

Council Meeting 7 December 2017

Public Questions

Question 1 from Mr Leon Butler to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Planning (Councillor Mills)

I sense that re-designating the Forums may well be a watershed moment, a time when change happens, a Torbay Spring perhaps? It's an odd thing being empowered to do an important job, not unlike your first love, it's overwhelming, you have a nibble and you want more. Our communities have tasted Localism at work and we want the plate full, not some divvied out scrap that officers grudgingly want you to throw us.

The question for you is do you ride this wave, work with our communities to make Neighbourhood Planning a success, in deed to embrace community involvement – it could well be scary, you may feel threatened, but it could be the catalyst for a new way forward, to get us all working together for the good of Torbay.

Our Forums haven't got everything right, we could have done things better, we could have been more adventurous but we were frankly constrained by understanding, knowledge and our own misgivings. We wanted to succeed, we want Torbay to succeed but when we started out we didn't know what that meant.

But now we do, we have a submitted a Plan – it's a good Plan, it's not a perfect Plan but neither is our Local Plan but if you take the time to read it you will surely agree that it has merit, it gives our communities' vision within the constraints of the Local Plan; it gives its full support for economic growth, it protects our environment and delivers more than our allocated housing sites; it protects and adds sites for employment space. And yes, unashamedly, we protect our allotments, our play parks, our special green spaces.

I'll tell you what I find really offensive about the various iterations of this officer report, it's not the lies, bias, half-truths, careful omissions or misinformation it's saying on Page 141 Paragraph 2.18 'Approval by Council to re-designate would give the Forums the opportunity to submit representations as a qualifying body, until December 2022. Experience to date has shown that this has had a significant impact on Council resources day to day'. So in other words the community are a damned nuisance because democracy boils down to how much cash it costs the Council – can you really support that?

	<p>But the report by officers does quite clearly state the law, the basis of your decision – Page 142 paragraph 2.21 ‘The issues relating to the content of Neighbourhood Plans will be considered separately and by an Independent Examiner, this is not a matter for this report’. You might care to consider why it is then that officers deemed it appropriate that almost all the supporting evidence against re-designation in Appendix 1 references the content of the submitted Plans?</p> <p>So summing up it’s really down to whether we are properly constituted to comply with the law for designation – do we meet the criteria or not? Well there are no objective arguments against and we have evidenced that we do, as the report clearly acknowledges, so the case for re-designation is overwhelming, not unlike the results of the consultation.</p> <p>Summing up, we have a role to play in making Torbay successful; we want Torbay to be successful and we want to finish the job we started - support your communities and vote yes to re-designation.</p>
<p>Question 2 from Mr David Watts, Chairman Paignton Neighbourhood Plan Forum to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Planning (Councillor Mills)</p>	<p>See Appendix 1.</p>
<p>Question 3 from Mr Darren Cowell, Chairman of Torbay Community Partnership Company to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Planning (Councillor Mills)</p>	<p>Would you agree with me that there has been an enormous amount of voluntary effort invested in to the development of our three neighbourhood plans and that it is necessary for the three Forum responsible to be allowed to complete the task set out to them in December 2012?</p> <p>In addition, given the strained relationships between some officers and the Forums as a result of an original recommendation to not renew the Forum status, what efforts will be undertaken to rebuild bridges?</p>