

Planning Committee – 14 December 2021

Written question from Lindsay Becker to the Chairman

The briefings at Freshwater Library by the Cabinet Member for Planning and to Freshwater Parish Council by planning officers, report that the Freshwater Neighbourhood Plan represents the most significant document to defend against excessive development. That consistent advice formed the foundation of objections to Birch Close, including the Freshwater Parish Council.

Following objections, FPC and the Ward Councillor's contribution, the planning staff interjected, stating that the more recent release of the NPPF superseded the FNP. What changed between the local briefings and the planning committee meeting to diminish the weight of the FNP? The briefings from Councillor Fuller directly pointed to the protection afforded by the FNP, why was this crucial document withheld from the advance briefing papers circulated to the committee and also from the website, resulting in the committee members being unaware of the important policy contents and unable to consider their relevance and debate them?

Response

The weight given to the Freshwater Neighbourhood Plan has not changed. The NPPF does not supersede the FNP – these two documents, along with the Island Plan Core Strategy, form the Development Plan against which applications are considered. If there is a conflict between policies in the Development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to become part of the Development Plan. Officers highlighted that the revised NPPF was published after the Freshwater Neighbourhood Plan.

The FNP was clearly referenced in the Officer's Report that was considered by the Planning Committee. The report was made available to members of the Planning Committee and published in the public domain on Monday 8 November (a full week before the Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday 16 November). The FNP has been available on the Council's website since it was made and came into force on 12 March 2018.