

Full Council

21 October 2020

NOTICE OF MOTION – THE PLANNING WHITE PAPER

Mover Councillor Crow and Seconder Councillor Lamb

This Council notes:

- 1) The publication by Government of the White Paper, 'Planning for the Future' on 6 August 2020, which set out proposals on reforms to the planning process for the future.
- 2) That currently, the vast majority of planning applications are given the go ahead by local authority planning officers and committees, with permission granted to around 9 out of 10 applications across the UK.
- 3) While some of the analysis of the problems existing within the planning service are accepted, too many of the solutions put forward will not help the situation but may worsen it.
- 4) That the following proposals contained within the White Paper are of particular concern regarding their potential impact for planning in Crawley:
 - The proposals should not result in a decline in on-site provision of affordable housing. In a land constrained borough, it is difficult to secure alternative sites for off-site provision. "Developer discretion" over which units are affordable is a significant concern. The council should be able to continue to set its own affordable housing requirement and tenure mix through the Local Plan examination process.
 - Removal of the Duty to Cooperate, meaning there is no requirement to cooperate with regard to major developments close to shared boundaries, as well as address unmet needs.
 - The setting of a binding housing target based on constraints which are unclear.
 - That a formula-based approach does not avoid the need to make substantive, strategic decisions about the distribution of housing, and has the disadvantage of a greater perceived lack of transparency and legitimacy when applied at local level.
 - The potential loss of local democracy, accountability and engagement as part of the development management process, if increased delegation reduces or minimises the future role of the Planning Committee.

- The contradiction of increasing Permitted Development Rights, particularly for proposals such as two storey upward extensions, against the White Paper's increasing emphasis on good design and automated decisions against Design Codes.
- That a nationally set Infrastructure Levy will fail to take account of differences in viability. Conversely, there is a concern that the threshold below which the Levy won't be charged could result in development taking place in viability challenging areas within the borough, but making no contribution to infrastructure or affordable housing, therefore risking a reduction in the future provision of new affordable housing.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Highlight these concerns within the response provided by the Council to the consultation.
2. On behalf of all members, instruct the Chief Executive to formally write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, stating the Council's cross-party concern to these proposals and to seek revised proposals that better serve future planning in Crawley.