

## Questions from Richard Hames

### To Councillor Toby Sturgis – Cabinet member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Operational Property and Waste

#### Background

1. On the last day of the EIP Mr Cunningham informed the inspector that the LEP or council WOULD provide finance if the developer was unable to do so. This was a commitment the council was willing to do. This commitment was accepted by the inspector - please see 4 below.
2. Mr Sturgis in his helpful reply to a Question at the last cabinet meeting stated: "The statement of intent from the Council is a last resort and only a wise contingency to guarantee the timely delivery of road infrastructure in order to minimise adverse traffic impacts." Mr Sturgis then went on to explain that the liability of the council was a CONTINGENT liability rather than a COMMITTED liability. This however is ingenuous as the inspector is asking for back stop finance. This therefore means that there is a POSSIBILITY that the council WOULD be required to make payment?
3. The inspector in his final report required the council to change its policy so as to provide for the council AGREEING to provide backstop finance if the developer failed to do so. Also in his report he stated that the cost of the railway bridge and infrastructure was in excess of £3 million, though others have stated at the EIP that they thought this was unrealistically low. The inspector also contemplated the council exercising its CPO rights to purchase land (allegedly owned by Wavin). See MM26 of the Main Modifications.
4. The commitment the council is being asked to give today by approving the inspectors report is COMMITTING to backstop the cost of the railway bridge and infrastructure and if necessary the compulsory purchase of land. As Wavin still consider they own the land in question, despite what ever assurances you may receive from officers, there is always the possibility that the council may have to compulsory purchase the land which will be based on the developers profit and therefore be hugely expensive. The council CANNOT GUARANTEE that the money that is spent upfront will ever be repaid by the developer. Nor do they know the quantum of their liability.

#### Questions

1. Is the Cabinet aware, that if it approves the inspectors report, it is agreeing to backstop financing the bridge and infrastructure and possibly compulsory purchasing land to build the bridge on?

#### Answer

Cabinet is aware of its responsibilities in terms of supporting the delivery of allocated sites and the infrastructure required.

2. Is the Cabinet aware that Wavin do not wish the link road to run the length of Parsonage Way through their site but wish it to run along a new road yet to be constructed on the edge of their site? If yes, how do they propose to assist Wavin, a leading employer, given that the CSAP is employment led?

**Answer**

Yes, Cabinet is aware of Wavin's proposals and as always will work constructively to support businesses where it can.

3. The inspector in this report required 40% affordable housing. Please see para 36 of his report when he raises concern as to whether CP43 can be satisfied? Is the council now amending CP43 and reducing that to 30% given Baroness Scott's comment on the Sunday Politics TV programme on 25 February 2017 or will 40% still be required in Rawlings Green?

**Answer**

The Council has no intention of modifying Core Policy 43 and still remains on target to achieve the overall Core Strategy target to achieve 30% affordable housing across the County.