

COUNCIL

10 FEBRUARY 2015

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A.2 **PETITION: POTENTIAL HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN WEELEY** (Report prepared by Ian Ford)

In accordance with the Council's approved scheme for dealing with petitions, I formally report the receipt of a petition submitted by Carol Bannister, Vice-Chairman of Weeley Parish Council, as lead petitioner. The petition is signed by over 700 local residents and states:

"No' to 1,100 Further Homes in Weeley:

We, the undersigned object to such a huge increase in housing for our village over the next 17 years on the grounds that it will destroy our community, ruin the character of our rural environment and take up agricultural land in a farming area."

In accordance with the Council's approved scheme for dealing with petitions, this matter will now be investigated and a report will be prepared and presented to Council together with the petition.

The Council's petition scheme specifically states that *"in the period immediately before an election or referendum, the Council may need to deal with petitions differently. If this is the case, the Council will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale that will apply"*.

Members will be aware that the next ordinary meeting of the Council is on 24 March 2015 and this date falls within the 'Purdah' period for the forthcoming District Council elections.

The Local Plan Committee acknowledged at its meeting in November 2014, that the allocation of sites within the draft local plan was becoming an election issue and therefore:

RESOLVED, that the Local Plan Committee considers the content of the Draft Local Plan, as soon as possible after the elections in May 2015, to enable it to be then agreed for publication for formal consultation.

In accordance with the Council's Pre-Election Guidance issued by the Chief Executive, decisions, meetings, public consultation exercises and publicity campaigns on issues which are considered to have the potential to be politically contentious may be rescheduled until after the election. It is for these reasons that Officers' advice is that consideration of the petition is reported back to the next ordinary meeting of Council following the Annual Meeting of the Council.

At that meeting, and in accordance with the Council's procedure, Carol Bannister, as the lead petitioner, will be invited to address the Council, present the petition and outline the action that the petitioners would like the Council to take. Members will then discuss the petition and decide what action, if any, should be taken. Mrs Bannister will then be informed, in writing, of the Council's decision and the decision will be published on the Council's website.

RECOMMENDED

- (a) That the receipt of the Petition and the contents of the report be noted; and

- (b) That, in accordance with the 'Purdah' provisions of the Council's Petition Scheme and the Council's Pre-Election Guidance, the Petition be investigated and considered at the first ordinary meeting of the Council following the Annual Meeting of the Council.

IAN DAVIDSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS LIST FOR
REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

A.2 PETITION: POTENTIAL HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN WEELEY

Petition submitted by Carol Bannister, Vice-Chairman of the Weeley Parish Council to the Planning Department on 10 November 2014 and subsequently.