you, Chairman. And I would also like to thank all the members of the public who've come here tonight, to remind us of the gravity of the decision before us, and of course all those who are unable to come in person. The strength of public engagement with this process is abundantly clear and it is right that we assure members of the public that we've considered their concerns. I've little to add to the detailed responses made by some of the fellow Cllrs, and particularly Cllr Milne, except to emphasise that we've considered residents concerns not only for the larger sites allocated, but also for those that are comparatively smaller. One such smaller site – 133 houses on land at Lower Broadbridge Farm – will have a particularly significant impact on the residents of Broadbridge Heath. Speculative developments have been mentioned a number of times this evening. Horsham District Council refused a speculative application to develop the Lower Broadbridge Farm site, which was submitted in the absence of a Local Plan. This decision to refuse permission was appealed by the developer. A public inquiry was conducted in October, at which I was privileged to see the efforts taken by the residents in raising concerns, but also the care and expertise of planning officers in considering them, especially regarding this all important issue of water neutrality. The outcome of that appeal is now in the hands of the planning inspector. We await her decision and the very real possibility that water neutrality will, as has happened in another appeal, fail to offer a shield against speculative applications. Whether it happens at this appeal or at another, what is certain is that this danger will only grow and we must be clear about the consequences. Open season for speculative development. Planning by appeal without any effective means to make strategic choices for the future of this District. It cannot be argued that we have breathing space left. We're all touched, personally, by this plan in different ways, and I believe I am as deeply affected as any other person here present. The site at Lower Broadbridge Farm is a minute's walk from the house that I've called home for most of my life, since my family moved there in November 1991 when I was 5 years old. These are the fields where I played as a child. They're the fields which I studied for My GCSE geography coursework in 2001, when they were subject to a previous speculative planning application. Officers at the time were somewhat surprised to find a 15-year-old taking quite such interest in planting law and flood plains. These are the fields where I walked with my dying mother during lockdown, in the last days of her terminal illness. I know, as I believe every Cllr, officer, and member of the public here appreciates what it is to care deeply about the places where we are privileged to live and the profound sense of loss that can come with seeing those places change. Nevertheless, change comes and we cannot delay in responding to it. The chaos and dysfunction of the previous Conservative administration in failing to deliver a Local Plan cannot be allowed to persist. It is our duty to safeguard the future of our District, and this Local Plan, now, is the best means by which we can deliver that safeguard. This is not a decision to be taken lightly. I do not believe anyone here would take it lightly. But I am convinced that this is the best decision for the whole of the District. Which is why, perhaps with a heavy heart, but with a clear conscience, I intend to vote to approve this Plan and I would commend my fellow Cllrs to do the same.

[3:19:38] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Brookes. Cllr Olson.

[3:19:44] **Cllr Jon Olson:** Thank you, Chair. A few additions to my previously prepared comments; I believe we may have already heard some alternative facts tonight. Unless I have a different understanding of the origin theory, or this Regulation 19 document and all the sites within, I believe it originates in the Regulation 18 document brought forward by many of those now crying innocence. How many times would colleagues opposite like to look at a plan without an opportunity to vote on it, I ask. In fact I believe many of them will be delighted if this Plan is approved and that's what truly unites them tonight. Consultation is about discussing and listening; it's not about making false promises. I am very familiar with the Lib Dem Manifesto, one which helped reduce blue rosettes from 29 to 11 recently, and I believe all of the parts under our pledge of ending Tory planning chaos can stand today. That said, over the past seven months I have been proud to be part of a team that had set one of its highest objectives delivering a much-needed Local Plan for this District. I'm particularly proud this evening to see this Lib Dem administration delivering on what we said we would do, and that is this latest draft has been influenced by our fresh vision for Horsham District. This vision and this Local Plan does go beyond housing allocations. I'm delighted to see in this draft greater environmental standards and the higher target for biodiversity net gain, which aligns with our wider environmental ambitions and targets, and Manifesto. It is right that the latest draft includes more accurate description on the poor state of our natural waterways as well, and we should continue to push for those responsible to make improvements. And I also like seeing a stronger nod to our growing and successful local wine industry in this document. With reference to my portfolio for leisure, culture and green spaces, I'm further happy to see policies outlining continued protection for designated local green and open spaces, requirements for community facilities, including leisure activities and new developments, and assurances we remain an inclusive community that new developments should look to address the needs of all groups and members of our District. This means new facilities and infrastructure should be accessible to all, and all users should feel safe while using them. This will hopefully address our desire to see further investment in girls sport and improve access to sports for disadvantaged groups. I had wanted to acknowledge residents who have contacted us about the sport of hockey, but I have spoken on that matter earlier tonight on behalf of my colleague. However, I am also welcome to speak to them at any point should they wish to contact me. Finally, and more locally, on behalf of my fellow Ward members I would like to speak on the future development of land at Holmbrook Farm in my own Ward, wed between the current built-up boundary of Horsham town and the High Weals Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or soon to be National Landscape, including St Leonard's Forest. The development of this site in Forest Ward of roughly 100 homes was pretty much inevitable, as our community continues to grow and a need for more housing near Horsham town remains. However, I would like to particularly thank my colleague, Cllr Milne, for arranging the recent Local Plan workshops with parish and neighbourhood councils, which did provide an opportunity to listen and discuss. This collaboration resulted in welcome amendments to the policy for that site, and that any future development should include an extension to the Horsham Riverside Walk, much needed safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, thereby ensuring any new residents will be easily integrated into our local neighbourhood and not become an isolated enclave on the edge of town. As you can see, there was likely something for everyone to find in this Plan they'd wish to maybe exclude or improve, and I'm sure we'll hear more of those tonight. However, I firmly believe, under the circumstances, and particularly time pressures, this is the right plan for the right time; a plan which delivers on our administration's promise to end the planning anxiety and chaos plaguing our District's residents, and a Plan which provides the needed certainty for our community to plan for future growth. Thank you. [3:23:51]

Cllr David Skipp: Thank you, Cllr Olson. I'll take Cllr Lambert next.

[3:24:01] **Cllr Lynn Lambert [Con, Cowfold, Shermanbury and West Grinstead]:** Thank you, Chairman. Can I just clarify several things? First of all, this may be the Local Plan with the fewest number of houses in the first five years this century; this is purely down to water neutrality and the fact that it's a step trajectory: after that 5 years it goes up to nearly 900. Secondly, Regulation 18 happened two years before water neutrality, when there were very few constraints in this District. So, it is not the Lib Dems

that have got it to the lowest number this century, it is water neutrality. There could be lower water, the water usage figures of 85 litres per person per day facilitates more homes. Had it been a realistic building regulation number, there will be fewer homes still. Thank you.

[3:24:55] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Lambert. Cllr Trott.

[3:25:00] **Cllr Clive Trott [Lib Dem, Denne]:** Thank you, Chair. Housing and planning is the number one issue facing local authorities. It's a fact that very few people want development in their area, and 100% agreement is never possible. All political groups, local or national, make noises about needing more housing, some with laudable motivations and some not, some favouring developers and some potential tenants and owners, but always pressing their own agenda. At some point, an administration needs to have the courage to make a decision in order to prevent a free-for-all situation of speculative development, where applications are made, turned down, appealed – at great expense to the taxpayer – and built anyway. This administration has taken advantage of a window of opportunity. In respect for waiting for government announcements, hoping to be thrown a bone by central government, having the Housing Minister – the fifth in two years – give you something is a false hope. It is likely that the changes to NPPF will allow more housing, less easily controlled, not make for less housing. It is brave that this administration has taken the opportunity to make a more considerate Plan, complying with the restrictions imposed by central government and yet providing a level of certainty for the future which has, to date, sadly been lacking. Those of you who know me know that I wholly agree with decisive action and as such I will be supporting the Plan, and I would encourage my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

[3:26:59] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Trott. Cllr Landeryou.

[3:27:04] **Cllr Peter van der Borgh [Lib Dem, Southwater North]:** Thank you, Chairman. Good evening, members, officers, and members of the public. As Member for Southwater North, I'll be specifically speaking about the Ward this evening, predominantly. I campaigned in support of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan and also to get the Local Plan done. The revised Berkeley Homes proposal is a significant improvement on the one that was withdrawn earlier in the year, not least because it is 500 less homes. It also includes a sensible amount of affordable housing, a critically needed school, much needed infrastructure, and ample green space, including a green buffer along Two Mile Ash Road. As such, and given the very different time frames of the two Plans, I believe the revised proposal in the Local Plan respects the key elements of the Neighbourhood Plan raised by residents on doorsteps during the campaign. The proposal offers an opportunity for the District and Parish Councils to work together with a familiar, proven developer in a way that would enable assimilation and cohesion of the development, to preserve the village's community spirit, whilst delivering and upgrading much needed infrastructure. Under the Local Plan, Lintott Square will remain the village centre, as per residents' wishes. We find ourselves in an unenviable position, trapped between a rock and a hard place: on the one hand, pressure from government for more homes; on the other, understandable opposition from some residents to more homes. This is compounded by the risk of speculative development in the absence of a Local Plan and a 5-year land supply. I therefore believe that if we see this as an opportunity, grasp it, and work together, the position and layout of the Berkeley proposal should result in Southwater village being nicely rounded off over the next 20 or so years. I am therefore minded to support the proposed Local Plan, and should it be approved, I shall encourage the residents of Southwater to engage with us during the upcoming consultation period, and work constructively with us to identify and secure further improvements where possible. Thank you, Chairman.

[3:29:51] **Cllr David Skipp:** thank you, Cllr van der Borgh. Yes, Cllr Fisher.

[3:30:00] **Cllr Claudia Fisher:** Thank you, Chair. I'm going to abstain from political sniping, because I don't think it's helpful when, as a community, we need to work together. First, I'd like to thank the HDC officers and the Lib Dem administration for their hard work in pulling this draft Local Plan together,

especially for the emphasis on tackling climate change, promoting nature recovery, and building sustainably. And I appreciate the openness to accepting feedback and incorporating several elements of said feedback into the revised Plan. But, none of this allays my dismay at UK government imposed housing numbers. Yes, we have a housing shortage, with mandating housing numbers with such negative impacts on the impact on the environment and on current residents' quality of life, is concerning. There are ways of tackling the housing crisis without giving up large areas of green space to housing developments. I also recognise the need for a robust Local Plan in fending off speculative development, but I am uneasy about the Plan before us. My concerns, particularly, are lack of sufficient time for Members to be able to give 225 pages of Draft Plan scrutiny, eight days for feedback, ten days to scrutinise the revived Draft before requiring to say 'yes' or 'no' tonight. In my view, for something so important this is not long enough. So, I'd like to propose a delay in voting of ideally two months from now, or at least one month. One very small example, but important one, was the reduction in affordable residential care home allocations from 40% in the Draft circulated for comment, to 30% in the amended version, but not recorded in the table of key changes. And while this key change was explained by an officer when queried, it's a significant change that most Members are unlikely to have spotted. Every word of this Plan, if approved, will mandate the future of our District, yet every word cannot have been scrutinised sufficiently in the time we've had. I've also got concerns about the 85 litres per day figure, one which relies hugely on changing residents habits and which, as far as I can see, is theoretical. I'm much more comfortable using the 110 litres per day requirement, which is already proven in a practical setting. I have concerns, too, that Policy 26 Gatwick Airport Safeguarding at no point mentions HDC's stated opposition to the expansion of Gatwick. I understand this objection has no material impact on the policy, however it sits uneasily in a document which starts with a reference to the HDC's commitment to a climate and ecological emergency declaration. Please can words to that effect be included? And then, as a Storrington and Washington Member, I need to raise specific concerns about the development north of Melton Drive. This development will be over three fields, rather than one as in the 2013.2015 refuse;d dash withdrawn iterations, so it could still impact on the listed buildings in close proximity, namely West Wantley Farmhouse and East Wantley Farm, and would extend the built-up area of Storrington northwards, thereby eroding the green gap between Storrington and West Chiltington Common. I also question whether the Ravenscroft development – a site allocated for development in the local Neighbourhood Plan to deliver at least 35 homes, but allowed at appeal on the 6th of October by the planning inspector to deliver up to 78 homes – has been factored to the housing figures for Storrington, and to any assessment of impact on traffic to the A23, which cuts through Storrington – a road which Police Inspector Neil Durkin described as unfit for purpose at a briefing only last week. Storrington's community suffers real stresses in terms of well-being from the impact of traffic. I shared with Members today a wordcloud of answers to 'how does traffic in Storrington make you feel?' from Storrington residents at a public meeting last month. Taking the allocation to the north of Melton Drive, the overturn of the decision to refuse permission for 78 homes West of Ravenscroft into account, and The Rock Road development for 55 homes, this extra 203 dwellings, with a likely 400 roughly extra residents, will significantly increase congestion on Storrington roads, and add to the undoubted misery suffered daily by many residents, which is impacting mental health. I share, too, Cllr Grech's concerns, which she will voice soon, about walking distances, which are optimistic at best and misleading and worst, and Cllr Beard for consideration which would be coming as well, of the impact of the Local Plan, as it stands, on generations to come. I am listening to all arguments on all sides and I'm maintaining an open mind, however unless all or substantial degree of my concerns are radically addressed tonight, and I'm currently minded to vote against the Plan as it stands. Again, I'm calling for a delay in making a decision on this Plan, ideally of two months and a minimum of one, to allow sufficient scrutiny. Thank you.

