

Fareham Borough Council

Local Plan CAT Meeting Notes Summer 2021

Revised Publication Local Plan CAT Meeting

Warsash Victory Hall, Thursday 22 July 2021 from 6.00pm – 7.30pm

Speakers:

Cllr Seán Woodward, Executive Leader of the Council

Gayle Wootton, Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development

Cllr Joanne Bull, Meeting Chairman

Councillors in attendance:

Cllr Ian Bastable, Cllr Susan Bayford, Cllr Trevor Cartwright, Cllr Malcolm Daniells, Cllr Michael Ford

What was talked about?

Introduction by Cllr Woodward

Councillor Woodward explained that Fareham's housing requirement was given to us from central government and has increased to 541 homes per year since last December. This means that we had to find additional housing sites, which were being consulted on.

Cllr Woodward explained that we create a Local Plan so that housing development in the Borough can be guided by the Council, rather than leaving it in the hands of private developers and Planning Inspectors.

The Council chose housing and employment locations in line with our Development Strategy and the following hierarchy of sites:

- Town Centre Living (Redevelopment of the Town Centre to include leisure and retail facilities as well as housing)
- Urban Living (sites within existing settlements)
- Building on council owned land
- Edge of town living (sites of the edge of existing settlements)

Welborne will go some way to meeting our housing requirements but not all the planned homes will be built by the end of 2037 (the end of the Local Plan period.)

Presentation by Gayle Wootton, Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development

Gayle outlined [what had changed since the last consultation](#): Fareham's housing requirement, our employment need has increased, and some [evidence base documents](#) have been updated.

She also outlined how our total housing figure is calculated. It includes:

- The housing requirement given to us from central government: 8,656
- Obligations on unmet need of our neighbouring local authorities: around 900
- A contingency supply of 11%: around 1,000

This takes our total proposed housing numbers to 10,594 by 2037.

Gayle went through the new proposed housing sites and explained how and why they have been included in this version of the Local Plan. (The specific details of each new site can be found in the [Local Plan document](#)).

The presentation ended with an outline of the next steps:

- Following this 6-week consultation the council will read, analyse and consider all the comments made
- The Revised Publication Local Plan will then be submitted, along with the evidence base documents and consultation responses to the Secretary of State's appointed Planning Inspector for independent examination
- The Plan will be examined in public and if found sound will be presented to Fareham's Full Council for adoption.

You can view the presentation in full [here](#).

Questions from the floor

Q- Are there provisions for sewage disposal for the proposed developments.

A- Yes, Southern Water are statutory consultees. They have informed us that they do have sufficient capacity for the proposed sites.

Q- What was the justification for the government increasing the housing requirement in Fareham? Are there other places in the country with more space for housing?

A- There was no justification from government. Despite consulting on more accurate and up to date figures from the ONS, the government reverted to 2014 data which increased our level of housing need. We continue to object to the Secretary of State.

Q- Do you suggest we write to the local MP to protest the housing figures?

A- Yes, if you don't agree with central government then your MP is your point of contact.

Q- We have to be seen to be talking to neighbouring authorities regarding their unmet housing need. If we don't need to agree, why did we agree to take 900 homes?

A- Our plan is in danger of being rejected by the Planning Inspector on the basis that we fail our duty to cooperate. We plan to cooperate with our neighbours while also not compromising the Borough.

Q- I am pleased that we can build more council houses, however can you quantify affordable?

A- There are a variety of tenures: a property with a rent at 80% market rent, shared equity housing where people can rent part of the property and buy another part on mortgage, Self-built homes can also be deemed affordable.

Social rent is the most affordable type of housing. These are council houses. Council house rent is half of market rent. These homes are often allocated to people on housing benefit, these are homes that are truly affordable for those individuals.

Q- What level of architectural expertise do you have in the Council Planning Department?

A- We have an excellent urban designer who has been at the Council for many years. When we need landscape architects advice, we seek it externally.

Q- What has stopped us building council houses until now?

A- We didn't have enough money. The latest development cost £2.7 million and 6 houses were built.

Q- I understand that land on Isle of Wight has been purchased in order to offset nitrate levels. How many houses will that offset?

A- Every site has a nitrogen quota which takes into account its current nitrate levels and what it is used for. Some sites have nitrate neutrality, such as Welborne. A lot of nitrates come from agricultural runoff.

The site on the Isle of Wight feeds into the same catchment as Fareham. The positive work the Wildlife trust are doing is all part of the changing approach to nitrates in the area, things are going to improve.

Q- Does the land on Isle of Wight mean that the nitrates of new houses in the Local Plan will be offset?

A- Every site has its own nitrate calculation as they have varying levels of nitrates to begin with. Each new housing site does not necessarily have a negative impact on nitrate levels.

Nitrate offset schemes are paid for by property developers as they have to purchase credits in order to offset sufficient nitrates caused by their developments. The Council has also modified some of its council housing stock to reduce the nitrates produced there.

Q- The strategic gap between Stubbington and Fareham is talked about a lot, my understanding was that we did not want to build on that land?

A- Yes that has been our position. However in 2015 our Local Plan was found sound on the condition that we reviewed our strategic gap borders, we have done so.

We believe it is critical to maintain the gap between the west and east of the Borough and also between Stubbington and Fareham. We have never promised that we would not touch the gap. Furthermore, whilst there is an area set aside for housing the rest of the site is being kept as green space.

Q- Why have we got a housing contingency of 11%? Why is there not an agreement between Fareham and other areas of the country for housing numbers?

A- We are told we should have a buffer of 10%. We have shouted very loudly indeed about our housing numbers. However, if we do not put together a plan that is sound then our Borough is in danger of uncontrolled development.

Q- Are new retirement homes included in our housing requirement?

A- They do make a contribution, yes. However, one room in a retirement home is not always an exact equivalent for a new house. It depends on the level of care in the facility.

Q- Southern Water have been fined recently. What controls do we have over Southern Water so they keep to their promises?

A- The Environment Agency regulates them.