

Corporate Scrutiny Committee – 12 April 2022

Written question from Dom Hicklin of Freshwater to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

It appears that consultation has been with developers and agents and not with Parish Councils and the public have been largely ignored and their views not represented in the summary. Has the correct procedure for moving settlement boundaries been followed?

Response

The Council has undertaken extensive public consultation in formulating the current draft plan. This consultation has been with a wide spectrum of people and organisations, with over 4,500 responding to the various consultation. Planning staff presented at over 20 separate meetings (including Freshwater Parish Council) and together with drop-in sessions held by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Community Engagement, over 600 people attended these events to hear about the draft IPS and have the opportunity to ask questions.

All the responses have been considered, along with the evidence base the Council has established, and used to inform the draft IPS which has to be prepared within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The preparation of a local plan is an appropriate planning mechanism to consider the issue of settlement boundaries. There is nothing within the NPPF stating that settlement boundaries should endure across plan periods or should not be capable of revision to accommodate the development needs of a new plan period. There is nothing within Planning Practice Guidance (which supports the NPPF) to suggest that settlement boundaries should be fixed on a permanent basis or that they should endure unchanged when moving from one local plan to its successor.

The inclusion of allocated sites within settlement boundaries when a new local plan is being prepared is not uncommon. It can make it easier to formulate development management policies which will then apply to the allocated sites and help to provide clarity about future development areas, rather than leaving such areas as ostensibly subject to countryside/rural area policies because they remain outside of a settlement boundary. That is especially the case where there is also a policy stance which is restrictive of development outside of settlement boundaries, as is proposed in the IPS.

The proposed changes to settlement boundaries were consulted on at the Regulation 18 stage of the Draft IPS in the summer of 2021, will form part of the Regulation 19 period of representation and also be a matter for consideration during any public examination.