[3:35:00] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Fisher. I've got, I understand Katherine, one of the officers, will respond.

[3:35:15] **Cllr Paul Clarke [Con, Pulborough, Coldwaltham and Amberley]:** on a point of order, Chairman, was there a proposal put to the floor or not?

[3:35:21] **Officer:** It would have to be seconded, so—

[3:35:22] **Cllr David Skipp:** I didn't pick up that, but you probably heard more than I did.

[3:35:27] **Cllr Claudia Fisher:** I'm happy to make a proposal, which is to delay the plan by two months at best, or one month minimum.

[3:35:36] **Officer:** Have you got a seconder?

[3:35:39] **Cllr David Skipp:** You'll need a seconder. You got a seconder? In that case, I'll take that as an amendment. The advice is to let the officer speak and then we will reflect on the amendment.

[3:36:38] **Officer:** Thank you. I would just draw your attention to Paragraph 6.5 in the Committee Report, which sets out the implications of what the government requirements are in terms of preparing the Local Plan, and the number of uncertainties that would arise with a considerable delay. As has been set out by a number of the councillors this evening, obviously at the current time we cannot demonstrate a five-year land supply, and at the moment this stands up three years, that will be reviewed with a new revision published in the New Year, and that is likely to fall. So, obviously that is a significant count against the council, where we have development where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Again, as has been set out, there are a number of applications coming forward where planning water neutrality can be demonstrated, and there is also an application earlier this year where a Grampian condition was considered an appropriate way forward in terms of granting that development. Again, as has been set out, there are a number of changes to the planning system that are coming forward, which will come through the new legislation, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, and that will effectively require new development to come forward, or new Plan to come forward, under planning system. So, any substantial delay to the plan process will lead to a requirement to plan using that system, and it is expected to have a significant loss—

[3:38:16] **Cllr:** Point of order, Mr Chairman. Could the officer be able to finish what she's saying without constant chuntering from the Conservative area? Thanks.

[3:38:23] **Officer:** Thank you. So the, yes, the— Yeah, so the new the new Levelling Up Act will obviously require a new Local Plan to be delivered under new legislation that will include a revised NPPF, and not only that, but there will be new Local Plan or new development management policies, which, where there is differentiation between the local and the national provisions, the national provisions will take a hold, so there will be less local impacts, or less local chance for community to have their say, compared with, you know, the conversations which have been going on this evening. I will leave it that, but I would just commend people to read Paragraphs 6.5 to 6.7 in particular.

[3:39:21] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Katherine. I have a proposal for an amendment, obviously quite a serious amendment, so I'm going to take it seriously, and I'm going to just explain the order of speaking. The proposer of the amendment will speak first, the seconder may speak whenever – at the end or now – other Members can speak, and the final speech of reply is by the mover of the original motion. And once that's been gone through, we will then have a vote. So, I will ask the proposer of the amendment whether she will wish to speak again, having spoken already, but you have that option.

[3:40:21] **Cllr Claudia Fisher:** Thank you, Chair, I'll be very brief. I do firmly believe that this Plan has been rushed through. I understand the reasons for it, and it's not intended as a criticism; however it is too important a set of decisions that will impact what is the most extraordinary area of the country in a negative way without, and I don't believe that Members have had the opportunity for sufficient scrutiny of this of this Plan. So, I would propose that it be, well, I'd say just get, to put balance on it, that it be delayed for a month to allow for further scrutiny. Thank you.

[3:41:10] **Cllr David Skipp**: Cllr Marks, you're seconder. Do you want to speak now?

[3:41:12] **Cllr Nicholas Marks [Green, Steyning and Ashurst]**: Yes, I'd like to add my support to Cllr Fisher's points there. I think further to scrutinise the detail and to also to have some kind of explanation of the discrepancies between the certain changes that have been made to the document without, for example, the example that you made about the percentage of care places. Certain inconsistency has been brought to light and explained fully, and we can then return to our residents we represent, say that we've done to the plan thoroughly and we're happy to support it. So, from position of strength, basically.

[3:42:00] **Cllr David Skipp**: Thank you. Other Members, obviously, are entitled to have a comment or make a comment, please. Cllr Frankland.

[3:42:13] **Cllr Anthony Frankland [Lib Dem, Trafalgar]**: Yes, just very briefly, and for the avoidance of doubt, Cllr Fisher, I feel that I have had time, plenty of time, to review this and I have spent some effort in trying to make sure I understand all the detail, and I would expect that most Members would have taken this seriously enough to do that in the last period of time that we've had. Thank you.

[3:42:34] **Cllr David Skipp**: Thank you. Cllr Circus.

[3:42:39] **Cllr Philip Circus**: I would support the motion that has been put forward, the amendment. For one thing, as I said when I spoke, it will give us an opportunity to see if any important considerations can be drawn from the the Minister's statement on the NPPF. But, secondly, the administration has had the opportunity tonight to have a sort of a consultation, in fact a very important consultation, because they've been able to listen to some very heartfelt comments by those in the public gallery, those who asked questions, those who made observations. They've also had the opportunity to consider some of the strength of concern that has been raised, and not necessarily on a party basis, about some of the sites, particularly some of the smaller sites, that are in the Draft Plan. It therefore gives the administration not only a chance to wait and see what the government have to say, which could be crucial, but also to reflect on the important comments that have been made this evening uh by the public and by Cllrs about the issues raised by the Draft Plan. Thank you, Chairman.

[3:44:09] **Cllr David Skipp**: thank you, Cllr Circus. Cllr Bevis.

[3:44:19] **Cllr Tony Bevis [Lib Dem, Roffey North]**: Thank you, Chairman. There's been quite a lot of criticism tonight about things being rushed. Well, I think we're being rushed very badly at the moment. My watch says it's the 11th of December; one month's time includes Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, various other festivals. If people want to consider this thing then a month isn't going to work for them. I think we should just get on, we've had the papers in front of us for long enough now and I think we should just take this thing through and get to the point where we can vote for it. But can I also, while I've got the microphone, ask that we have a recorded vote for this amendment. Thank you.

[3:45:08] [Audio lost]

[3:45:38] **Cllr ?**: Thank you, Chair. I will be speaking specifically around the Southwater Strategic Site as— Apologies, sorry.

[3:45:49] **Cllr David Skipp**: I was just going to say I think you want to talk about the amendment. Cllr Minto.

[3:45:55] **Cllr Colin Minto [Lib Dem, Forest]**: Thank you, Chair. I unfortunately can't support the motion; this has been dragging on for so long, the public need, the opportunity for closure on this one, as is the District, so I wouldn't be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

[3:46:07] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you.

[3:46:11] [Audio lost]

[3:46:16] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Clarke.

[3:46:18] **Cllr Paul Clarke:** I just wonder, Chairman, if the officers, having clarified the position as they see it about a delay, can explain why on one hand perhaps advice has been given for Neighbourhood Plans to wait to see what comes out with the new NPPF, but we're not waiting to see what comes out in the new NPPF for this Plan. I'm a bit confused.

[3:46:42] **Cllr David Skipp:** I'm happy for the officer to check that .

[3:46:46] [Audio lost]

[3:47:10] **Cllr Paul Clarke:** If I can just clarify, Chairman, it's in relationship to the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

[3:47:16] [Audio lost]

[3:47:26] **Officer:** I think the issue here is that the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, they obviously have a made Neighbourhood Plan that is operational, it forms part of the development plan. They are talking about whether to do a review or not; that would have to be in conformity with the adopted Local Plan. We have an adopted Local Plan which is the Horsham District Planning Framework, therefore the situation that they have at the moment is there. What is there to change, in that sense, if they're looking at making a change then clearly then the NPPF is a consideration in that context, along with a decision-making that would happen tonight. What the decision-making tonight is about is what is the new Local Plan for the District. That is not the same with a Neighbourhood Plan. Not only that, but it would also set the framework for Neighbourhood Plan reviews going forward, therefore it is a different context in terms of the question.

[3:48:24] **Cllr David Skipp:** Is that okay?

[3:48:28] **Cllr Paul Clarke:** Thank you.

[3:48:29] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Boffey.

[3:48:31] **Cllr Martin Boffey:** Thank you very much, Chairman. Cllr Fisher started out her statement by saying that 'I'm not going to get involved in political, party political sniping tonight.' She may not have got involved in party political sniping, but she can certainly scent an opportunity. And to be honest with you, I think that's where this comes from. I'm not a religious person, so I don't really sort of like saying phrases like this, but it feels a little bit like holier than thou opportunity, really. We've been consulting on the Local Plan since what? January/February 2020? Yeah, but— Yeah, but the consultation, the Reg 18, was in early 2020 I seem to remember. As far as I recall, we didn't, although the consultation period ended, we didn't stop taking consultation responses, or taking them into account. I'll give the previous administration a share of credit in this, consultation is carried on throughout. There's been more than one revised draft of this to go for people to look at. It's been available the whole time through. There's been an earlier draft of this Local Plan, I believe shared with members of the public for them to see. They've had opportunities to come speak with officers, with Cabinet Members; they just haven't done their homework. Sorry, but most Members who take this seriously have done their own homework, they're ready to move forward on this Plan, whether they – or making a decision, at least, on this Plan – whether they're in favour of it or whether they're not. I mean, as for the support coming from Cllr Circus, I mean, 'oh, let's have a delay, let's have another delay.' I appreciate, you know, 'let's stick with what's been working so well for us for the last four years, just delay, just push it off.' I don't know

whether they noticed quite so how many less of them there are around as a result of this constant delay and not being willing to actually take the difficult decisions and move forward, you know. I'm not prepared to continue to play Russian roulette with speculative development in this District any longer than I have to. The Plan is there, it's been consulted on, it's been available for people to look at if they've been prepared to take the time to actually do so. The evidence base is there. It's time to actually make a decision. Thank you.

[3:51:13] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thanks. Thank you, Cllr Boffey. Cllr Mike Croker.

[3:51:17] **Cllr Mike Croker [Green, Bramber, Upper Beeding and Woodmancote]:** Thank you, Chair. I'd just like to briefly respond to Cllr Boffey and reassure him that Cllr Fletcher's concerns are genuine, they're not political, they're not opportunistic— Sorry. I thank Members for the correction. Cllr Fisher's motivations just reflect some of the discussions we've had within the Green group and I'll leave it there. Thank you.

[3:51:49] [Audio lost]

[3:51:58] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Walters. Okay. In that case, as you are the mover of the original motion, Cllr—

[3:52:11] [Audio lost]

[3:52:19] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Manton, I wouldn't want to leave you out.

[3:52:23] **Cllr Alan Manton:** Well, thank you so much, Chairman. I feel, and forgive me, that I probably need longer to read and understand these things, because I have a special need; it's not, I have a special need. I see, at the moment I believe that this is being rushed purely for political gain. I would like to be non-partisan with Cllr Fisher, and feel that an additional month to consider this carefully and fully is not unreasonable, and I will be supporting her in the motion. Thank you.

[3:53:10] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much. Oh, yes. Cllr—

[3:53:19] [Inaudible]

[3:53:21] **Unknown Cllr:** —this, but the spirit of Vicky Pollard is strong with us tonight, with the flip-flopping of the 'yeah but, no but, yeah but, no but' on our decision-making. I think the time is right to move forward, make a decision. The time is right and we have to make that decision today. So, I'm minded not to support this amendment in this proposal. Thank you.

[3:53:43] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you. I don't think there's anybody else. Yeah, well, Cllr Milne has the right to reply, so just leave it and I'll sort it.

[3:54:01] **Cllr John Milne:** [Inaudible]

[3:54:03] **Officer:** You do.

[3:54:04] **Cllr David Skipp:** You do, so just make your right to reply.

[3:54:08] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you, Chairman. I stand corrected on procedure as ever. Cllr Fisher, I'd be more sympathetic – well, I am more sympathetic to your position – and I really wish there was more time to consult, and we had other things planned if we if we'd had longer. But, the system is what it is and we have to we have to work at pace. I would say that you got the document, as all Cllrs did, absolutely as soon as it was ready, i.e. finished by officers. That was as fast as it could go. And you got it sooner, for instance at an earlier stage of the process, than was the practice in the last council. You will also know that I held some sessions with you, the Green group, and also with the Conservative group

about at an earlier stage in the process, before the plan was written. So, for example in the case of the Conservatives I said to them, 'okay, our starting point is the January Plan,' which of course they're very familiar with, 'what would you change about it if you could?' That was the question I asked them, because it was their Plan; I didn't ask that of you, because it wasn't your Plan. And they didn't say very much and virtually nothing of what has been said tonight has been said to me over the last several months, so any of those changes, if they wanted them – if they actually wanted them to be included – that was the time to tell me, when there was time for them to be included. As they well know, there is no time tonight, it cannot be done without crashing the Plan. So, that's very disappointing and, but we engaged with the Green group and you made a number of comments, and we we've incorporated them. To delay the Plan now is, if you change anything substantial you pretty much force, you know, there's so many ways in which you're likely to force it to six months, because everything is supported by an evidence base – it has to be redone. For instance, change a site you need to redo the transport plan; you're talking months. It is very difficult to change anything that's worth changing that does not lead to a delay of many months and open up all the risks. So, for our residents I very, very strongly believe that you're basically, you're gambling £1,000 in the hope of winning a fiver. The chances of improving things are small; the chances of losing a very great deal are enormous. But, it's up to you. Thank you.

[3:56:37] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Milne. Now, we've taken— You heard the discussion concerning the amendment and I want to make this very clear. I'm going to take a vote. We've been asked for a recorded vote and I would like a proposer and a seconder for that. Cllr Walters. This is on the amendment, okay? This is on the amendment. The amendment, as I understand it, is to postpone the decision on this plan for a month. That right? Okay. That is the amendment that is before you. So, be very clear if you're going to vote for the amendment then when you're asked for your vote please say 'for', if you are against the amendment then please say 'against'. So, that's the amendment: to postpone for one month, or delay for one month. If you are in favour of that amendment: 'for'. If you are against that amendment: 'against'. And we will take the names as is, as directed by our officers. Can you stand and really shout.

[3:58:05] **Officer:** Cllr Sam Bateman.

[3:58:09] **Cllr Sam Bateman [Lib Dem, Billingshurst]:** Against.

[3:58:10] **Officer:** Cllr Emma Beard.

[3:58:13] **Cllr Emma Beard [Green, Storrington and Washington]:** Abstain.

[3:58:14] **Officer:** Cllr Tony Bevis.

[3:58:16] **Cllr Tony Bevis:** Against.

[3:58:16] **Officer:** Cllr Colette Blackburn.

[3:58:19] **Cllr Colette Blackburn [Lib Dem, Southwater South and Shipley]:** Against.

[3:58:21] **Officer:** Cllr Martin Boffey.

[3:58:23] **Cllr Martin Boffey:** Against.

[3:58:24] **Officer:** Cllr Peter van der Borgh.

[3:58:27] **Cllr Peter van der Borgh:** Against.

[3:58:28] **Officer:** Cllr James Brookes.

[3:58:30] **Cllr James Brookes:** Against.

[3:58:32] **Officer:** Cllr John Campbell.

[3:58:33] **Cllr Jon Campbell [Green, Pulborough, Coldwaltham and Amberley]:** Against.

[3:58:35] **Officer:** Cllr Philip Circus.

[3:58:36] **Cllr Philip Circus:** For.

[3:58:37] **Officer:** Cllr Paul Clarke.

[3:58:39] **Cllr Paul Clarke:** Abstain.

[3:58:41] **Officer:** Cllr Mike Croker.

[3:58:43] **Cllr Mike Croker:** Against.

[3:58:45] **Officer:** Cllr Joy Dennis.

[3:48:57] **Cllr Joy Dennis [Con, West Chiltington, Thakeham and Ashington]:** Abstain.

[3:58:48] **Officer:** Cllr Len Ellis-Brown.

[3:58:51] **Cllr Len Ellis-Brown [Green, Pulborough, Coldwaltham and Amberley]:** Against.

[3:58:53] **Officer:** Cllr Nigel Emery.

[3:58:55] **Cllr Nigel Emery [Lib Dem, Holbrook West]:** Against.

[3:58:56] **Officer:** Cllr Victoria Finnegan.

[3:58:58] **Cllr Victoria Finnegan [Green, Steyning and Ashurst]:** Abstain.

[3:59:02] **Officer:** Cllr Claudia Fisher. Cllr Ruth Fletcher.

[3:59:07] **Cllr Ruth Fletcher:** Against.

[3:59:09] **Officer:** Cllr Chris Franke.

[3:59:11] **Cllr Chris Franke [Lib Dem, Holbrook West]:** Against.

[3:59:13] **Officer:** Cllr Anthony Frankland.

[3:59:15] **Cllr Anthony Frankland:** Against.

[3:59:16] **Officer:** Cllr Nick Grant.

[3:59:18] **Cllr Nick Grant [Lib Dem, Holbrook East]:** Against.

[3:59:20] **Officer:** Cllr Joan Grech.

[3:59:22] **Cllr Joan Grech [Green, Storrington and Washington]:** Abstain.

[3:59:24] **Officer:** Cllr Kasia Greenwood.

[3:59:26] **Cllr Kasia Greenwood [Lib Dem, Itchingfield, Slinfold and Warnham]:** Against.

[3:59:28] **Officer:** Cllr Warwick Hellawell.

[3:59:30] **Cllr Warwick Hellawell [Lib Dem, Holbrook East]:** Against.

[3:59:31] **Officer:** Cllr Alexander Jeffery.

[3:59:33] **Cllr Alexander Jeffery [Lib Dem, Southwater South and Shipley]:** Against.

[3:59:35] **Officer:** Cllr Liz Kitchen. Was that against? Thank you. Cllr Joanne Knowles.

[3:59:43] **Cllr Joanne Knowles [Lib Dem, Cowfold, Shermanbury and West Grinstead]:** Against. [3:59:45] **Officer:** Cllr Lynn Lambert.

[3:59:46] **Cllr Lynn Lambert [Con, Cowfold, Shermanbury and West Grinstead]:** Against.

[3:59:47] **Officer:** Cllr Richard Landeryou.

[3:59:49] **Cllr Richard Landeryou:** Abstain.

[3:59:51] **Officer:** Cllr councilor Dennis Livingstone.

[3:59:53] **Cllr Dennis Livingstone [Lib Dem, Nuthurst and Lower Beeding]:** Against.

[3:59:55] **Officer:** Cllr Alan Manton. Cllr Nicholas Marks.

[4:00:00] **Cllr Nicholas Marks [Green, Steyning and Ashurst]:** For.

[4:00:03] **Officer:** Cllr Jay Mercer. Cllr John Milne.

[4:00:08] **Cllr John Milne:** Against.

[4:00:09] **Officer:** Cllr Colin Minto.

[4:00:11] **Cllr Colin Minto:** Against.

[4:00:12] **Officer:** Cllr Roger Noel. Cllr Jon Olson.

[4:00:17] **Cllr Jon Olson:** Against.

[4:00:18] **Officer:** Cllr Josh Potts.

[4:00:20] **Cllr Josh Potts [Con, Henfield]:** For.

[4:00:22] **Officer:** Cllr Sam Raby.

[4:00:24] **Cllr Sam Raby:** Against.

[4:00:25] **Officer:** Cllr David Skipp.

[4:00:27] **Cllr David Skipp:** Against.

[4:00:29] **Officer:** Cllr councilor John Trollope.

[4:00:30] **Cllr John Trollope [Lib Dem, Billingshurst]:** Against.

[4:00:32] **Officer:** Cllr Clive Trott.

[4:00:33] **Cllr Clive Trott:** Against.

[4:00:35] **Officer:** Cllr Belinda Walters.

[4:00:37] **Cllr Belinda Walters [Lib Dem, Roffey North]:** Against.

[4:00:38] **Officer:** Cllr Mike Wood.

[4:00:39] **Cllr Mike Wood [Lib Dem, Southwater North]:** Against.

[4:00:41] **Officer:** Thank you. [Pause for counting votes] Thank you, Cllrs. The result of that vote was: six for, 31 against, and six abstentions.

[4:01:52] **Cllr David Skipp:** The result of the vote, the amendment has been defeated. The numbers being for the amendment: six; against: 31; abstentions: six. As we have now dealt with the amendment the debate concerning the motion that was originally put will continue, and I'm sure that actually Cllr Jeffery would like to say something at this time.

