

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

1 December 2020

From Myla Watts

**To Cllr Philip Whitehead – Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, MCI and Communications; and
Cllr Toby Sturgis – Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property**

Item 8 – Consultation to Inform the Wiltshire Local Plan Review

Statement

I find the availability of your agenda and papers, to allow sufficient time to prepare a proper question, as usual, much too late. How are busy members of the public supposed to have time to wade through the 900+ pages provided, digest the information and respond in just a matter of days? It's totally unacceptable.

Regarding WCCs planning processes: it is clear to me that you are working within an increasingly out-dated model of economic growth at all costs ("We must build more houses and grow the economy so we can build more houses, etc"). However, it is also clear our planet will not survive if we continue in this way – we need a green, sustainable future which must start now – we have already run out of time. You are not supposed to be in charge, you are here to serve the people of Wiltshire and if you put all these planning decisions to referendum I'm certain you would get a clear 'No' from the public. Don't think that one county council can't make a difference – if you lead and push back against government directives and pressure local MPS, others will follow because let's face it, MPs (like Councillors) all want to be voted back in!

Each of you should realise you are personally responsible for the massive destruction of our very depleted countryside and associated biodiversity loss when voting through builds on non-brownfield sites. Don't you realise Britain has experienced a 41% decrease in wildlife populations since 1970? Also, don't you realise that humans cannot survive without biodiversity? We are 100% depended on it and if we lose it, we have no future.

Question 1

My question to you is, when will you stop pussy-footing around the edges of green policy and essentially just performing tick box exercises, and put the climate change and biodiversity loss at the forefront of your planning decisions?

Response

The Local Plan process is complex and must be undertaken in accordance with legislation, national planning policy and guidance. It is not a simple tick box exercise.

Climate change and biodiversity are an integral part of the process. However, the Government's National Planning Policy, at paragraph 8, recognises that the planning system has three overarching objectives - economic, social and environmental - *"...which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)."*