

Overview and Scrutiny 12.5.22.

Chair: Joan Raine

Report by Michael Hanley.

## 1. Portfolio Holder Question and Answer Session. Virginia Taylor.

### Partial Review of the Local Plan

Planning: When the new administration came in in 2019, we promised to do a full review of planning, with a view to sustainability and affordable housing. Due to local government reorganisation, the timetable for bringing things to fruition was problematic. We revised this to a partial review in 2021. We looked at health inequalities. We have appointed a consultant for sustainability including strategic environmental assessment.

There is an important new concept: nutrient neutrality. Certain parts of England have been under this condition and recently we in Eden have been added. It refers to excess nitrogen and phosphorus which pollutes our rivers. The main source of this is fertiliser but building new homes contributes to this in the increased amount of sewage. Alston is the only part of Eden which will not be affected by this new ruling. There will be a ban on new houses and campsites. We have had feedback from other areas which were affected in 2019. It took up to 9 months to sort out the issues. We can offset the pollution by changing agricultural land usage to other purposes. There will be a cost to developers.

There have been 2100 planning applications in the last two years. 79% are dealt with in 13 weeks (national target: 60%). 5 new appointees, 2 new enforcement officers. New software will be used. With the A66 dual carriageway scheme, we have put pressure to add a cycleway. This is due to be started in 2 years and will take five years to build.

Michael Hanley (MH): Asked whether this ruling was to try to prevent algal blooms and if so wasn't fertiliser use by farmers the main cause. How was the building of new houses involved?

Fergus Mc Morrow (planning officer): Due to sewage treatment which will have high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen.

David Ryland: You talked about taking agricultural land out of production.

FMcM: Fertilisers and animal stock add to the problem. If land use is changed then it reduces pollution such as re-wilding of land.

Graham Simpkins: This nutrient neutrality will cost money, I hope it doesn't affect affordable housing.

FMcM: We will have to review viability.

## 2. Single Site Update

Les Clark (LS): Work is progressing on Voreda House. A crane is coming to take down the concrete cladding. Concerning the Town Hall, the cabinet has approved an arts and cultural adaption. Better access to the current council chamber on the first floor is needed. A new better lift will be installed.

MH: Is there any indication that the new unitary authority will accept Voreda House as a hub for Eden? I suppose it might be too early to predict.

LS: Yes, it's too early but if the facility is up and running by April 23, we hope they will use it.

## 3. Zero Carbon and Biodiversity Update: Laura Cadman (LCa)

The COP 26 grant is awaiting approval. Also the Eden Greening Business Scheme is up and

running. The limit of funding is £19k but we might review this in June.

Doug Banks: Can the grant be used for village halls?

LCa:Yes.

LC: The high carbon footprint of Eden is due to the cement works and the M6.

MH: Asked about chargers for electric vehicles and pointed out that what will be needed will be the fast chargers that will fully charge the car in 30-40 minutes not 4-5 hours. Also, will the council own these?

In the document you talk about getting the cooperation of farmers to increase biodiversity. Talked about the very harmful effect of various pesticides on the bee population. Also referred to the success in Ireland and Scotland in increasing red squirrel populations as a result of the reintroduction of the pine marten.

LCa: Plans are to work with farmers to improve biodiversity. As for EV chargers, we will want these to be useful so super fast chargers would be preferred and it would be expected that these would be council owned.