[4:02:28] **Cllr Alexander Jeffery:** Well, at least I've got the correct motion now, so there's one thing to go in my favour tonight. Thank you very much, Chair. I will be speaking in my capacity as one of the Ward Members for Southwater South and Shipley on the proposed strategic site at Southwater. During the election back in May, I campaigned on respecting the Neighbourhood Plan; something which I'm confident this Local Plan achieves. The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan runs until 2031, with scope for 450 dwellings, and the provision of a secondary school. Currently, our target as a District is 480 per annum, the lowest target this century. Over the course of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, which runs until 2031, the numbers in the Neighbourhood Plan will be respected. The Local Plan runs for an additional nine years, until 2040, which needs to be planned for in the updated Local Plan. In May, residents across the District voted for change. And in Southwater the need for change was more apparent than ever. I acknowledge the concerns that some residents have raised with this Local Plan; Southwater has already taken on much development over previous years. However, without a Local Plan in place we run the very real risk of not being able to capitalise on this historically low annual target, running the risk of reintroducing our targets of 1,200 dwellings per annum, which would not allow the time required for local infrastructure and amenities to catch up with development. Due to our lower targets, this development will be carried out over a period of 20 years, ensuring that vital local amenities and infrastructure can be incorporated that have been long overdue, and to the local community, whilst also ensuring a build-out rate across the Plan period that does not overwhelm the village. I have personally spoken to families concerned about secondary school places for their children. The Local Plan respects the Neighbourhood Plan in providing a solution to the appeals process, with the anguish that has caused families in Southwater since 2019. I do acknowledge the concerns that some residents have with further development in Southwater. Residents voted for change and we must not take this opportunity to deliver that change for granted. We campaigned on passing a Local Plan and ending the uncertainty that Southwater, and the wider District, has experienced over the last five years. I strongly believe that the Plan in front of us is the best way of delivering that certainty that Southwater needs, while also addressing some of the infrastructure and local amenities that Southwater has been requiring and lacking for many years. The concern remains, however, that without an up-to-date Local Plan in place, we leave our District at the mercy of speculative development, with Horsham Golf and Fitness being a prime example of a speculative application the residents of Southwater are rightly concerned about. Without a Local Plan in place this leaves the District vulnerable to further speculative applications. The outcome for Southwater residents would result in this speculative proposal queue jumping the entirety of Southwater for secondary school places at Tanbridge, keeping further pressure on the lottery for school places already at breaking point. The truth of the matter is that without an updated Local Plan in place, we will end up with increased development without any of the control. This is something that must be remedied. If Council votes take advantage of the opportunity to deliver clarity and certainty for our residents tonight, I look forward to engaging with both Southwater Parish Council and the residents to work constructively to ensure the best deal for all. Having reviewed the Plan in great detail, I believe that the Local Plan will provide protection against speculative development in and around Southwater for a generation. With all this in mind, I am minded to support the publication of the Regulation 19 tonight. Thank you, Chair.

[4:06:20] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Jeffery. I'm actually going to call a break now. I know you wanted to speak, so I allowed you to speak, but I think actually it would be sensible to have a break, just stretch your legs and I've noticed people disappearing off to the bathroom, so let's break for five minutes.

[Recording Stops 4:06:38 – 4:20:23]

[4:20:23] **Cllr David Skipp:** Good. Thank you very much. So, we'll resume the debate concerning the Regulation 19. Do I have anyone to speak? Cllr Minto.

[4:20:41] **Cllr Colin Minto:** Thank you, Chair. And first of all thanks to Cllr Olson for speaking on my behalf for the Forest Ward. In addition, I'd like to thank the residents for their attendance today and the passion demonstrated during their questioning. I am a resident, too, so I naturally sympathise with the concerns and aspirations of all. I wanted to specifically support something that Cllr Fletcher mentioned earlier in the debate about her pride of being part of a group of officers and members, and their courage and conviction for making the tough decisions that were required for the District, including all of its residents, to seize control away from the developers. I say this, because I've thought long and hard throughout this journey, and it is my belief that no Plan means all the sites in it could still be built on, arguably without the strength of conditions that can be imposed if the Plan is in place, along with many more. Therefore, is imperative in my mind that we give the District and its residents the security it and they need, rather than put them and it at considerable risk, and to not lose a substantial opportunity. And also, Chair, may I finally request that we have a recorded vote for the main recommendation of what we're holding.

[4:21:56] **Cllr David Skipp:** You certainly can request that, you need a seconder. I'll choose whoever it is. Yes, Clive – Cllr Trott. Okay. So, I note that for the for the —

[4:22:10] **Cllr Clive Trott:** Appreciate that, Chair, thank you.

[4:22:12] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Kitchen, did I see your—?

[4:22:16] **Cllr Liz Kitchen [Con, Colgate and Rusper]:** Yes, Chairman, you did, thank you very much. First of all, I want to say the reason I didn't vote for the amendment, which part of me wanted to, was that I don't believe that it would have got us any further by delaying the Plan this evening, and we'd probably all be back here again in three or four months time saying exactly the same thing for exactly the same length of time, so I didn't do that. But, those of you who know me know that I will not be supporting this Plan as it is, and it's really the housing section I don't support. I can support the majority of the rest of it, but to my way of thinking since I voted against it last time, there have only been a few tweaks in it and there hasn't been a lot there. I think I simply can't support this Plan and I'm going to concentrate on west of Ifield, because a lot has been said elsewhere, and I would also like to endorse – I won't copy it again – the comments made by my colleague here about the impact of Gatwick Airport and what that will have on the area. The west of Ifield site, if approved, will mean endorsement at the next stage, which will amount to 10,000 houses. Now, I shall be long dead by then, but you know there it does have an impact because we will be endorsing that land. But to do it with 3,000 houses, which I still believe is unacceptable, will bring no benefits to the local people at all. It will only bring a relief road that will go from nowhere to nowhere. All the local roads are completely blocked up already, and Kilnwood Vale and north of Horsham are far from being built out yet, so we've still got that extra traffic to come and clog up not only the country lanes, but the lanes around surrounding areas, such as Charlwood, will be badly affected by this. I've commented on the Gatwick Airport plan. The new Plan gives absolutely no serious open space; it only gives small sites that are dotted around the place. We know about this and how important recreation is, and I think that is a mistake. But I think most importantly of all the things I want to say is the historic landscape. It's a home for many species of wildlife, including a colony of Bechstein bats and actually many, many other wildlife. It's also a sanctuary and a way through; don't forget it's surrounded by Crawley, the large majority of this site. There'd be a loss of 3,000 acres of ancient woodland and it slightly interested me that the other night at DM North, we spent over an hour discussing whether to take one tree down, and tonight we're apparently talking about taking many, many trees down and destroying hedgerows and everything. So, that in itself – and there are many, many more areas that could be. The argument for losing the golf course is not proven; it is very well used, it has over 600 members, and I think the consultation that was sent around from Homes England was, frankly, disingenuous and I just don't agree that there are more golf courses around than there should be. But the Ifield golf course is – it's an old golf course, it's been there for over 100 years, it has

over 600 members, and it has a very good social life as well. So, I think to lose that would be, well, it would be a very – take away an awful lot of recreation from a lot of people, because not only do the golfers use it, a lot of other people walk all over it as well, and I say that now as an ex-golfer, so I'm not putting in a for the golf course. To permit this development will create a vast sprawl with Kilnwood Vale, north of Horsham, which would take away from the historic parish of Rusper, it would destroy Faygate village, and it would basically, well, it has overtaken already Colgate village in the number of people living there. So, for the Cabinet Member to make the point that we were not having a Crawsham, if we're not having a Crawsham what are we having in this enormous urban sprawl that will go into Crawley and all around, right up to the Surrey borders? And so for that, and everything else, I don't seriously think that enough has been made of the traffic. The traffic is appalling already, it's an absolute – a in rush hour in the mornings and evenings you can't move in the villages, any of the three I've mentioned. And I just think on that particular area it's a bad Plan, and this will be examined, I know, by the inspector if this Plan goes through tonight. Thank you, Chairman. That's all I've got to say, although here's masses more I could say.

[4:28:03] **Cllr David Skipp:** I'm sure. Thank you very much, Cllr Kitchen. Cllr Wood.

[4:28:09] **Cllr Mike Wood:** Thank you, Chairman. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, Cllrs, colleagues, members of the community. I'll try and keep it brief tonight. First of all, I'd like to thank Cllr Brookes for his heartfelt and honest words earlier; they struck a chord with me. Thank you, very much. Tonight, we have a decision that will shape the future of Horsham District, Southwater North in particular, for the proposed development plan. In making this decision, I have listened to the concerns and views of some of the residents, and the decision I make tonight – we make tonight – is informed by the stories and aspirations I've heard during conversations I've had on doorstep visits, and the profound impact this decision will have on our children and future generations to come. In one way or another, everyone in this room loves and cares for where we live. So deeply, in fact, that we are all here tonight for the same reason. I want to acknowledge community groups, such as Save Rural Southwater, Southwater Youth Project and the Horsham Hawks for the heart they have shown in making sure that I have taken into consideration every point of view, which I have done so in weighing up my decisions. The inclusion of the school in the Local Plan is very important to me, and many others and many of the residents. And the decision I make tonight will be, in part, informed by the stories I've heard on the doorsteps when I've spoken to the residents. I've, not going to mention the names, one resident has to pay £16.50 a week for his 14-year-old daughter to catch a bus to The Weald, which over the course of five years works out with more than £3,000. This is for his daughter's secondary school education. Another resident on Worthing Road, who I visited on Saturday, told me about his son who attends Bohunt: he can get a bus in the morning at 7:20, but if he misses it – and let's face it, 15-year-old boys aren't necessarily known for getting up early and wanting to run to school – the resident will have will drive him to school, or his wife will drive him to school. This has become the norm and this is what they do now. He also said the return journey is worse, and there is a bus, but he's never made it and he has to walk from Bohunt to Tesco to get to the bus home, unless he gets picked up. Perhaps the most inspiring person I recently spoke to was an 18-year-old. He signed up to join the Army, he's just waiting for the physical and he's hoping to start next year. He went to Tanbridge and he studied at Collyer's, and he told me he would have loved to have gone to school in Southwater had it been an option. He didn't mind going the bus, and that was fine, but he would have chosen to go to Southwater over getting the bus. When I asked him about the wider plan and showed him a few things, he said 'it's a future generations really, and really isn't it? And having a Plan is better than not having a Plan.' Wisdom and youth, in my opinion. These three accounts sum up real world requirements for the secondary school in southwater, and there were so many more people with so many more stories like this. Inclusion of the school and many other beneficial reasons are why I'm minded to vote for this motion. Thank you, Chair.

[4:31:14] **Cllr David Skipp:** Cllr Franke.

[4:31:17] **Cllr Chris Franke:** Thank you, Chairman. I'd like to echo other Cllr's thanks to the officers for putting together this Plan, and the residents who attend this evening and have shared their communities' views. We clearly face a difficult challenge to meet government targets, to meet local need, and to satisfy local sensitivities. But I think this Plan as is presented makes the very best of what is not an ideal situation. We have a responsibility to do the very best for our community, after failed attempts of previous administrations to bring this to bear. The proposals in this Local Plan appear to me to be both practical and sensitive and effective in meeting the challenges that we've been left. It is not in any sense ideal, but it is certainly an improvement. It's certainly a way forward. It mitigates some of the issues and problems that have been faced and it brings about concrete benefits, as has just been mentioned by Cllr Wood, to both the community and the environment in terms of what the planning committees have been able to make to add to it. I'm speaking as a Holbrook Cllr and I'm speaking on behalf of the other Holbrook Cllrs at the moment. I'm well aware that most of the building proposed falls outside of my area, however areas such as the Mowbray development, Mercer Road and Novartis will certainly bring its own challenges to Holbrook, not the least of which is the increased population around the area and the impact this will have. I certainly hope, we certainly hope, that in the near future transport links will be enhanced and improved, as indeed by mentioned by Cllr Kitchen just previously. The Holbrook Cllrs note, for example, the original plans of the Mowbray developments include a new train station. It's clear that Littlehampton station is at capacity and a new railway station will ease congestion and provide transportation to and from the new areas of employment and development in the North Horsham area, and we hope that happens. I have to say that I'm impressed with the wide provision in the Plan for local secondary schools, and I feel it really gives a resolution to the issues of a lack of school places in our area. I feel that this is finally a solution to the issues of our local young people having to be sent to Crawley, Steyning and Burgess Hill for schooling. If these proposals go through, we will have adequate – in fact more than adequate – school places for all our children of secondary age. I feel this needs to be celebrated in this Plan. Another element that impresses me about this, about the revisions to this Plan, are the scaling back of the numbers of houses. There's a significant reduction to the Plan on the numbers that were in previous Plans, and I think this has to be recognised as a huge positive. Whether or not it comes through water neutrality or just great planning by the officers, we have to take this opportunity. We know we can't keep on building – that's obvious – and the reasons in this Local Plan clearly reduce the amounts of building will take place. It reduces the loss of biodiversity, however it still meets the need for housing of all sorts of different types of housing in Horsham and around; these are promises that we made as Liberal Democrats in our Manifesto. There is absolutely not a perfect Local Plan, but the provisions have been able to be made provide a wider range of housing for different sorts of people within our community. It seems to protect by diversity, enhance leisure services, and also educational provision, and as such I'm minded to say that this Local Plan proposal is one that I feel I can support. It is a compromise, but it brings enhanced benefits to our community – a community which we all love, which we all want to improve and prosper for generations in the future.

[4:34:52] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Franke. Cllr Beard.

[4:35:03] **Cllr Emma Beard:** Thank you, Chairman. Yeah, such deep gratitude for the amount of work and understanding that has gone into this, and for the ears and the voices of the public, so thank you. I'm just keen to return to the words that I spoke at Council back on the 20th of July, when I talked about seven-generational thinking. This Plan must be put forward with this thinking, having them deeply embedded in all the policies. We must make sure that the policies are watertight to protect us humans and the more than human world for years to come. We need to stand up and know for sure that the impacts of this Plan will encourage all beings to thrive. The UK is in the top 10 of the most nature depleted countries. Are we doing all that we can to work and change this? So, building a better future for our grandchildren's children and beyond, so that all can grow and thrive and flourish here, within our District and beyond. Thank you.

[4:36:01] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much. Cllr Grech.

[4:36:08] **Cllr Joan Grech:** Thank you, Chairman. As my colleague, Cllr Fisher, said earlier, much earlier, I've got something to say about the land north of Melton Drive in Storrington. I have some concerns about the north of Melton Drive allocated site in Storrington, but I would specifically like to focus on the site in respect of Strategy Policy 24 Sustainable Transport and the impact the development of the site will have on road safety, and I'm concerned that this may apply to other allocated sites in the Plan. I live in the vicinity of the land north of Melton Drive site, so I'm very familiar with the area. There are three main walking routes from the site to the village centre. The safe route is via residential and other roads with footways; route takes about 22 to 25 minutes to walk from the site to Waitrose, which is the supermarket in the village. In order to get to the doctor's surgery it probably take you about 30 minutes to walk, because the surgery is at the other end of the village. The walk back could take a little longer, because a significant amount of the walk is actually uphill. I know, I've done it. The two other routes are quicker, but one is dangerous, as it includes around 200m of walking along a fairly narrow road without footway. That's, people know the the place, it's Fryern Road as it comes into the village. It is dangerous. And the other involves using a footpath which is unlit, gets muddy in parts during wet weather, can be overgrown, and is uneven. There are bus stops on Fryern Road, but one service is Tuesday only, and only has three buses either way, and the other one is an hourly service that runs from the morning to mid-evening. On that basis, many of the residents of the proposed sites are likely to opt for using their cars even for the relatively short journey into the village centre. So, I question the sustainable transport side of this. On the road safety side, the speed limit on Fryern Road is 30 mph until the Melton Drive junction ,where it changes to the national speed limit outside of the built-up area, i.e. 60 mph. Due to the blind summit when you're looking north up Fryern Road from the Melton Drive junction, visibility is restricted. The risk this causes to road users being compounded by the speed of the approaching vehicles. So, you're at a junction, you can't see, and they're coming down at you at 60 mph. The additional vehicle movements associated with the proposed development would, could increase this risk further. While I appreciate that the speed limit could be lowered, and it would be a good idea in any case, considering that the development would extend the built-up area northward, the issue of the blind summit and the additional vehicles will still remain. Thank you.

[4:39:20] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much. Cllr Blackburn.

[Audio lost 4:39:23 – 4:39:45]

[4:39:45] **Cllr Colette Blackburn:** Good evening. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman. Hopefully everybody has read chapters five and six of this Local Plan, which have taken strides forward in terms of climate action and nature recovery. I won't go through it all again here now, but I was particular pleased to see that monitoring compliance has also got, you know, is also in there, as well as allowing for technological advances and changes, so it's very strong in my belief. In my capacity as Cllr for Southwater South and Shipley, these are my thoughts. Southwater is a popular village that prides itself on its rural location. Its residents regularly access the surrounding countryside, as well as utilise and care for the wildlife and environment within the picturesque Southwater Country Park. The Swan Society there has more than 250 individual members. It is my understanding that this developer builds to a high standard, as can already be seen in Southwater at Broadacres, and that there is an intention by the builder to provide a sympathetic scheme that respects residents and the countryside in the modern manner. Carbon reduction must be taken seriously and so must an enhanced environment for wildlife and biodiversity. These aims are very important to Horsham and Southwater residents. We have community engagement research that shows this is so, as well as the existence of a plethora of community groups actively working to address climate change and to enable nature recovery. This plan for Southwater requires that development is landscape-led, protecting views into and out of the scheme, as well as enabling natural movement to the wider landscape. Preserving the Downs Link is also a stated must, as is a landscape buffer along the western edge. Character areas, such as informal food growing and meadows, water bodies, and tree cover must also be proposed within and around the scheme, as well as native species-rich hedges and the creation of wildlife corridors. The requirement for bird boxes and wildlife-permeable gaps will help residents to live in a natural environment and play their

own part in Horsham District's aims to enhance biodiversity. The developer and residents together will be able to support nature recovery work and contribute to the efforts of Wilder Horsham District and Weald to Waves. The proposals must deliver a 12% net biodiversity gain on the site, and also not only protect, but enhance three areas of ancient woodland: Courtland Wood, Two Mile Ash Gill, and Smith's Copse, as well as any other woodland. The homes themselves must be built sustainably and from 2025 all homes are expected to be net zero carbon, which will have a knock-on effect of meaningful energy bill savings for our residents. In addition to all of this, the developer is required to provide a transport strategy that includes a walking and cycling strategy, as well as funding a walking and cycling link that connects Southwater and Horsham, something residents have long desired. Additional cycling and walking routes around the village are also required, so that there is a more natural flow of people around the village, and I note the inclusion of a 5 km safe circular route for pedestrians and cyclists. Further there is a requirement for multi-use games areas, equipped children's play facilities, and social seating areas, as well as sporting and leisure facilities. This developer has already provided high-quality homes in Southwater, and with a commitment to our residents' aspirations there is an opportunity to finish the work to a high ecological standard. It seems to me to be considered and mindful of residents and their priorities, and it has the potential to contribute to a more complete healthy and happy village environment and lifestyle. When I think of a future Southwater where children attend school, socialise, access their sports and leisure clubs, and are actively engaging with the natural world, as well as taking or playing their part in its ongoing recovery, and all within walking distance of their homes. I am pretty pleased with this Plan for Southwater. Thank you.

[4:44:27] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much. Cllr Finnegan.

[4:44:31] **Cllr Victoria Finnegan:** Thank you, Chair. First of all, thank you to the officers, the Cllrs, everybody involved in compiling this huge piece of work. We are all, all parties, trying to create a balance between enough good quality homes in the right places and over-development. I want to follow on from what Cllr Manton said earlier, and Cllr Fisher, to say the point that I'd like to raise is about water usage estimates using the calculations for the number of new homes in the Local Plan. I refer to the Sussex North Water Neutrality Study December 2022, Part C, Litigation Strategy. I think this was also raised by a member of the public, Andrew, eloquently earlier. And it uses different scenarios, many scenarios, two of which are 110 litres per person per day building regulation option, the current standard for the local affected authorities, and 85 litres per person per day, which is described as 'ambitious'. Although stricter recommendations to drive down water usage are really welcomed, the quote Ofwat report, paragraph 248, states: 'changing behaviour was required to achieve this.' Southern Water has a 100 target campaign, Ofwat September 2022 states 110 for Southern Water should be a target for new homes. Now, the difference between these two scenarios, 110 versus the 85 litres per person per day, these scenarios create a gap of 2,000 homes and this sort of concerns me. Developers have anecdotally stated that being too strict means that people remove the efficiencies. Homes Building Federation at HBF states that 100 litres per person per day was just about achievable. By using this very ambitious, yet unproven, water usage in the calculation for the homes, are we not risking overdevelopment combined with a failure to achieve neutrality? Thank you.

[4:46:30] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much. Cllr Trollope.

[4:46:37] **Cllr John Trollope:** I have been a resident of Billingshurst since 2005. Both my two children went first to Billingshurst Infant then to The Weald School. I have done a lot of walking and cycling in and around this village, this town – this town, let's be frank and call a town a town – and love its natural beauty. I chose to stand as a local Cllr as I wanted to serve the community and help keep Billingshurst a nice and lovely place to live. With this in mind it is hard to ignore the strong support many have for the proposed Newbridge Park, the land to the west of Billingshurst. Mark Betts, the chairman of the Billingshurst Football Club, gave fellow Billingshurst Cllr, Sam, sitting beside me, and me a detailed tour of Jubilee Fields and described, at length, the challenges they are facing with the poor state of the clubhouse and especially the issues with drainage on their football pitch. They desperately need funds

to allow for an all-weather pitch and other improvements which is vitally important given the importance of sport to our society. Sussex Green Living support it for various reasons, including improved biodiversity gains and the country park. BilliGreen supports it for similar reasons, especially the inclusion of a nature reserve – something that I would dearly love to have for Billingshurst. The Billingshurst Parish Council have come out in support of West, and it is my understanding that they have even entered into a legal agreement with Highwood Homes to ensure delivery on the promises made by them. In a perfect world, supporting this would be a no-brainer. However, there are downsides to the West proposal which are impossible for me to overlook. This comes at a cost of 350 additional homes to the east proposal. The homes in the west are significantly further from the train station than those in the east. The whole of Newbridge Park is on the other side of the A29, which is currently acting as a natural boundary to the rest of the village. For me, this would create two communities with Billingshurst losing its cohesive nature. The east on the other hand keeps Billingshurst as a single unit. The vote today is not for a east versus west, but whether or not we accept this Plan. Not having this Plan opens us up to speculative development. It is also the officer's concern that should the east proposal not be accepted, we may be vulnerable to a successful appeal, leaving us with 1,600 houses, instead of just 600 additional ones; that is an east and a west. Whilst I recognise and strongly share the frustration of many that Bellway Crest Nicholson, the promoters of the east, have not engaged with the local community at all, in stark contrast to the promoters of Highwood, I passionately feel that the strong support for the west is really a desire for the benefits that the west is offering. It is, in my opinion, generally accepted that Billingshurst has not had its fair share of funding in the last 20 years or so, but having 600 homes the east, plus a thousand homes the west is too high a price, and quite an undesirable way of getting the investment we so desperately need. Looking at the Horsham District as a whole, the Plan my fellow Cllrs have put together is a very good one, giving us some of the highest ecological standards in England, much needed investment, including a school for Southwater and a primary school for Billingshurst, and most importantly a way of stopping speculative applications where in Billingshurst we could easily end up with an east, a west, and even a further 2,500 houses in Adversane. Thank you.

[4:51:25] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Trollope. Cllr Dennis.

[4:51:29] **Cllr Joy Dennis:** Good evening and thank you. We've seemed to have heard an awful lot about this school at Southwater tonight and I feel actually is very disingenuous and I'd like to give the reasons why. We should be aware that, I mean we're all aware of the provision of secondary places in Horsham, school for Southwater families has been quite difficult just recently with 26 children who were unable to be accommodated. Over all, in the Horsham District there are actually over a 100 spare places, but with parental choice that's where the difficulties came. But, with cooperation from Bohunt, Tanbridge and Forest they were very sympathetic to the situation, we expect that to continue. However, it appears that a continued justification of building a thousand homes for a new school, for a secondary school, seems rather straight and I'll just take you a little bit further through that one. You might be interested to learn that Southwater Infant Academy has started consultation to reduce its pan, that's the numbers of pupils, from 120 to 90 due to falling numbers applying to reception in new recent years. This September only 84 actually joined the reception. In the past years that 120 pan was thought to be increased, would have to be increased due to house building, but the reverse has been the case, and we're seeing falling birth rates across the county, including very much Horsham, even though we've seen increased numbers of people moving into the area. So, I'm quite surprised that there is a document called Planning School Places in West Sussex, it's a 22/23; very interesting reading. And I just wonder whether it's been read by the appropriate people, or in fact they have listened to the advice they've been given to by West Sussex County Council officers in the education department, and I'll just give you in a second that advice. I just want to go through, in Horsham West one of my colleagues mentioned the fact that the school at Wickhurst Green, which was the proposed new primary school, was cancelled by the DFT around concerns a falling birth rate again. So, that was actually not failure; that was because falling birth rates didn't justify it. So, then we sort of say to ourselves well do we actually need a six-form entry secondary school, that's 1,500 pupils with 300 a year; that's quite significant, because what we work around roughly is a thousand schools, thousand homes sorry, is around one form entry. So we're

saying there's an issue of just under 30 pupils at the moment, and potentially we've got 30 already, that's potentially one to two forms, so why would we build a six-form school that's going to cost £50 to £70 million to build, and that's just for starters for that. And then who's going to run it? So there has to be a business case, so actually the advice is there has to be a suitable site, there needs to be 106 contributions to build the school, and then there needs to be a business case to launch and find an academy who's prepared to take it on. Which academy which run as a business is prepared to take on building and taking on the acquisition of a school for sixth form entry? Sorry, it's not sixth but six-form, each year? We're only going to get 30 to 60 pupils, potentially. Now, on top of that there is also another school that's been given approval by the DFT, a free school in Crawley, you could ask what's that got to do with Horsham? Well, it's got a lot to do with Hprsham, because actually there's an awful lot of pupils, at this moment in time, coming over from Crawley that are going to Bohunt. So, if there's a new school there then actually that will take some of the demand away. So, and just to let you know in case you're asking the question 'yes, we're seeing declining birth rates in Crawley as well,' I know you might be surprised, but we are. So, all I've actually sort of said what the officers say, so what I sort of finally want to say is: so, will there really be the site? Will there be the money to build it? Will there really be any demand? And is it likely to be approved by DFT, and it'll have to be approved by the DFT? So, on that basis – well, not just that basis, but lots of comments my colleagues I, and that I won't be approving the Plan.

[4:55:56] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Dennis. Kasia Greenwood.

[4:56:03] **Cllr Kasia Greenwood:** Thank you. First, allow me to express my personal thanks to Cllrs and officers for delivering on this vital Plan. My colleague, Cllr Mark Baynham from Billingshurst Ward has asked me to read the following statement from him in his absence from this council meeting, so the following words are his: 'I've been a Billingshurst resident for almost 30 years. I care about our village and what happens in it as much as any other people who I represent. That is why I've considered this draft Local Plan in great detail, together with the other proposals for strategic sites that didn't make it into the document. In my local context, this largely meant considering the proposals for land allocation in three competing sites: Adversane, east of Billingshurst, and west of Billingshurst. I generally accepted that at least one of these would make it through to the draft Plan. Of the three, my preferred option is lent to the east site. Why is that? So, firstly I consider the size of the proposals. East, with 650 new homes, is by far the smallest, versus a thousand-plus for west and over 2,800 for Adversane. The Adversane proposal has its merits, based as it is on the Poundbury concept in Dorset, but I don't believe we need a new local settlement of that size at that location. And while the model of a new garden village may be something to consider in the future, the Adversane location does not work for me for a host of reasons, with which I would anticipate my Cllr colleagues in Pulborough, whose boundary crosses, would agree. I'm therefore pleased that is not included in the draft Plan. This leaves east and west. The east, as well as being the smallest, has the major advantage of being contained within strong existing boundaries, that is the A272 and the railway line. This effectively restricts the opportunity for further expansion of future years. It also connects well geographically with the rest of the village. The west, in contrast, has large areas of open farmland to the north, west and south, into which development could easily expand. Indeed, there has already been a further development proposed adjoining the south of the site. It is also not a homogenous site. It is split into three distinct settlement areas, divided from the village by a bypass, and it is also divided from itself by a busy A-road – the A272. It is difficult to see that as a natural expansion. The geographical, logical choice of the east would also not be lost on developers, who would be very likely to press on with their proposals even if excluded from the Plan. While Planning Committee Members might oppose anything not in the Plan, the same geographic logic would be apparent to the government planning inspectorate, who would adjudicate on any appeal. In any event, when the next Local Plan is developed in five years time I'd be very surprised if east was not put forward again as a strategic site. So, I conclude that in the medium term if we chose west, we'd likely in fact get west and east. A major consideration is, of course, the pressing need for infrastructure improvements, notably lacking in previous developments over the past 15 or so years. This is also acknowledged in the Local Plan chapter 10, paragraph 118. The west

proposals include many attractive improvements within the site, including new sports facilities, a primary school, a nature park, and community buildings. Many residents and local groups have expressed their support for the west proposal based on the provision of these facilities. The east does also come with some commitments, but at a smaller scale, including a new primary school, a community hub, and green and play spaces. But many have expressed scepticism to me that the east facilities would actually be delivered based largely on seemingly underwhelming efforts by the developers to engage on a local level. I'm very conscious of community wishes and our commitment as laid out in our election Manifesto, and our annual plan, to be a listening and responsive administration. But I cannot disregard the factors I've already laid out that favour the east. Therefore, if this Plan is approved I'll be taking measures to ensure that we get the infrastructure improvements we need. Primarily, these are: firstly, to commit to a meaningful and robust engagement of the developers in partnership with those local groups and representatives who wish to join me, to ensure that promises made are delivered at the early stages of build. Strong conditions will be included at the Planning Committee stage. Secondly, in my role as Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, I intend to set up a Billingshurst Infrastructure Fund. This would consist of existing earmarked funds, but would also attract further funding from HDC resources. How this money is spent will be determined through local consultation, but I would anticipate could providemany of the improvements offered by the west proposals. So, my aim is to protect the cohesion and character of the village through limited and sustainable development, while providing what our residents are rightfully asking for. As a local Ward Member, my remarks have unsurprisingly focused on my village, but you'll have heard from Cabinet Member for Planning, John Milne, on the benefits of this Plan at the wider District level, and how it significantly improves on early iterations. It therefore has my support and I encourage Council to pass the motion. Thank you.'

[

5:00:45] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Greenwood. Cllr Clarke.

[5:00:50] **Cllr Paul Clarke:** Thank you, Chairman. Several points to make. I'll start off by basically saying that the plan in 2021 proposed was quite different from the one here, but there are several common threads, but I'll move on from that. Basically, this plan has been like the Rock of Sisyphus, some of us have Classical knowledge know what that's about, otherwise you can look it up, but I'd like to thank the officers for their help in letting me delve into the numbers, because I like numbers, and also acting as a critical friend, because I hope that was useful for the officers as well, acting as a critical friend looking at this water neutrality issue. Moving on from that, essentially I was going to talk about Greeks and GIFs, but I won't. I'll stick it instead to beware of politicians bearing gifts, because 480 houses in five years, you think yipee doo. The total is 13,210, of which 6,717 are in the planning stage, takes it up to an average of 1,081 for the 10 years that follow. That's the meaning of the step trajectory. I just thought I'd point out the numbers, because nobody's talked about numbers as yet in this debate. I have problem with the 85 litres a day. I know officers, when we looked at Part C together, looked at it as being a realistic achievable, I think, was to quote an officer. The 62 litres a day scenario I won't repeat in polite company. The Southern Water target is 100 litres per day, our pres present target is 110, as Cllr Finnegan outlined earlier on. The facts, the points, the facts and the issues that she pointed out were quite accurate; I couldn't do any better than her. But, I have a problem because not only is it 85 litres a day plus grey water recycling and all the rest of it, with the policies heaps on developers more costs that does concern me. I agree with them, but I'm not sure this the numbers add up, and I'm concerned about the cumulative sum of what is being imposed. Only the future will tell us, but I'm just expressing my concern here, strategically speaking, if you look at it on a strategic basis, because, you know, biodiversity gains? Yeah, sure, what's not to like? Building standards improvement? Yeah, go with that. Et cetera. But, the inter-relationship between these Desiderata and the cost that comes with it, and, oh, let's not forget social housing 40%. So, I do have some concerns. This aspirational target is troubling, especially the water side. As an anecdote, I asked one of my fellow Cllrs, no name no pack drill, how much water he used in his household, because I thought of all the Cllrs I know, he'd be the one who'd get closest to the target. He basically admitted that for him personally, it was close to 110, but for the rest of the family it wasn't. We didn't dwell anymore on it, but I think I've made the point. It was serious, because they couldn't get down to that sort of level that we're looking at. We've talked about the numbers and

the site, I'm not really going to dwell on that, there's not much point, but a number of the policies need to be looked at. Gypsy and Traveller strategy in my personal opinion is nearly as contentious as the numbers, because it's one of the most difficult policies, and it's not solved the final issue, but it's a progress, but certainly for people in Pulborough, and I suspect one or two other places, the Gypsy and Travellers policy is really a problem. I think the Cabinet Member from, well I can't remember what the title is, but among screens and stuff, was going on all about chapter six and the improvements to do with the environment and that sort of stuff. I did go through that policy very carefully and was very upset as a member of Pulborough to see that the Arun is not there really to be spoken of, it's all about the Adur, and the Adur this, the Adur that and Knepp Castle and all the rest of it. Most of these major developments are fed into the Arun, so the Southwater site, the Billingshurst site, and sites up northern Horsham, all those feed into the Arun and they all arrive back on my doorstep. And if you look at the Southern Water numbers for CSOs and the rest of it, it's quite worrying. So, the policy on chapter 6, if you look at Item 6.45 on page 69-70 or 102-103, depending on what numbering system you're using, no mention of the Arun, and I think it is an omission, and I've already pointed this out to officers. Just look at the Arun/Adur bullet on Point 4, which is a bit sad, really. That said I'm glad to see more prominence for Community Land Trusts and adding Community Land Trust to our repertoire of affordable housing, and I totally agree with Cllr Milne that CLTs are a valuable tool to bring forward. I've always been a proponent of rural exception sites. If you can't get a rural exception site, then the CLT is a good thing. I also noted from one of the members that one of the developers has been lorded on its projects in Southwater and a lot of praise was put to the door of that developer, and my comment really to that is it's a shame they're not all like that, but unfortunately most of them aren't, and we are dealing with most of them aren't like that. Thank you, Chairman. That's my comments.

[5:06:40] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Clarke. Cllr Bateman.

[5:06:48] **Cllr Sam Bateman:** Whenever you discuss housing developments with Billingshurst residents, infrastructure is the recurring theme. 'Show us the infrastructure,' they say. Community concerns about developments appearing without the necessary supporting infrastructure are valid. Billingshurst has grown considerably over the last 20 years. Investment in community infrastructure has not kept pace. It's unsurprising many community groups feel grieved and sceptical about the inclusion of a further strategic site in this Ward. However, there's an unquestionable need for housing. My case work is awash with people, younger people as especially, asking for help with housing, and their needs cannot be ignored. Added, Horsham is surviving on an out-of-date Local Plan, a Plan that dates back to 2015 and does not reflect current priorities, or our ambitions for nature. Housing development right now is being left to chance. Uncoordinated developments are popping up across the District and our communities face the uncertainty of speculative applications. It's a woeful inheritance, and it must be remedied. Further, we're at the tipping point in climate change. Tougher action on all fronts is necessary, and these speculative developments do not have to adhere to ambitious environmental standards. We need to act now on climate change and this Plan will secure for our District some of the most rigorous building standards in the country. It'll demonstrate that Horsham cares about Planet Earth and also that this Council cares about householder energy costs. That's a win-win. This Plan recognises that master planning of the site to the east of Billingshurst has to be considered cumulatively. To me, this is an important detail; it's the acknowledgement necessary to secure my support. In this Plan, Billingshurst's contribution to housing targets will be smaller than in previous years, 650 new homes, the design will be landscape-led and respectful of our semi-rural location and characteristics. The location will not breach the community's boundaries; a defensible boundary will remain. The community will not have to be on guard against unsustainable and incoherent future expansion that would be our future if the A29 barrier was breached. Finally, this is a council under new administration, it's a Lib Dem council, and Lib Dem councils care about their communities, and they're true to their word. New infrastructure in Billingshurst will be a key priority. There will be no let up of lobbying the integrated care board the new clinics and GPs, the negotiation for the earliest possible start on the construction of new schools. Not only will we enable and encourage community engagement, we'll be demanding it. Billingshurst did not vote for a cowardly abstention; they voted for someone able to make a tough decision. This is a tough

decision. And the best interests of my community are clear. The best interests of Billingshurst are served by voting through this Plan.

[5:10:41] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Raby.

[5:10:45] **Cllr Sam Raby:** Thank you very much, Chair. I think I want to give a different perspective, probably to most of the other Cllrs here, if not all of them, in that we have numbers here, which Cllr Clarke said we need more discussion of numbers, we've got over 700 people on our housing list. Every year we're getting another 350 people added to that, and people who are in insecure accommodation, overcrowded accommodation, or if they've suffered illness or disability that's changed their mobility needs can be stuck in inappropriate accommodation, and one of the best way of meeting the needs of families stuck in temporary accommodation in B&Bs, in overcrowded accommodation, or I've had a resident in – previous roles I worked with a family, there was a young girl who went in for spinal surgery to, she had scoliosis, and during the surgery she lost the ability to walk, so in upon leaving hospital she couldn't return to her second floor flat, which was up flights of stairs, and it was one of the best things of my whole professional career was lobbying and finding that family the right housing and seeing them in accommodation their daughter could be wheeled in and out of was transformative, and I think if perhaps more of the members here were living in temporary accommodation, didn't own their own homes, we might have a very different view on how many homes we need. And although I moved here because it's a green and wonderful place to raise my family, it's why my grandparents came to the District to farm, and we have to balance the needs of preserving what makes Horsham a brilliant place to live, and we want future generations to do the same, we also need homes for people and finding ways of reducing it below 450 and celebrating that we're going to build fewer homes when we've got over 700 people on our list, it wouldn't be celebrated by those people, so I just want people to take that into account. I wanted to reiterate some of the things that Cllr Kitchen said. I know the west of Ifield site very well from having lived in the area, I also door-knocked all over it and delivered leaflets and spoken to people, and I know it's nature-rich, and I understand the concerns of it stretching all the way to Faygate; that's in no way part of this Plan – I think you'll find 10,000 homes creating almost Crawsham would never have been a Lib Dem idea and I doubt you'll find a single Lib Dem uh who'd propose such a thing. So, I think as long as we're the administration, 10,000 homes creating nearly Crawsham will never happen. But I just also want to say that the sooner that we recognise and get this Plan which officers and Cllr Milne have put a huge amount of effort into putting forward, and despite the objections, and I've heard a lot and I'm sure there are parts of this that people will be unhappy with, and I've heard the speeches from the parish councils, and I've received multiple e-mails, of which I've read as many as I possibly can. It's important that we get stability so that we can create the communities for other people to have the opportunity to live and work in decent homes, in the place that all of us have chosen to build our lives, and I think this Plan is the best way to do it. And to delay it again and again with the hope that some – it's a good thing to do to have housing in the District, it's a good thing to do. So for that reason I'll be supporting the Plan. I hope everybody else can push it forward so we can have homes for our residents.

[5:14:29] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Raby. Cllr Ellis-Brown.

[5:14:34] **Cllr Len Ellis-Brown:** Thank you, Chair. Most of my questions I'd listed here have been answered, you'll be pleased to hear. One, though, I would like to raise is around the Local Plan, and I've had some comments from Cllr Milne and the officer, is that I think aligned to that Local Plan should be a supplementary planning document design guide much the same as South Downs National Park has. That will then provide assurance outside of our Local Plan that we mean to improve the quality of our buildings within our community, greater use of grey water, rain water harvesting, et cetera. More community space I think is also going to be in there, but we need to have that supplementary document. I was very pleased to read that Adversane was not in the Local Plan, and I didn't think it should be, because of the issues around the A29, and the A29 is not actually capable of dealing with the volumes that was proposed there. However, I was disappointed to find that it wasn't excluded in the

back of the document, it wasn't specifically excluded. Like many of the other Cllrs, I'm not overly convinced by the water neutrality 85 litres per person per day. I think we should more aligned to the building regs, and in doing so we should be more conscious of the equipment that's being installed into new developments, although we can't govern that over time, and of course the biggest weakness of all that we can't govern people's behaviours. Over all, I'm quite confident and happy with the Plan, but I will raise one particular point that has been raised to me by my local residents, and that is the proposal to have a gypsy and traveller site at Girder Bridge. This particular site falls foul of its own, of the Local Plan itself, because in section, sorry Policy 11 Environmental Protection it actually says that gypsies and travellers should – should – be afforded—sorry, I read my note again. So, the proposed site of Girder Bridge is not suitable as it does not comply with 6.2 of the Local Plan, which states, for example: 'residents of park homes or caravans, which can include elderly or gypsy traveller populations, are more susceptible to noise, or sensitive to noise, and flooding.' If one was to visit this site, you would see that it's flooded regularly and that it's right next to the railway line, and right next to a footpath where they sound the horn 60 times a day from at 6:00 a.m. in the morning till 11:30 at night, so it's not a quiet life there, and therefore it does breach their human rights; they're entitled to quiet enjoyment of their possession and their home, and this would clearly be in breach of that human right ,so I think that site needs to be re-thought and if it can be removed from the Local Plan. But, over all I think this addresses, the Plan addresses the major weakness and the risk that we have, and I've not heard the word risk mentioned too often this evening, is that we don't have a Local Plan. That means we are open to speculative applications and those developers will use the term 'presumption of favour for sustainable development,' because we don't have that. We need to add a protection to our District that we don't have today, and I think the Plan does actually address that. We need to dig behind some of the policies when we're actually considering the applications as when they come in, but I think this Plan actually closes the risk that we currently have today, but I would just emphasise that that point I made earlier about the site at Girder Bridge, I think that falls foul of his own policy within the document, and their human rights, and therefore should not be included. Thank you.

[5:19:05] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you, Cllr Ellis-Brown. I'm sure your comments have been noted, thank you. Yes, Cllr Croker.

[5:19:17] **Cllr Mike Croker:** Thank you, Chair. As we've all been reminded earlier, Horshams Local Plan revision has been dragging on for a while. Nevertheless, these delays have allowed time for improvements, such as around sustainable travel, incorporating many of the recommendations from the previous task and finish group on that subject, which I welcome, and the environmental improvements that the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery mentioned earlier. Secondly, I do share many of the concerns expressed by my colleagues around housing numbers and character, the effect of development on the natural environment, from ecology to climate change, and the stress on both water supply and disposal. I do welcome the 85 litres per person per day water use planning requirement, although I accept that it is a double-edged sword, effectively raising the number of dwellings over the Plan period. It does, though, enable new residents to save water from day one in the same way that incorporating higher building standards and low carbon energy capture into new builds, will save future costs and carbon emissions long into the future. Thirdly, mention of energy reminds me of the inclusion of the phrase 'energy from waste' in paragraph 5.16 of the preamble to Policy 7 on appropriate energy use. Given the planned reduction in the biogenic content of residual waste resulting from food waste collection, energy from waste can no longer be thought of as a low carbon source of energy, and I'm grateful to the head of strategic planning for advising that the phrase will be included in the list of deletions in the modification schedule to accompany the Regulation 19 Plan submission. Finally, this Plan, like all planning, is a compromise. The challenge is to provide the best Plan in the circumstances. I'm inclined to say that this one is. Thank you.

[5:21:50] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Croker. I think we may have exhausted the questions. Are there any other Cllrs who wish to speak? No. Thank you very much. If not, I'm going to ask Cllr Boffey, as seconder of the motion, to speak now.

[5:22:15] **Cllr Martin Boffey:** Thank you very much, Chairman. It's certainly been a fascinating and enlightening debate, in more ways than I than I expected, actually, with some other things we've heard, but that's all to the good. I'd also just like to return a little bit to where we began this evening, I'd like to say just a few words as I begin about Cllr Malcolm Eastwood. He was a great Cllr, a lovely man, and an all round wonderful human being. He worked really hard in life to build bridges between the parish councils and the District Council; he was very passionate about that. I literally have no idea what Malcolm would have thought of this Plan; I would not presume to say so. But I really wish he was here to tell us, because you can bet it would have been well worth listening to. Making a Local Plan is hard, but it's also an opportunity. In preparing what I was going to say tonight, I looked back that the speech I wrote two years ago as a newly elected Cllr, when the Plan was supposed to come to council under the previous administration. The following section of that speech struck me. 'Making a Plan for the next 17 years of the District should be an exciting and challenging endeavour – a chance to think about the future, to be bold, to show lead leadership and vision in providing for both current and future generations. Unfortunately, I do not feel that this is the spirit in which this Council has embarked on the plan-making process. I do not blame the officers for this; it's a failure of political leadership, and it's not good enough.' So, have we done any better this time round? This is an important question for me, because in the May 2023 elections my colleagues and I didn't ask the public to vote for perfect, we asked them to vote for better. I believe that better is what this Plan will deliver: higher environmental standards, cheaper housing, a clearer strategy, and the lowest house building target in decades. Now, I'm not particularly proud of her having a low housing target. I'm not going to celebrate decisions which reduce people's opportunity to own their own home, or to down size, or simply to be able to put an affordable, safe, secure roof over their head. However, a lower target is necessary at the present time, both due to the impacts development is having on our environment and the speed of development is having on our communities. We need a slower rate of building, but both to mitigate and manage the impact on the environment and to give communities time to absorb and integrate the new additions. So I am pleased we have assembled a strong evidence-base to support a lower target. In terms of both the quantity of housing and the locations of sites selected for allocation, clearly this is a subject which excites passions. We have seen that tonight, as we have seen throughout the process. However, I do become, I must admit, frustrated at the constant refrain of 'you haven't listened' or 'you have ignored this or that consideration'. I do not believe this is true, either of Cllrs of any political persuasion here. The job of a Cllr is to listen to all the evidence, give it the appropriate weight, and come to a decision. Leadership is about making decisions. It's important to listen to everyone's points of views, their hopes, dreams, and fears, and try to accommodate their wishes where it is possible to do so. However, if you can't look people in the face and tell them the things they don't want to hear, then you've no business doing this job. Plan-led development is always better than unplanned, speculative development. In order to deliver plan-led development, you need a Local Plan. It's as simple as that. It's the only way to retain local control without handing it over to developers, or having government take it away from you. I will be voting for this Council and its constituents to retain control of Horsham's destiny. I will be voting for the recommendation. I would urge all members to do the same. Thank you.

