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TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

AMENDMENTS FOR COUNCIL

Date: Wednesday, 15 March 2023

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Council – 15 March 2023

Liberal Democrat Amendment to motion 8a – Protecting our precious green belt

This Council believes that:

Tackling the housing crisis is essential in order to provide fairer futures for the next generation.

A plan that works for all of Trafford Borough is best developed in Trafford Borough, by this Council and in consultation with the people we represent.

Every part of the borough should be afforded fair and equal treatment when it comes to providing access to nature and wildlife and protecting what remains of our green spaces.

This Council recognises:

That Trafford Council has recently focussed substantial energy on preserving green spaces in the north of the borough, and now will seek to find similar ways to protect those in the south of the borough.

The site of the former municipal golf-course William Wroe - which spans both sides of the Manchester to Liverpool railway in Flixton - was removed from the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (the predecessor to Places for Everyone) and now enjoys 'field of trust' status.

The lengthy work which would be required to submit all such green spaces to Fields of Trust; and agrees to find alternative ways to protect vulnerable green space in the south of the borough from unnecessary development.

Plans to develop Timperley Wedge would remove the last large open green space between the already heavily developed urban areas of Timperley and Hale Barns, thus removing the 'green lung' between those communities and the airport.

The density of the housing means the current 'Timperley Ward' has one of the lowest percentages of green space of any ward in Trafford and the further increase in density resulting from building large numbers of houses and office buildings on Timperley Wedge would be detrimental to the area.

Council Officers have confirmed that there is sufficient brownfield space in Trafford for more than 16,400 dwellings. A 'brownfield first' approach can provide Trafford with the homes it needs and should be pursued more vigorously.

That the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in December made a statement in the House of Commons in relation to ~~an update~~ government U-turn on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

In this statement the Secretary of State confirmed that whilst he will maintain a method for calculating he believes that the plan-making process for housing has to start with a number, this number should be an advisory starting point, a guide from that is not mandatory.

The Secretary of State further added that it will be up to Local Authorities, working with their communities, to determine how many homes can actually be built, taking into account what should be protected in each area - be that our precious green belt or national parks. It will be down to local authorities to determine how many homes can be built, taking into many factors, including protecting our precious Green Belt.

The Secretary of State further outlined how those local authorities with local plans at an advanced stage of preparation who will not benefit from these provisions can take advantage of transitional arrangements to produce plans that are compliant with the new guidance.

Although this Council is part of the Places for Everyone submission, we have no adopted local plan. As such the housing need calculation made within Places for Everyone is now obsolete and not in line with national guidance. As such it is clear that Trafford's local plan be produced in line with the new national guidance. Bearing in mind the ~~clarification outlined in the~~ Secretary of State's statement U-turn in the House of Commons.

This Council resolves to;

- ~~To~~ withdraw Trafford Council from the Greater Manchester "Places for Everyone" Plan with an immediate priority.
- Develop a joint approach to calculating housing need through community consultation and a reinforced brownfield first policy.
- Make a public commitment to protect the Borough's precious Green Belt by removing the Timperley Wedge and Carrington Moss sites from any future local plan.

Amended motion 8a to read:

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Council – 15 March 2023

Liberal Democrat Amendment to Motion 8b – Making Votes Count with Proportional Representation

This Council notes:

Within Europe, only the United Kingdom and authoritarian Belarus still use the archaic First Past the Post (FPTP) system for general and local elections. Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect parliaments in more than 80 countries.

At the 2019 general election:

- The SNP won one seat every 25,883 votes.
- The Conservatives won one seat for every 38,264 votes.
- Labour won one seat for every 50,837 votes.
- The Liberal Democrats won one seat for every 336,038 votes.
- The Green Party won one seat for every 866,435 votes.
- The BREXIT party received no seats despite winning over 600,000 votes (2%) nationwide.

FPTP returns a government that doesn't represent the will of the voters. FPTP also permits the basic unfairness of minority rule. In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a government with 56.2% of the seats but 100% of the power.

The impact of FPTP is to leave millions of voters feeling unrepresented and unheard.

Under a PR voting system MPs, councillors and other elected representatives would better reflect the views of their communities. This would lead to improved decision-making, higher turnout and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken.

PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and at local elections in Scotland. Welsh councils also now have the right to adopt a PR system for their local elections if they so choose.

With 2.8 million people, Greater Manchester is almost as populous as Wales with 3.1 million people, yet the citizens of Greater Manchester do not enjoy the same devolved powers to decide their own electoral systems for local elections as the citizens of Wales.

This Council believes that:

- The FPTP system has contributed to dangerous levels of distrust and disillusionment with our democratic processes and politicians.
- 3 elections between 2015 and 2019, and 3 Prime Ministers in the last year, shows that FPTP does not lead to stable government.
- It is essential that faith is restored in our democratic system and that the public see Parliament as fairly reflecting their views.
- Our FPTP voting system is a significant barrier to restoring this faith and all but guarantees that the balance of opinion among the electorate is not reflected in Parliament or in council chambers.
- A system of proportional representation in which seats match votes and all votes count equally would help to rebuild public trust. It would ensure that all political views are represented in Parliament and councils in proportion to their level of public support.

Council therefore resolves:

1. To request that the leader of the council writes to the Government asking it:
 - to change our outdated electoral laws to enable proportional representation to be used for general elections,
 - and to (following the Welsh Government's example) allow Councils to use a PR system if they so choose.
2. To request the leader to sign, on behalf of this council, the Electoral Reform Society petition calling for fair votes in English local government.
3. To call upon Trafford's MPs to push for a change to electoral law to permit proportional representation and to promote the matter for debate within Parliament.
4. To call upon Greater Manchester's Mayor to use his office to push for our region to have the devolved powers necessary to switch to proportional representation for the local election of Councillors to the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester.