

Appendix 1

Councillor A. Kent's response to Councillor S. Douglas' Question

What is the best way to get these two vital items, appended to the Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 without delay:

- Protected provision for walking and cycling, with dropped kerbs, linked to public transport, should have priority when planning the most convenient option or getting about, and
- That all new buildings including domestic housing be carbon neutral compliance and ECP Rating A, with run-off water storage, energy generation and appropriate EV points; these having now arisen given the urgency of holding back climate change and the reduction of air pollution?

It is simply not possible to append things to the District Plan, all planning policies in District plans must go be subjected to the full plan making process, which involves evidence gathering, wide scale public engagement, and culminates in an examination in public carried out by a representative of the Secretary of State. As members know that process is already underway, and the issues raised above can feature in the consideration of that review, although the answer just given to the question from Cllr Hughes is also relevant here in relation to carbon neutrality. Officers are considering what if any changes can be made to the recently adopted design Supplementary Planning Document to consider climate change further, although the ability to introduce new requirements as per the question are unlikely to be possible in a supplementary planning document which does not have the full weight of an adopted District Plan policy.

The current BDP in policy BDP16 in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council Streetscape design Guide already has policies to ensure safe and convenient access for walking and cycling, As with any planning issues, I would urge members to raise this issue at the SPSG so officers can investigate further.

Councillor A. Kent's response to Councillor S. Hughes' Question

The Government is currently consulting over removing the right of local authorities to determine environmental standards in new homes as part of its Future Homes Standards. Does Cllr Kent agree that this could hamper our aspiration to become carbon neutral and limit our ability to set ambitious requirements for new homes as part of our review of the local plan? Will you write to the Secretary of State following the election in December to ask for a rethink?

The simple fact is we don't know how it will affect our aspirations. The proposals do set a standard that is an improvement on current building regulations and the current District Plan. Our aspiration to become carbon

neutral will be affected as much by the financial viability of any new standards, which have to be considered when setting local plan policies, as by new government standards. The new standards would appear to be able to be enforced without requiring a lengthy local plan process to determine them, so may in fact speed up the implementation of higher standards. The consultation is open until 10th December, officers are considering a response at the moment; I would urge others to respond if they feel strongly about it.