[5:26:45] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Boffey. I now going to extend the right of reply to Cllr Milne to make his closing comments.

[5:26:55] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you, Chairman. If I may, with your permission, like to hand the mic to the officer to respond to a number of issues of factual clarity which perhaps be good to clear up.

[5:27:09] **Cllr David Skipp:** Absolutely fine.

[5:27:10] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you.

[5:27:15] **Officer:** Thank you very much. These are sort of, to quote a Strictly phrase, in no particular order, it's as I've written them down. So, just picking up, there were some questions that were raised

about education and how that had been considered. One of the evidence-based documents, which is on our website and is referenced in Appendix Four this evening, is the infrastructure delivery plan. That specifically mentions the Planning for Education document, which was raised by the Cllr, and it also sets out on a page 132 onwards, some details and costings of the requirements for education, and it specifically says in some of the notes on page 40 that West Sussex County Council has indicated that pupil numbers are due to rise due to demographic changes, so I'll leave that one there. Then taking forward to gypsies and travellers, which was another question that come up this evening, obviously the impact of the noise from trains, that is something that I think if the Plan is voted through this evening we are happy to take that up with the train operating companies and investigate that further, clearly depending on what comes out of that we will pick that up as proposed modifications. Another comment that was made was about design guides. One thing that the officers are already working on is design code, which would obviously help support any development that comes forward. If it's in the form of an SPD, that does need an adopted Plan to hang that from, and obviously we don't yet have an up-to-date one. And then finally, I would just come back to some of the issues of water neutrality and the questions that have been raised around that. So, clearly, there seems to be a bit of a debate around the 85 and the 110 litres per person today. Now, one of the critical issues that officers have to grapple with when preparing or recommending a Plan is whether it is in conformity with the NPPF, which is set out in your Cabinet Report. One of the key requirements is paragraph 11 of the NPPF and what that says is that 'strategic plans should, as minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses,' and then goes on to say, 'unless the adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.' So, effectively what that means is we have to try to maximise the delivery of housing, and certainly the advisory meetings that we have had with the planning inspectorate have made that abundantly clear. Therefore, the evidence that we have got in looking at whether we have 110 litres, which would deliver a lot less housing, to the 85 is something that we have had to grapple with. Now, clearly, if there is evidence which shows that 85, despite it being challenging, can be achieved, then that is something that we would need to recommend if the evidence is there before us, and it is. One of the issues I think that has come up is, well, you know is there the removal of efficiencies. Well, you know, people can take them out, take those efficiencies out. That is built into our estimates; we know that sometimes that will happen. We have made that, we have taken that into account and therefore that that is a factor. I think the other aspect really is, that's been raised on that before I leave it, is concerns about viability. That has been looked at, we have done a viability assessment; again, that is referenced in your in your papers and it is on our website, which has looked at the viability of the whole Plan, it looks at the viability of affordable housing, biodiversity net gain policies, the water neutrality policies. We would not be recommending a Plan as officers to you this evening unless that evidence showed that that Plan could be viable. Thank you.

[5:31:15] **Cllr John Milne:** Thank you, Chairman. It's been a long night, so I'll be brief. Getting a Local Plan across the line is the hardest task for any Council, but it's also our most important duty. We've all received a massive postbag from residents raising concerns about sites in their neighbourhoods. Some of the choices we've made were complex. There were compelling arguments on both sides. But right or wrong, I can say that no decision was taken without strong reasons. Over all, there are hundreds, literally hundreds, of sites in this Local Plan and that effectively means hundreds of reasons to vote against it, if that's what you want to do. But the time to raise these objections was when I asked six months ago, when there was still time enough to include them. It's quite hard to respond to a request that hasn't actually been made, and that does apply to many of the things raised this evening. Lastly, there's a point about the numbers that's been missed. We will effectively, when you add on the Covid years and the years of the slower rate of building in the next five years in the Local Plan, in effect we will have about ten years of dramatically lower build rates, which means our population growth, which was 11.7% between the last two sentences, which by the way is one of the highest in the entire area, one can foresee that should roughly half, because we're doing less than half the number of houses that we were building before then, which was over a thousand before Covid hit, per annum. That gives time for our District to catch up with infrastructure, and actually it gives time for communities to build, because

it's very hard to build a community if you're adding on that many people that quickly. So, let's just get on with this and vote. Thank you.

[5:33:23] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you very much, Cllr Milne. It's been a long night and we're coming to the end of the evening. I just wanted to be absolutely sure that you had all read the recommendations that were made from Council to this, from Cabinet to this Council. There are four recommendations; I hope you've read them all. I hope you understand what we will be voting for. It has been put forward that we have a vote which is recorded. We have uh a proposer and we have a seconder, and therefore I'm going to call for a recorded vote at this time on the proposals to approve publication of the Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 19 document, together with the Sustainability Appraisal Habitats Regulations Assessment, and policies map and other supporting evidence-based documents. It's all in the in the agenda, but I do want you to know what you're voting for. So, we'll go ahead with our recorded vote.

[5:34:45] **Officer:** Cllr Sam Bateman.

[5:34:53] **Cllr David Skipp:** Can you speak up so that they hear.

[5:34:56] **Cllr Sam Bateman:** I vote for this plan.

[5:34:58] **Officer:** Cllr Emma Beard.

[5:35:26] **Cllr Emma Beard:** Abstain.

[5:35:29] **Officer:** Cllr Tony Bevis.

[5:35:31] **Cllr Tony Bevis:** For.

[5:35:33] **Officer:** Cllr Colette Blackburn.

[5:35:36] **Cllr Colette Blackburn:** For.

[5:35:36] **Officer:** Cllr Martin Boffey.

[5:35:38] **Cllr Martin Boffey:** For.

[5:35:40] **Officer:** Cllr Peter van der Borgh.

[5:35:41] **Cllr Peter van der Borgh:** For.

[5:35:42] **Officer:** Cllr James Brookes.

[5:35:44] **Cllr James Brookes:** For.

[5:35:46] **Officer:** Cllr John Campbell.

[5:35:47] **Cllr John Campbell:** For.

[5:35:48] **Officer:** Cllr Philip Circus.

[5:35:50] **Cllr Philip Circus:** Against.

[5:35:51] **Officer:** Cllr Paul Clarke.

[5:35:54] **Cllr Paul Clarke:** Against.

[5:35:55] **Officer:** Cllr Mike Croker.

[5:35:56] **Cllr Mike Croker:** For.

[5:35:58] **Officer:** Cllr Joy Dennis.

[5:35:59] **Cllr Joy Dennis:** Against.

[5:36:00] **Officer:** Cllr Len Ellis-Brown.

[5:36:03] **Cllr Len Ellis-Brown:** For.

[5:36:05] **Officer:** Cllr Nigel Emery.

[5:36:07] **Cllr Nigel Emery:** For.

[5:36:09] **Officer:** Cllr Victoria Finnegan.

[5:36:11] **Cllr Victoria Finnegan:** For.

[5:36:13] **Officer:** Cllr Claudia Fisher.

[5:36:15] **Cllr Claudia Fisher:** Abstain.

[5:36:19] **Officer:** Cllr Ruth Fletcher.

[5:36:21] **Cllr Ruth Fletcher:** For.

[5:36:22] **Officer:** Cllr Chris Franke.

[5:36:24] **Cllr Chris Franke:** For.

[5:36:26] **Officer:** Cllr Anthony Frankland.

[5:36:28] **Cllr Anthony Frankland:** For.

[5:36:29] **Officer:** Cllr Nick Grant.

[5:36:31] **Cllr Nick Grant:** For.

[5:36:32] **Officer:** Cllr Joan Grech.

[5:36:35] **Cllr Joan Grech:** For.

[5:36:37] **Officer:** Cllr Kasia Greenwood.

[5:36:39] **Cllr Kasia Greenwood:** For.

[5:36:40] **Officer:** Cllr Warwick Hellawell.

[5:36:42] **Cllr Warwick Hellawell:** For.

[5:36:44] **Officer:** Cllr Alexander Jeffery.

[5:36:45] **Cllr Alexander Jeffery:** For.

[5:36:47] **Officer:** Cllr Liz Kitchen.

[5:36:49] **Cllr Liz Kitchen:** Against.

[5:36:50] **Officer:** Cllr Joanne Knowles.

[5:36:52] **Cllr Joanne Knowles:** For.

[5:36:54] **Officer:** Cllr Lynn Lambert.

[5:36:56] **Cllr Lynn Lambert:** Abstain.

[3:36:58] **Officer:** Cllr Richard Landeryou.

[5:37:00] **Cllr Richard Landeryou:** Against.

[5:37:02] **Officer:** Cllr Dennis Livingstone.

[5:37:03] **Cllr Dennis Livingstone:** For.

[5:37:05] **Officer:** Cllr Alan Manton.

[5:37:09] **Cllr Alan Manton:** Against.

[5:37:10] **Officer:** Cllr Nicholas Marks.

[5:37:13] **Cllr Nicholas Marks:** For.

[5:37:15] **Officer:** Cllr Jay Mercer.

[5:37:18] **Cllr Jay Mercer:** For.

[5:37:19] **Officer:** Cllr John Milne.

[5:37:21] **Cllr John Milne:** For.

[5:37:23] **Officer:** Cllr Colin Minto.

[5:37:25] **Cllr Colin Minto:** For.

[5:37:26] **Officer:** Cllr Roger Noel.

[5:37:29] **Cllr Roger Noel:** Against.

[5:37:31] **Officer:** Cllr John Olson.

[5:37:32] **Cllr John Olson:** For.

[5:37:34] **Officer:** Cllr Josh Potts.

[5:37:36] **Cllr Josh Potts:** Against.

[5:37:37] **Officer:** Cllr Sam Raby.

[5:37:39] **Cllr Sam Raby:** For.

[5:37:41] **Officer:** Cllr David Skipp.

[5:37:43] **Cllr David Skipp:** For.

[5:37:44] **Officer:** Cllr John Trollope.

[5:37:47] **Cllr John Trollope:** For.

[5:37:49] **Officer:** Cllr Clive Trott.

[5:37:51] **Cllr Clive Trott:** For.

[5:37:53] **Officer:** Cllr Belinda Walters.

[5:37:55] **Cllr Belinda Walters:** For.

[5:37:57] **Officer:** Cllr Mike Wood.

[5:37:58] **Cllr Mike Wood:** For.

[5:37:59] **Officer:** Thank you. [Pause for counting] for

[5:38:54] **Cllr David SKipp:** What's the count?

[5:38:56] **Officer:** Thirty-two for, eight against, three abstains. That's what I got, anyway.
[Inaudible]

[5:39:10] **Cllr David Skipp:** That's three abstains, eight against, thirty-two for.

[5:39:17] **Cllr Ruth Fletcher[?]:** They got the same figures?

[5:39:18] **Officer:** Yep, they all got the same figures.

[5:39:21] **Cllr David Skipp:** Thank you. Thank you very much. The result of that vote was: against the motion: eight; abstentions: three; and for: thirty-two. And therefore the motion is carried and the recommendations have been passed, so thank you very much for that. Can I just say how much I appreciate your consideration. It's been a long evening; I did try and get it through by 10:00, because someone said the last orders were going to be taken. Unfortunately, I couldn't do that, but thank you very much, and thank you very much for your contributions. There was very much there to consider later on. I'm sure we will be looking at it again over the coming months. But thank you to the officers for all the work you put in and for your input. Thank you very much, Cllrs. And I say good night and I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday.

[MEETING ENDS 5:40:29]

The transcriptions were commissioned by Dr R F Smith, Trustee CPRE Sussex

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