



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 82/20

12 OCTOBER 2020

The purpose of this Report is to agree a response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's current consultation on its White Paper, *Planning for the Future*.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government launched a consultation on 6 August on its White Paper, *Planning for the Future* – available by clicking [this link](#) - that invites responses until 29 October.
 - b) The White Paper's stated aims are to modernise the planning process, improve outcomes on design and sustainability, reform developer contributions and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed.
 - c) The consultation covers a package of proposals for reform of the planning system in England, covering plan-making, development management, development contributions, and other related policy proposals.
 - d) Views are sought for specific proposals and the wider package of reforms presented.
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2) RESPONSE

- a) As recorded in Minute 95/20 of the Town Council Meeting of 14 September Members agreed that the Town Council's Planning Committee would assess the proposals in more detail with a view to agreement on a formal response at the 12 October meeting.
 - b) An informal meeting of the Planning Committee was held virtually on Monday 5 October to discuss an initial draft provided by its Chair, Councillor Brian Lucas.
 - c) Its agreed response for consideration by this meeting of the Town Council is attached to this Report.
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3) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to consider the attached draft, amend as agreed and authorise the Clerk to submit it to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in advance of the deadline.



VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

12 OCTOBER 2020

{DRAFT}

This is a response from Ventnor Town Council to the government's *Planning for the Future* consultation as agreed at its Meeting of 12 October 2020.

The first response to the White Paper is to question how realistic the Standard Method of establishing housing growth is for our area, and upon first view, it bears no relation to the needs of Ventnor or the ability to locate, build and service the number quoted, and certainly not when any further increased number is calculated.

It would seem that the high number of units is based on a flawed formula and does not take into account the unique conditions applying to Ventnor in particular, and the Isle of Wight in general, such as:

- Poor and expensive travel links with the mainland
- The Island roads, albeit recently resurfaced, are not suited to such a significant increase in traffic as would result
- The local Hospital has been downgraded in some essential specialisms, causing more off-island journeys
- A major proportion of Ventnor's land mass and coastal areas has protected status, which is the prime attraction to tourists, upon whom the local and Island's economy depends
- All utility services have to be delivered from the mainland and are already under strain
- The limited housing needs of the island are currently evidenced by having nearly 2000 planning applications granted where no building has started
- High cost of distribution of goods from the mainland
- Owing to the holiday attraction of the Island any large housing growth will not totally satisfy the genuine national housing shortage, but will be massively reduced by being classified as "second homes" This due to insufficient differential Council Tax charging (a valuable source of LA funds) being applied
- Generally, a low wage economy exists with limited employment opportunities

The proposals in the White Paper regarding setting growth levels are a blunt tool to meet a national housing shortage without any real scrutiny to ensure they are correct for our locality of Ventnor and certainly not for the Isle of Wight.

The White Paper has some worthy aims.

The necessity for the LA to formulate a very comprehensive and precise Local Plan with new criteria and to agree a design code is surely an essential requirement of any planning process.

Consultation is however needed at a local level to affect the new planning zone boundaries, design codes and the total number of new dwellings mandated over the next 15 years. The possible land that could be designated as a growth area, with effectively no local sanction once established, is strictly limited in Ventnor and can only lead to land previously considered totally unsuitable, to be zoned with the pressure to fulfil a theoretical number and type of housing units.

The proposal regarding local plans, if cleverly devised, offers us an opportunity to tackle the thorny issue of affordable housing content in any growth. It must be accepted that commercial developers will always suffer when affordable housing, usually with a lesser specification, adversely affects the marketing of their full price properties.

The great need for more private rented accommodation, acute in Ventnor, needs to be addressed. Councils and Housing Associations need to be properly funded to satisfy this rented sector's needs. Shared ownership options should be insisted upon with new estates to breach the affordability gap. Self-build schemes should be instigated by local authorities.

All these proposals should be part of the local plan, together with innovative design ideas to make the most of brownfield sites - but a realistic growth plan for the next 15 year needs to be agreed first, and not by using historic-based formula.