

Farnham Residents doing vital service

Sir, – The lead article in *The Herald* last week describes the debate about Waverley's allocation of £250k for its estimated legal bill for judicial review. The debate was called by councillor Jez Hyman for Farnham Residents, and you could feel the sense of personal resentment his action provoked. Waverley doesn't do debate, it prefers unanimous and predetermined decisions behind closed doors.

It was revealing watching councillors on the video recording. They remind you of Jeremy Corbyn. He and his cronies have spent so many years in a self-admiring echo chamber they have lost all capacity to hear, listen to, talk to, relate to anyone who thinks differently, and they get furious when people don't take them at their own valuation. As for opening their minds to the views of others, they don't know how to begin.

As a result, councillors all speak like a chorus of clones. They have no individuality because that would mean independent thought. One redeeming moment came early on from the presiding mayor, subtle and understated, when he asked councillors to remember to turn their mobiles OFF when they left the chamber.

One councillor said he was baffled by the thinking of those who oppose the scheme. Of course he's baffled. Neither he nor any of his colleagues has had the curiosity or even the courtesy ever to make any contact with the thousands who disagree with them; how could he be anything other?

Another councillor, from Godalming – who and how many in Farnham has he talked to? – claimed the majority favoured the scheme. Like all his predecessors, he makes the assertion but offers no evidence. He has none.

There is an all-round paucity of adjectives when councillors speak. Adjectives don't make money, and money is all they know how to talk about, members of a council that has been completely outfoxed and outgunned by CNS over that very issue. The £20m sweeteners promised by the developers will become sweeteners to the developers, by the time land purchase is complete. May Farnham Residents continue to expose this.

Just as Waverley doesn't do debate, nor does it do contact with the public; and it has abolished informal questions at the start of meetings. Too threatening. It now erases public recordings of its meetings after a fortnight and is replacing them with interviews with the mayor and the council leader. Presumably it thinks we will find this more entertaining; certainly it means it controls the message in even more draconian fashion.

In interview, councillor Potts claimed there was affordable housing in East Street. At the May meeting where the public was forbidden to speak and the decision to go ahead was announced, it was stated there was to be a change from 72 affordable homes to 72 in shared ownership. This is a more expensive option and makes it harder for everyone, including the young, to start on the ladder.

Ms Potts spends her interview time sycophantically buttering up the young. As though their's was the only generation on the planet, not one among a number of equal groupings. Demographically, the numbers of the old are increasing the most rapidly, so they are the ones whom she should be flattering, but that would be just as bad. All generations matter equally.

Jez Hyman and his colleagues are doing us a vital service. They are holding a series of ruthless, failed practices up to scrutiny and exposure, thereby providing an astringent corrective to the Corbynista tendency. More power to your collective elbow.