

# Cabinet of 7 September 2021

## Public Questions

### 1. Question from Giles Watts on behalf of Dorset Climate Action Network (DorsetCAN)

Consultation for the Draft Local Plan closed on 15<sup>th</sup> March. At the Cabinet meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May we asked when the submission and feedback from the consultation would be made publicly available. The Portfolio Holder for Planning, David Walsh, responded that “It is likely that they will all be published in July”. As of 1<sup>st</sup> September this has not yet happened. Can Cllr Walsh please update us on when the consultation documents will now be published and, given the further delays, his new timescale for revising, submitting and examining Dorset’s Local Plan.

### 2. Question from Mike Allen

In July I asked the Cabinet whom they expected to buy the nearly 10,000 extra dwellings planned in the draft Local Plan, extra that is over the Ministry of Housing’s projected household growth in Dorset due to population, migration and household size changes.

The Cabinet reply was that the extra housing:

*“...enables for the formation of households from those who already live in Dorset where a suitable property is not available (such as young adults who live with their parents) and for those who need or wish to move to Dorset and where a suitable property is not available.”*

I want to probe a little deeper please. The answer says that the extra housing will be more suitable for so-called hidden-households and for extra in-comers from other areas. One can only assume that “suitable” here means affordable. So the plan is for nearly 10,000 extra more-affordable dwellings to be built, generating extra demand as a result of their lower prices presumably.

Remembering that current population trends, projected by the Ministry and the independent ONS, do not project these households to form, there must be something in the Council’s planning that is going to cause these extra dwellings to be more affordable than expected. Either wages are planned to rise faster than house prices, or house prices are planned to fall relative to wages, or both.

Marginally, house prices rise when incomes rise, so one must assume that house prices are planned by the Council to fall relative to wages, due to some undeclared

mechanism. The plan surely must quantify the actual fall in prices expected to be necessary.

Since building costs and margins cannot be expected to fall, those price falls must be found in reduced land values. Land values must be planned to fall enough to bring 10,000 new households into the housing market.

So it is this economic mechanism I want to ask about:

***Please can the Cabinet explain how they expect the house price falls to occur that will enable 10,000 extra households to form in Dorset over the Plan period 2021-38?***

### **3. Question from Julie Leah**

As the Environment Bill will have long term implications for Dorset, please could the council explain what they are doing to ensure that the Environmental Bill is rigorous enough to serve Dorset well and how its implementation will affect the CEES and DLP?

### **4. Question from Andrew Carey**

Cllr Ray Bryan has publicly stated his intention (Dorset Council Website, May 25, 2021) to: "make Dorset the greenest county in England".

The UK100 pledge says: "*We will bring our council emissions to Net Zero by 2030\* and we will work with our residents and businesses to bring our wider communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible (and by 2045\* at the latest).*" Dorset Council's target dates of 2040 and 2050 fall well short of this pledge.

Wiltshire Council, Somerset County Council and Cornwall Council are among 13 county councils that have already signed the UK100 pledge (as well as many district, town and city councils). Dorset Council has not. Dorset is therefore not even among the 13 greenest counties in England. Given the urgent call for action in the IPCC's latest Climate Change report, will Dorset Council now support Cllr Bryan's aspiration and sign the UK100 pledge?