

COUNCIL – 13 FEBRUARY 2020

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 13 FEBRUARY 2020

The following questions have been received under Standing Order 8.1. The draft replies, which are subject to amendment, are set out below.

“Councillors are thanked for their questions.”

1. Question from Councillor M Ali

“When will the monies already lent to greenfield school be fully returned to WBC and paid off.”

Reply from Councillor A Azad

“The funds lent to Greenfield School for the acquisition and development of their new site will be paid back to Woking Borough Council over a period of up to 50 years commencing 3 years after the acquisition of the site.”

2. Question from Councillor M Ali

“What profit will council make on the money already lent to greenfield school.”

Reply from Councillor A Azad

“At 31 January the Council had lent £6.4m to Greenfield School at 1% over the 3 year PWLB rate. A 1% margin on the amounts drawn to date generates £64,000 pa to support of Council Services.”

3. Question from Councillor M Ali

“The council was informed that the red park had structural issues and hence needed to be demolished. However previous surveys had not found any such defects. Why so?”

Reply from Councillor D J Bittleston

“The Council was not advised that it needed to demolish the red car park but that it was considered more economically advantageous to do so rather than reinforce it. The initial survey was a sample survey related to the first Planning Application which had proposed a part floor extension. Following discussion with Members about the volume of parking availability in the town centre a subsequent Planning Application sought additional floors and more overall parking. The second survey was more detailed and extensive than the first survey. I have previously advised the Council of this position when I responded to a similar question from Councillor Ali at the meeting on 17 October 2019.”

4. Question from Councillor M Ali

“Relating to question above on red car park: the CEO had informed the council that council will be taking action against the surveyor who had failed to spot the defects or make a claim. What has been done?”

Reply from Councillor D J Bittleston

“In response to the Question from Councillor Ali at the Council Meeting of 17 October 2019 I advised you that the Chief Executive had no recollection of stating that the Council would take action against the surveyor. Therefore no action has been taken.”

5. Question from Councillor L S Lyons

“Is the Council aware that letters were sent from Community Partnership LLP, a developer, to residents in Waverley Court and York Road stating that they “are working with Connolly, Crowther and Hofbauer LLP and Woking Borough Council on a regeneration of this part of Woking”? Is the Council also aware that the letter gave the residents a number of options, including selling their homes or moving to alternative properties, but that none of the options given was to decline the offers and stay put? Is the Council also aware that several residents have described the manner of the people delivering these letters as “bullying” and “intimidating” and that some residents allege that they were verbally told that a meeting had already taken place, whereby the decision to develop this area of Woking had already taken place in a meeting at the Civic Offices, and that there was nothing they could do to affect that decision? I have furnished the Leader of the Council with a copy of the letter in full.”

Reply from Councillor D J Bittleston

“I am grateful to Councillor Lyons for supplying me with a copy of the letter sent to residents. I asked the Chief Executive to raise our concern with the developer that the letter could be interpreted to imply it was a Council development when it is not. It is also disappointing if the developer’s agent has behaved in a manner that some have interpreted as “bullying” or “intimidating”. The Council will be aware that part of the site was identified in our HIF Bid as it will, subject to Planning Approval, enable the relocation of the access to the Aggregates Yard and in that regard the Council will work positively with the developer. I will ensure that the developer is aware that the Council expects it to act reasonably with residents when seeking to acquire their homes for the development.”

6. Question from Councillor R N Leach

“Does Woking Borough Council sell data on individuals who visit our website to any third parties, and if so, to whom?”

Reply from Councillor K M Davis

“No, the Council does not sell any personal information to third parties.”

7. Question from Councillor R N Leach

“To what extent is Woking Access Group consulted when planning developments in Woking?”

Reply from Councillor G S Cundy

“Woking Access Group is not consulted on planning applications within Woking, the planning team use the in-house expertise of building control colleagues where input is necessary on this issue. However, we endeavour to inform the Woking Access Group as appropriate of new initiatives in the Town Centre.”

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REPORT ENDS