

## **MDC Councillor Lindsay MacDougall - report for Feb 2022**

I attended the following meetings this month:

**Full Council:** items of interest here included:-

- 1) a report on the **Mendip District Council Climate Management Plan:** there remains criticism of this Plan that progress cannot be accurately measured with reference to the Mendip District Council Carbon Emissions targets and we are merely given a description of activities that have taken place.
- 2) a motion was passed to include in the **Medium Term Financial Plan** the service objectives sought during the year with the agreed funding for them. This is to be **written in plain language** avoiding complex financial terminology, and published with a prominent link on the front page of the Council website so the public can readily access it. Councillors noted that in the case of Gloucestershire Council, recognised for good financial practice by the LGA recently, they not only state their case but have a public consultation before bringing it to Council.
- 3) a motion was passed to confirm that **Phosphates mitigation** should seek a wider gain beyond simple trade-off schemes; mitigations schemes should be nature-based and demonstrated to work throughout their stated operational life (not just fit then forget). The council will also write to government to request a reduction in our housing target numbers in view of the phosphate issue.

**Affordable Housing meeting:** I attended a meeting with the Principal Housing Enabling Officer, Nina Richards, and Julie Reader-Sullivan (Group Manager Planning and Growth) re social and affordable housing. I will now be writing to seek the support of the National Housing Federation policy team to lobby government to change the 'Affordable Housing' designation, which currently covers socially rented housing, but also housing that is for sale on the private market at prices well beyond the reach of those on lower incomes. The National Housing Federation represents Housing Associations, in particular with regard to the national housing crisis. Those on low incomes who cannot access homes for social rent are currently reliant on landlords who are still entitled to ask a tenant to leave with a 'No fault eviction' with only 2 weeks notice. I understand the Renters Reform Bill is expected in the future to address this precarious situation and remove this regulation.

**Rishi Sunak's Council Tax Rebate for all residents:** It is worth noting here, as it *applies to all residents*, that payment by Direct Debit for council tax is the most straight forward way to claim the government £150 rebate recently announced. You can apply here for the rebate:  
<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/paycounciltax>