

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

17 October 2023

Item 5 – Public Participation

From Henk Leerink

To Cllr Nick Botterill – Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning

Question (P23-28)

I initially contacted the council about their failure to notify in writing about the current plan being a key resident next to the development. They admitted that this would be a non conformity with regards the Statement of Community Involvement. When I raised a complaint this was dismissed, stage 2 was dismissed also and it has now been escalated to the Ombudsman, The fact that WC contacted 23000 people about this current plan and the 2 previous plans is irrelevant to all of those most impacted residents who were not made aware of any of these plans. Does the council not agree that they have not engaged with the most impacted residents and should have fully followed the processes described in the SOCI, that these residents have been denied the opportunity of a consultation under Reg 18 and there has been a violation in response from Spatial Planning?

Response:

The council has responded to this enquiry through e-mail correspondence. A response has also been replied to through the council's formal complaints process. The matter is now being assessed by the Local Government Ombudsman and therefore it would not be appropriate to comment further.

Question (P23-29)

Since the plans is based on evidence the only objections residents can make is to challenge that evidence. To that end numerous FOIR's have been made generally resulting in fuzzy responses providing no evidence (mine was about traffic, pollution and emergency services). Does the council not agree that if the public are denied the evidence requested they are not able to challenge the plan, or if the evidence is not forthcoming within the consultation period they are denied making objections or if it expires such evidence does not exist that the plan is not credible?

Response:

The council has responded to requests for information in accordance with Freedom of Information Act legislation. The evidence base supporting the emerging Local Plan has been published as part of the current public consultation which runs until 22 November 2023, and representations can be made until that date. Following the close of the consultation, officers will review all representations received and produce a consultation statement, responding to the comments raised. The evidence that has been published has informed policies and site allocations in the emerging Local Plan. This will be subject to examination by an independent Planning Inspector in due course, taking into account all representations received.