

Questions from Jack Fiehn, BBC Radio Surrey political reporter, answers from Kathy Smyth, Guildford, Woking and Waverley Friends of the Earth. Recorded 19 June 2013.

Question: I'm here at Tuesley Lane, we are here at Milford Hospital in fact, the new properties are going to be built to the south and east of here. Kathy Smyth is from the local branch of the Friends of the Earth. Kathy, can you just describe what we have in front of us just here.

Answer: This is one of the last available brownfield sites outside the major settlements which we are aware of. The sites that are causing real concern are the greenfield sites because once you have used up a site like this you are looking at Greenfield.

(Question edited out).

Answer: What the Council got wrong was that they didn't understand that the most important thing they had to do, and they had to start with, is what is called a "robust evidence base" of housing need. What they tried to do was justify the housing numbers based on the capacity of the area and the landscape constraints to accommodate that housing and that's just not what the government expects to see.

Question: Why is it a bad thing that this plan is now at risk and why is it a problem if this Council doesn't have one?

Answer: It means the National Planning Policy Framework will now govern the planning in this area and it means that there is going to be something of a planning "free for all" because developers have already identified sites, they have got option agreements. I'm expecting those sites, a lot of them around Farnham, and big debate around Cranleigh... the sites that I think will come forward first are the ones which are not in the Green Belt but they will come forward in an uncontrolled way.

Question: Where should houses be built in Waverley in your view?

Answer: That's also quite a difficult one because at the moment we don't know how many homes we are talking about, but let's assume it's a far larger number than the number the Council put forward which was 230 houses per annum. We would say, and my group would say, let's look again at the potential at Dunsfold Aerodrome.

(Question edited out)

Answer: This inspector is saying to them..... he's not saying 'you can save this plan'. He is saying to them in that letter 'this plan is doomed, please accept this offer to withdraw and maintain some dignity' and I hope they do that.

Question: If you had a message for Bryn Morgan, who's the Councillor in charge of planning at Waverley, what would that message be?

Answer: It would be, please, withdraw this plan, let's start afresh, let's do it properly and let's work together.

Live Interview with Bryn Morgan, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Waverley Borough Council, first broadcast 20 June 2013 at approximately 7:10am. Interviewer Paul Cannon.

Question: You heard what Kathy Smyth has said, what's your reaction?

Answer: It's not a story I haven't heard before, but it's not one that I accept. We have done an enormous amount of consultation with local people to determine how many houses they feel Waverley is able to sustain. It's not a question of just building houses, we've got to build them in places where they will work, where there is the infrastructure as far as possible to support them.

We came up with a figure of 230 but that was based on the old regional plan which suggested 250 – not a mile apart but that was shot away from under our feet when the government removed and abolished the local (sic) plan.

Question: What do you make of UKIP saying they are worried that Waverley will become Developer's paradise because of your actions?

Answer: It's what I would expect from UKIP, totally irresponsible and totally uninformed – they haven't the faintest idea what they are talking about.

Question: The Inspector though has given you a number of options – he's said that withdrawing the plan may be the most appropriate – are you going to do that?

Answer: Withdrawing the plan would be the easiest way forward I admit, but he has given us 3 options and I've set our officers busy, our planning experts, to find out what the possibilities are. At the moment we have not made any decision between all 3 although I suspect the first option does not look awfully promising but we will make a decision about which way to go and it will be based on factual information not merely speculation.

Question:you've suggested that many of the new homes could actually be built in neighbouring areas like East Hampshire and Rushmoor. Have you made assumptions on that? What have the Councils had to say?

Answer: We have hoped that we would get cooperation from those areas based on the fact that if you work in an area and live in another there has to be some kind of compromise about where the housing need lies. In actual fact we have had some discussion with East Hampshire that might bear fruit in the future, but we have had absolutely no cooperation whatsoever from Rushmoor. The Inspector did accept though that we had made every effort to co-operate and that was as much as we could be expected to do.

Q: So are you not just trying to shift the problem away from you?

Answer: Well of course. If the problem is caused outside Waverley area we expect some co-operation in dealing with it from those authorities beyond our boundaries.

Question: We should mention Dunsfold Aerodrome. The Farnham Society and Friends of the Earth are calling for you to reconsider the land around Dunsfold. Seems to be a logical brownfield site to build homes on, isn't it?

Answer: Well it is and it isn't. It is also an industrial employment site and there is a case before the High Court at the moment which.... if permitted, would allow it to become a much more active airport. I'm not quite sure where Dunsfold Park Limited are coming from. Either they want industry or they want housing but there is one thing I have to emphasise. Putting housing all over Dunsfold Park would simply increase the number of houses we would have to find across Waverley. It would not take them away from Farnham.