

West Wiltshire District Council

Council

23 June 2004

Question from Cllr Osborn to Leader of Council: Cllr Phillips

Question

Can the Leader please explain why local members, District and County, were never officially informed of the decision made by Somer Housing Society to purchase 67 Bradford Road, Trowbridge for use as a Drug Users Rehabilitation "Hostel"?

What is point of elected members being referred to as Community Leaders when they are totally ignored as to matters of immense importance to their local community - matters that this Council and its officers have been working on behind closed doors for some time?

Did the two Housing Portfolio holders know of this matter?

By not informing local members this Council have ensured that they have totally alienated local residents and that the Drugs "Hostel" when it opens will not be well received by the local community.

Answer

The purchase of a property by Somer Community Trust at Bradford Road Trowbridge has recently been the subject of press attention, and meetings involving Ward Members, officers and residents.

The original proposal to support Somer in developing such a scheme was put to Cabinet in September 2002 when Councillor James the then portfolio holder asked Cabinet (Cllr Osborn was also present as a member of that Cabinet) to support a programme of bids to the Housing Corporation. The Appendix to the report identified the bids and included a bid by Somer Community Housing Trust for a 6 person special needs (drugs and alcohol) scheme in Central area.

I refer you to the report presented to the Internal Overview Committee on 16 June. I understand that that Committee has made recommendations to Cabinet on the whole question of how members should be kept informed of this and other local issues. These recommendations will be considered by Cabinet on 30 June.