

January 2024 Report – Emily O’Brien, District Councillor

The Lewes District Council consultation on the next stage of developing a local plan launched on 29th November and runs to 8th Feb. Do respond and encourage residents to respond as this is a key time to influence two aspects. Firstly, the policies. There are some very strong environmental policies which I really am hoping people will support. Secondly, it's very important that the council gets Ringmer's views on both how and where housing growth should be located. Please note this is NOT a draft local plan, sites that are on this draft and graded amber are still being assessed technically. However, if you have views on them it is really important they are heard as part of the consultation.

I would also strongly encourage the parish council to come up with a list of infrastructure needed - including backdating thinking on to sites which have been given permission as speculative developments outside of any local plan process. I will certainly be seeking to emphasise this in my own response. We need the existing deficit to be made up if any new development takes place. The consultation is:

https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LDC_PO_2023/consultationHome

CIL applications have also opened - the deadline is 19th December - see:

<https://buff.ly/2psLeEG> for more information about CIL or contact CIL.Lewes@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk.

Separately there is a consultation on the council's corporate plan, which is the list that sets out our priorities going forward, and comments would be greatly welcomed. It runs until 31st December - <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LDC-plan-consultation>

My cabinet role has been busy with the above and more, and our upcoming meeting (7th Dec) will be focussed around finances which are incredibly challenging at the moment as for local authorities up and down the country. We are intending to renew our commitment to giving 100% council tax relief to those residents who need it most, as part of our support during the cost of living crisis. I was also on the panel for Lewes District Council at a recent 'Rights of Rivers' conference organised by Love Our Ouse, and visited yet another water treatment works (Newhaven this time) - to understand more about our water challenges - it's becoming a habit!

At the recent full council meeting we passed a 'motion for the ocean' which I was involved in developing, building on our commitment to supporting nature and addressing water quality issues.

I've also been busy with my LGA work including chairing a session on responses to the cost of living crisis.

Congratulations to the parish council on the lovely new website and thanks to all the parish councillors and all our wonderful residents and community groups for all you have done through the year - and wishing you a very peaceful Xmas and new year.