

# WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 28 April 2014

### AGENDA ITEM 6

#### Questions from Members

##### 1. Question from Councillor A Turner to the Leader of the Council

Given Conservative Councillors refusal to consider the potential savings from the merging of Buckinghamshire's County and District Councils into a Unitary Authority, perhaps the ruling clique will at least allow our residents the opportunity to comment on the matter. In the interests of democracy will this Council agree to consult the electorate on this matter by way of a referendum which could be timed to coincide with next year's local elections, thereby making this a very cost effective and popular public consultation?

**Verbal reply to be given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott**

##### 2. Question from Councillor G C Hall to the Leader of the Council

Given the strong level of interest that has been developing within the electorate over the past few years towards the idea of creating a unitary council in our area, and given the fact also that councillors are divided over whether or not this would be the right move for us, do you agree that careful consideration should be given towards asking the electorate in a referendum if they would like to see this long term change happen?

**Verbal reply to be given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott**

##### 3. Question from Councillor M Knight to the Cabinet Member for Community

In my district council ward of Micklefield most of my casework is taken up with issues around the services provided by social housing providers. Could the cabinet member outline the methods used to monitor the performance of these housing providers and what safeguards are in place to ensure that housing is of sufficient quality and customer service is of a good standard?

**Verbal reply to be given by the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor J Gibbs**

##### 4. Question from Councillor T Snaith to the Leader of the Council

The leader of the council stated at December Full Council in relation to Town Council for High Wycombe "I am yet to see a compelling case...I do not believe it would be in the interest of town residents to offer a solution that would increase council tax."

Does the leader agree his beloved Marlow could reduce the tax burden on its residents if it had a toothless Town Committee like High Wycombe. Therefore what is in the best interests of Marlow – A Town Council or Town Committee?

**Verbal reply to be given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott**

**5. Question from Councillor B Pollock to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainability.**

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that ".When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations".

In addition, in a House of Commons Library note to MP's (Ref: SN/SC/934) dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014 the following statement is made:-

**"Online Planning Practice Guidance issued by Government in March 2014 aims to make clear that "unmet housing need (including for traveller sites) is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm to constitute the "very special circumstances" justifying inappropriate development on a site within the Green Belt".**

Would the Cabinet member agree with me that this a very clear statement by the government that "other considerations" does not include "unmet housing need" and that the Green Belt should not therefore be used to meet Wycombe's unmet housing target in the Local Plan Review, in particular in the Green Belt that surrounds both Bourne End and Hedsor?

**Verbal reply to be given by Cllr Neil Marshall, Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability.**

**6. Question from Councillor K Ahmed to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainability.**

The Local Plan identifies the need for 7,600 affordable homes. What do you think are the chances of getting developers to provide these affordable homes?

**Verbal reply to be given by Cllr Neil Marshall, Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability.**

**7. Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability**

How successful do you think WDC has been in distributing the consultation leaflet on the Local Plan to all residents??

**Verbal reply to be given by Cllr Neil Marshall, Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability.**

**8. Question from Councillor G C Hall to the Leader of the Council**

Do you feel that it is right, proper, and moral that you and other non-High Wycombe members of the Cabinet should have the power of veto over what can and cannot happen in the unparished area of High Wycombe when it comes to matters from the High Wycombe Town Committee?

**Verbal reply to be given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott**