

Report to Sparsholt Parish Council 17th September 2020

The Local Plan

We were expecting the Strategic Issues and Options Document to be published in August. This was to have outlined the Council's chosen options on where to build more homes around the district. The options being considered were:

Option 1: Increase development in line with the current Local Plan

Option 2: Focus development on Winchester

Option 3: Allocate land for a new settlement – such as a new town of 6,000 homes around Micheldever Station or Hursley

Option 4: Build new homes in proportion to the size of existing settlements – which would Require development around most of our villages, for Sparsholt that would mean 100 new homes.

The City Council did not publish this important strategy document, citing the start of two Government consultation papers – one reviewing how local plans must be produced and the other how local housing numbers must be calculated. This has created a vacuum and uncertainty for all, but they did publish the SHEELA, which details all the possible development sites amounting to over 44,000 potential houses in the District.

It is clear that Village Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals will be important in any new planning regulations as there is a focus on design and so I recommend you review your documents at the earliest opportunity to ensure they reflect your aspirations for our community.

These papers will not be finalised for many months yet. Winchester will still have to consider the options for delivering the revised number of homes. It is essential as a Parish Council you become involved in the discussion and you make it clear where any new development is appropriate, rather than for others to take silence as consent for building on our countryside.

Leisure Centre

The River Park Leisure Centre, including the swimming pool, has reopened. The Council's new operator, Everyone Active, have taken over our leisure facilities in preparation for the opening of the new Bar End leisure centre early in 2021.

Covid -19

WCC staff have started to return to the offices this week. We can accommodate 140 safely and staff will rotate on a regular basis so they have time at home and in the office. The council is discussing whether Marshalls will be introduced to oversee the new rule of six, based on the latest Government regulations.

Finances

A new budget will be discussed at Council next week to accommodate the loss of revenue during lockdown particularly from parking. You will be seeing car parking charges increase in a few weeks and the introduction of Sunday and evening parking charges. You will also see the introduction of the outrageous tax for collecting garden waste from 1st February.

Instead of your free green bag service, you will now have to pay an annual charge of £59 for a 240l wheelie bin. Currently a Band D Council Tax cost of £143.09 pa includes this cost. Our community will be greatly impacted by this change.

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