

# MEMBER SPEECH FOR VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE ECM

Cllr Alan Dean 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Mr Chairman, welcome to your important civic and chairing role.  
I would like to start with some words that come to us from the  
Victorian age:

*“Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?”*

Mr Chairman, life in politics will never be without storms. If there  
were no choices to be made, there would be no need for  
politicians to make decisions for themselves and their fellow  
citizens.

Meetings like this would not be needed, never mind permitted **in  
public. It would be like Toytown in Soviet Russia!!!**

A later line reads:

“Will your anchor drift, or firm remain”?

Mr Chairman, we live today in an era of populism and opportunism:

- *That is, of politicians shifting their support in favour of something to being against it, simply to get one up on their erstwhile colleagues in an attempt to be popular.*
- ***Being unprincipled. Being populist.***

We all remember Donald Trump.

The big question for us is:

Will Uttlesford's anchor drift, or firm remain?

My take on Uttlesford District Council today is that the ship has **lost** its anchor; so, drift is inevitable.

Worse still, it is currently heading straight for the rocks. And no attempt by the captain, otherwise known as the leader, to bully the crew into meek submission and silence will save this small ship of state.

Why do I say all this? Well, in summary, in slightly earlier years events went like this.

During much of the last Council, the present council leadership backed the Local Plan promoted by the previous Conservative administration. It was only in the runup to the 2019 local elections that the R4U leadership saw an opportunity to distance itself by becoming populist campaigners.

I can just imagine the party line on the doorstep:

“Vote for me, and there will be no houses built at the bottom of your garden.”

That was naturally very popular. But it was not honest of the R4U leadership to promote the fantasy. In fact, it was disingenuous, whatever words were actually spoken on the doorstep.

Indeed! In today's reality, the cabinet is on the verge of agreeing the start of a new Local Plan containing an annual housing target getting on for 100 homes higher each year than in the Plan the cabinet carelessly ditched in 2020.

The Leader and Cabinet have wrought planning chaos on the district because of the delay. Why did this happen? Because they didn't like to make difficult decisions. Opportunists always crave for a scapegoat whenever anything gets tough: the Opposition, the Government, the Planning Inspectors, the general public and others.

When challenged this year by the public over the choice of their investments that make up their £300 million mortgage, they alleged that there had been a leak of confidential information. They blamed councillors. They attacked the public – the very residents they claim to support.

The Cabinet simply didn't like searching questions so they avoided giving answers. They invented justifications, made false statements but never came up with evidence that there had been a mole.

However, it seems that opportunists must always have scapegoat for their own failings. It seems not to matter who that is and whom they hurt in the process.

And I might say, Mr Chairman, that Cllr Lees, in particular, in making allegations that officers just do what they want and its nothing to do with the Administration, is just another example of scapegoating others. I will not change that view. (Interrupted by Cllr Lees.)

Mr Chairman, it seems to me that:

- whether it is covering up or turning a blind eye away from alleged criminal activity
- telling untruths in public meetings
- or looking desperately for scapegoats to cover for their own failures to defend their own planning committee's unequivocal decision about airport expansion
- **the Leader and Cabinet have brought Uttlesford District Council into disrepute.**

The Council has been poorly and dishonestly led.

**This Leader and Cabinet should go without delay!**

Thank you, Mr Chairman.