



RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

**to
COUNCIL
2 JULY 2020**

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's public speaking protocol the following questions were received from members of the public.

2. QUESTIONS

- 2.1 The following questions were received from Judy Lea on behalf of the Maldon Society on Friday 25 June 2020:

“We understand that the whole of the Local Development Plan has only one policy reference to a new nuclear power station (confirmed by Director Paul Dodson via email on 28th April this year). Embedded in Policy D4 there is the statement “The council will strongly support the principle of the development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea”.

Our question is in four related parts:

- a) Can the Council please now make widely available and easily accessible the detailed arguments and supportive evidence upon which this policy was founded?
- b) The need for a new station is determined by national government, but that policy is now well overdue for reassessment. Since calculations were made in support of the current national policy there have been enormous changes to both the means of electricity supply and storage, and the consumer demand for it. For example, even pre virus, there has been a 37% drop in electricity consumption below the government prediction. Amongst many other factors which have changed are the increased political awareness of the dangers of relying on China, the reduced costs of green energy, and the knowledge extreme weather events are becoming more frequent. Does the District Council therefore now consider it wise to suspend its unequivocal support for the new station until its place in national government policy has been properly reassessed and the need reaffirmed?
- c) In the light of the greater knowledge now circulating about the potential practical implications of the district's own policy (as evidenced for example in the BRB public consultation documentation and its evident omissions (such as power distribution infrastructure), is support by a majority of current members really still wholly unqualified and ‘strong’?

- d) Since the construction of the proposed station and its varied associated works (such as roads, piers, commuting traffic, staff accommodation etc.) is the largest single development affecting the District, likely to affect in one way or another the whole of the district (as well as many people beyond its borders), we therefore also ask that any MDC voting processes concerning Bradwell BRB now and in the future be by named vote please, in order that constituents are aware of the view of their elected representative.

We trust these important questions will be properly debated by the Council. Many thanks for your consideration.”

3. RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

3.1 The responses are set out below:

- a) The documentation on the preparation of the Renewable Energy and Low Carbon policy is already a matter of public record and is available on the council’s website:
https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/9163/local_development_plan_supporting_documents

From here, the documents that have informed the development of the District’s renewable energy and low carbon policy can be inspected, including the consultation documents and Committee Reports.

The policy was considered by the Planning Inspectorate during the Examination in Public between 2016-2017 an Inspector’s Report was issued detailing his considerations for alternations to Policy D2

- b) Whilst the Council may choose to now advise it no longer supports the new station (by a Motion for example), in 2017 it adopted the Local Development Plan which advises that the statutory policy position of the Council is different. The policy has statutory weight in decision-making and the Council cannot just withdraw aspects of policies it no longer supports when it is inclined to. The Council may feel that is inclined to change its position based on evidence and judgement, but I can only see that it can do that in two ways:
- i. by completing a full / partial review of the Local Development Plan, submit it to the Government and be advised by a Planning Inspector that it is legal, sound and can be adopted – which would take at least 3 years to pass through all legal stages; or
 - ii. By notifying the Government it intends to withdraw the whole Local Development Plan – this would result in a policy vacuum and would mean the Council has very little influence over any other type of development or land management in the District. The Council would also then be on the radar of the Government for not having an up to date Local Plan and could face intervention or some planning powers being withdrawn.

- c) As set out in in the LDP, Policy D4 “The council will strongly support the principle of the development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea”. This is current policy until such time as the LDP be withdrawn or amended as set out above in point b).
- d) In accordance with the Council constitution in rule 13(3) members can request a recorded vote on any motion providing that is seconded. .