

"Good Evening. I have to say I am frankly worried by the lack of candour on the part of E.D.D.C., the lack of involvement by local communities and town councils, and to put it bluntly the lack of democracy in East Dorset at the moment.

The building plans that have just been issued in the Core Strategy are much changed from the last version in September 2010. There is a lot of detail, right down to community allotments, roads, footpaths. Now the Government has made it very clear that top down planning should be at an end and that communities and Parish and Town Councils should be involved at the start. So have we been? Not in any way - it has all been done behind closed doors, and now we are astonished at what we see.

The Leader of the District Council has said that on Monday 5 March the full Council will be "voting on whether the document is sound and acceptable to go to consultation, rather than the merits or otherwise of individual elements of the Local Development Framework." Now that is a most masterly piece of political obfuscation. I don't know if he is thinking of standing for Parliament, but if he ever does he will be immediately eligible for a Ministerial post.

The clear facts are that the Core Strategy is about housing. In the green belt. You only have to read a hard copy to see that new housing estates in the green belt take up nearly all the space. In September 2010 the District Councillors voted for what they called "options" Make no mistake, on March 5 they will be voting for their Plans. The ones just issued, with 2490 houses in the green belt. A very great deal of time and money has been spent on these Plans, and although they can be modified as time goes on it is quite unthinkable that they are just some ideas that can be tossed aside. It is crucial to the Council leadership that they get the OK on March 5th, and that is what they will be voting on.

So crucial, in fact, that the Council has gone to a lot of trouble to see that the public can't interfere. To see that they can't make forceful and persuasive presentations as they did in 2006, when the P & R Committee met in front of some 200 people in the QE High School, resulting in a change of policy.

Where and how is this meeting to be held? Outside East Dorset, would you believe, in the Village Hotel Bournemouth, just outside the Bournemouth Hospital at 6pm on 5 March. Parking is scarce to non existent; no buses go there from East Dorset's communities; the time is not convenient for workers. And to cap it all the Council has, without so far giving a proper reason other than "they can", styled it as an "Extraordinary Meeting at which the public cannot speak. Really, you couldn't make it up!

This is happening in Councillor's names, but it is not apparent that they have been asked. They should examine their consciences before they take responsibility for this. Because they *are* the Council and they *are* equally responsible. They might reflect that the next time they are held responsible by the public is in the Spring of 2015 - just about, should the housing estates be approved, when the bulldozers will be starting to tear up the green belt fields. It will be too late then for them to reflect that they have got themselves on the wrong side of the electorate, and that is not a good place to be at election time."

Richard Heaslip, Chairman West Parley Parish Council.