

## Improving the Planning System for Alton

### Our Agenda for Change

#### THE CHALLENGE

To bring about significant and meaningful improvements in the planning outcomes affecting Alton. We will achieve this by challenging the weaknesses in both the policies and processes embodied in the planning system at a local and national level, and campaign for consistent levels of excellence in the Local Planning Authority's decision-making. This will include the need to engage with individuals and other organisations that have similar concerns.

#### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE BY EHDC

##### PLANNING POLICY

- 1 Adoption of good design principles, including choice of materials, and better internal space standards, for example as expressed in the BBBB Commission's report: *Living with Beauty*.
- 2 Application of Alton-specific policies which are current, and which focus on the town's unique character, sense of place, and historical context, for example in an updated Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3 Ensure that all development mitigates against the impacts of climate change, by insisting on rigorous building standards with the aim to build carbon neutral new homes and all other developments, in line with the SDNP Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

##### PLANNING PROCESSES

- 4 Facilitate earlier intervention by The Society in the planning approval process, recognising that we have historically always been too late to influence outcomes.
- 5 Implement a Design Review Process, as they operate across most of Hampshire and in the SDNP, especially for the sensitive and significant applications.
- 6 All sensitive and significant applications and significant amendments to them, to come to Planning Committee, with meetings held in Alton, and with adequate public notice.
- 7 All public consultations to be held at convenient times and locations, to optimise public attendance, and to be attended by Planning Committee members.
- 8 Sensitive and significant applications to include 3D modelling, clearly illustrating relationship with the topography and street scene. These to be available at public consultations.
- 9 Make site visits the 'norm' for all sensitive and significant applications, and ensure that a majority of the Planning Committee members attend, or alternatively make separate arrangements to visit the site. Members who have not attended should abstain when votes are taken.
- 10 Agendas and associated papers to be issued earlier than the current 6 working days. Ban the issue of Yellow Sheets on the day of meeting.
- 11 Applicants, ATC, and objectors to be allowed more than the current 3 minutes to present their case, allowing the use of visual aids as appropriate.
- 12 The Committee Chairman should not feel obliged to agree with the officers' recommendations.