

## Wokingham Borough consults, ignores, then blames someone else.

The Lib Dem Council refuses to accept responsibility for the chronic waste of money and the bad scheme for California Crossroads. Conservatives opposed this scheme, seeing its unpopularity when listening to public opinion. This Council approved it and decided to spend £5.5 million on it.

Lib Dems complain that as MP I did not regularly criticise the Council when it was Conservative controlled. That was for two reasons. The first is it was better run. The second is the Council invited me in or to zoom meetings with the Chief Executive to go through matters of common concern for the public. I had regular email and phone exchanges with the Leader so I knew what was going on and could influence it. I could work closely with the Council where they needed help from the government. When the new Lib Dem Council was elected I accepted an invitation to a preliminary meeting. I offered them the same behind the scenes support I had offered the previous administration. I said I would take up any sensibly argued proposal that needed government support or money. They have subsequently failed to take these offers up. I do not receive briefings about their financial condition, for example.

Despite this lack of normal co-operation I have taken up things I assume they want without their help or information to back my case. I have successfully persuaded the government with other MPs with similar problems to drop the top down housing targets that require too much building. I have explained this and urge the Council again to put out a local plan, as this is crucial under the new approach to offering protection to areas we do not want developed. They have failed to do so.

I have helped get more money for potholes. I want to see action using the enlarged road maintenance budget as there is a big rash of potholes.

I have helped get more money for social care, as this was an area in need of more funding.

I have helped get two new SEN schools where we need more provision.

I have offered public advice to the Council to not cut back spending on grounds maintenance and decent proper street cleaning and drain clearing. I have supported continuation of weekly bin collections.

I have helped get a substantial uplift in the main grant to the Council and in the totals including a range of other sources of public money.

It is a new low in Lib Dem propaganda to argue I want sewage dumped in our rivers. The government has set out proposals with the water industry to increase pipe and processing capacity which has to happen to handle increased volumes. In the meantime before the bigger pipes have gone in the choice is between letting the sewage into rivers or it backing up and polluting our

roads and homes.

Instead of scaring people about the financial position when they inherited a strong one with £120 million in balances the Council should get on with the task of providing value for money and spending on the peoples priorities. It would be a good idea if next time they hold a consultation they drop or amend their unpopular plan instead of ploughing on with it regardless as they have been doing all too often so far.