Downland Villages Ward : MSDC

Geoff Zeidler : Councillors Report – 15th May 2023

MSDC Update

A new Council was elected on 4th May 2023. The balance of the Council is Liberal Democrats 20; Conservative 18; Independent 5; Green 4; Labour 1. The first Council meeting is on 24th May at which time a Chairman and Leader will be elected and future roles appointed. At present there have been one of two days of induction meetings and so I am not yet fully briefed.

Given the focus of the Ward I have requested to participate in the District Plan Committee; the Scrutiny Committee for Executive Leader, Deputy Leader, Planning, Economic Growth and Net Zero; and the MSDC representative on the Board of the South Downs National Park.

District Plan

The Council is currently progressing the District Plan under the current NPPF although changes to this are expected. I have written to our MPs to request their assistance in having any revision published as soon as possible. The Policy approach to the District Plan may change with Leadership of the Council. The present District Plan is open to challenge as it is over 5 years old and the first speculative SoS appeal has been launched.

Services

The budget for the Council was adopted unanimously before the election and so the services plans outlined in the budget are expected to be progressed.

Infrastructure

There was a meeting with Southern Water organised by residents of Sayers Common with the support of Bob Sampson and Andrew Griffith MP. This reflected flooding issues in the area, particularly related to new developments. I am aware that there are similar issues in Albourne and I will be ensuring I am engaged in the follow-up.

Parish Issues for DC Support

Common Issues

Almost all the Parishes are seeking TROs or other approaches to mitigate speeding on dangerous roads; flytipping remains a regular issue, as is management of dog waste disposal facilities. Flooding also remains evident in a number of areas.

Albourne

An appeal to the SoS has been launched by Croudace relating to 120 houses South of Henfield Road adjacent to Albourne School.

Fulking

There is an appeal scheduled in relation to un-approved development at the Small Acres site. This arises under SDNP Planning.

Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common

The actions arising from the meeting with Southern Water include resolving the level of service from the Capita call centre and four actions to be completed by the end of May.

Newtimber

None at present

Poynings

None at present. There is local pressure for an extensive re-surfacing of the road through Poynings.

Pyecombe

None at present

Twineham

Response required by 30th May to the Rampion 2 extension socket consultation and there are 3 planning applications for Battery Energy Storage System facilities. DM/23/1184 – Lightrock Power; DM/21/2276 – Envirotech and DM/23/0769 – One Planet. Planning consent exists for a 42 acre solar array.

The major concern about BESS is Fire and Environmental risk as these are relatively new technologies. Stuart Malcolm is the MSDC Officer with responsibility for electrical applications.