

Suggested additions to the Council's draft response to the government White Paper 'Planning for the Future' following comments from the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee on 30th September 2020.

They relate to a) the absence of any consideration of impacts on the natural environment and b) concern about the risks of Councils borrowing against anticipated levy receipts. The Chairman of the Committee and the Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Place have considered the comments and recommend the following additions to the responses to Questions 4 and 22(d) for Cabinet's consideration.

The suggested additions are shown as underlined.

4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? [Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]

1) The design of new homes and places: Building a much better standard of home that is beautiful to look at, a delight to live in and a pleasure to be able to own and afford.

2) Supporting the local economy: Being able to support local businesses to expand and diversify whilst attracting inward investment and maximising the economic potential of tourism and the district's many assets.

3) More and better local infrastructure: Ensuring that infrastructure, particularly social infrastructure for health and education, is planned alongside new housing and delivered in a timely manner.

Conservation of the natural environment is also a high priority, yet the White Paper is notable silent on such matters. Measures to speed up the planning system and boost the delivery of housing need to be balanced against the need to consider and where necessary mitigate against the impacts on wildlife, in line with legal obligations.

22(d). Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Yes. It might provide the only means by which some infrastructure can be delivered ahead of the development – thus allowing the development itself to proceed smoothly.

However, there are concerns about borrowing against anticipated Infrastructure Levy receipts. If the new levy is to be paid in line with the progress of development and on completion of dwellings, there is a serious risk that if developments stall, an authority might be left with a significant debt and increasing interest costs. Under the current arrangements, authorities are able to secure financial contributions through s106 legal agreements prior to the occupation of development and at key stages or defined ‘trigger points’ as the development progresses – providing more certainty over receipts.