

PRESS

RELEASE

Keep Andrew Turner for the Island

Andrew Turner - Conservative Candidate for the Isle of Wight

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Council Leadership's Housing Disarray

Widespread public condemnation of a paper proposing 14-27,000 houses for the Island has led to an apparent change of tack by the IW Council.

The Executive on 6th April backed a proposal for a minimum of 520 houses a year for the next twenty years, not linked to economic regeneration (over 10,000 houses over 20 years). This contrasts sharply with the Executive's submission to the South East England Regional Assembly, which described 14-27,000 houses over 20 years as the 'preferred option.'

Andrew Turner, who is seeking re-election as the Island's Member of Parliament, had publicized the 14-27,000 figure which was submitted to SEERA after approval on behalf of the Executive by Cllrs Shirley Smart, Harry Rees and Terri Butchers. Mr Turner said,

"The Council's Lib-Dem / Independent Executive has now backed a minimum of 10,400 houses over 20 years for the Island, not linked to regeneration. This was clearly an attempt to clarify the utter confusion which has arisen about what the Council finds acceptable.

"Sadly it does nothing to resolve the key issues which concern Islanders. First, to many over 10,000 extra homes are unacceptable. Second, why did the Executive sign up to 14-27,000 houses? And third, why did Executive members deny signing up to 14-27,000?"

"On the first point, I have had letters from many electors and a number of town and parish councils which make clear their concern about the impact of even 10,000 houses. They point to

the shortage of jobs and the impact on congestion, medical facilities, and the green belt, and the evidence of recent years when these numbers of houses have been built.

“On the second, the Executive gave delegated powers to three members to make decisions on their behalf – and therefore on behalf of the IW Council. The three members were Cllrs Shirley Smart, Harry Rees and Terri Butchers. It is clear that they approved the submission to SEERA which identified the 14-27,000 figure as the preferred option. This must be withdrawn, explicitly, as soon as possible. I fear that otherwise we will be in a position where a minimum has been approved but the only maximum on record is 27,000 – the one in the submission to SEERA.

“Finally those councillors should withdraw their demand that I retract my press statements on the subject. My statements have been carefully researched and in many cases checked with Council officers or Council documents. Cllr Butchers is standing down at this election. But Cllrs Smart and Rees have been deeply irresponsible. They endorsed the 14-27,000 figure on behalf of Islanders but without consultation. Either they believed the document, they didn't read it properly, or they didn't understand it. In any case they have let down the Lib-Dem councillors and the so-called Independents who they lead, and Islanders on whose behalf they took these decisions.”

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