

(5) PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Given that the content of two public questions originally earmarked for the Cabinet Meeting on 17th May 2018 relate to the same subject area as two Member Questions that appear on this Council agenda, the Chairman has agreed to deal with those two public questions at today's Meeting - following consultation with the Cabinet Member and the person who has posed the questions. The date of submission of the questions was within the timeframe that would have allowed their presentation to this Meeting (in accordance with the Council's Constitution), albeit without the guarantee of an answer.

Questions from Mr Peter Minty, Chairman of the Stow-on-the-Wold Community Land Trust, to Councillor SG Hirst, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure

Question (1) - 'To assist CDC in providing truly affordable community led housing in Stow requires resolving the following:

1. Provision of property, land or money worth 50% of the project.
2. Finding development sites in Stow, which due to its geography as a hill-top village, are rare and priced at market rate.
3. Redressing the age imbalance (45% over 65 with 300 elderly people in two care villages, with no provision for affordable housing).
4. Exploiting the exemption of Stow Community Land Trust (CLT) from the "Right to Buy" legislation, to provide affordable housing in perpetuity.

A rarely available plot of land, with planning permission for 5 houses, has become available in Stow. Will the Cabinet approve use of the £882,000 Community Housing Fund money to provide Stow CLT with a sizeable investment in order to secure a mortgage available from ethical lenders?'

Response from Councillor Hirst

In line with CDC's bid for Government funding and the Cabinet report of February 2017, the Community-Led Housing Fund is to be allocated as follows:-

Activities	Tasks	Indicative Budget
Community Capacity Building	<i>Annual Project Management and Support</i>	<i>£100,000</i>
	<i>Training and support package</i>	<i>£15,000</i>
	<i>Small grants start-up fund (criteria to be agreed)</i>	<i>£150,000</i>

Community Housing Delivery	<i>Delivery support - technical, housing need</i>	£150,000
	<i>Capital viability budget (new / existing units)</i>	£467,272
Total		£882,272

As can be seen, the identified budget for capital grants/loans is £467,272. The hope/expectation is that such sum will be capable of assisting the delivery of 15-20 units - which equates to approximately £23,000 - £30,000 per unit, on a value-for-money basis.

In this context, the cost of the potential development plot which has been identified significantly exceeds the budget allocated for capital grants/loans, and is likely to deliver well below the overall number of units that we believe is achievable on the basis of such budget. As such, it does not appear to be a viable scheme that we could support.

We are currently finalising the process by which detailed proposals can be submitted to the Council for consideration under the scheme, and will let you have full details as soon as they are available.

Question (2) - 'To assist in the county-wide problem of lack of affordable housing, the community in Stow has attracted nearly £6,000 in grants to set up the only Community Land Trust (CLT) in the CDC area. This is dedicated to providing truly affordable housing in perpetuity for local people. As recommended in the "Community Led Housing" document, will CDC commit to engaging with Stow CLT to find solutions to purchasing and developing suitable sites?'

Response from Councillor Hirst

The Council is committed to working with community-led groups - whether already set up or being/to be established - to find solutions to community-led housing. We will shortly be recruiting additional resources to assist further with this work, and I and officers would welcome the opportunity to work with the Stow CLT to find appropriate, value for money solutions for your area. I also commend your efforts in setting up the first CLT of its kind within Cotswold District.

Notes:

- (i) The above responses were provided to the questioner and all Members in advance of the Council Meeting.
- (ii) If the questioner is present at the Meeting, he will be entitled to ask one supplementary question in relation to each question submitted - which must arise directly out of either the answer given or the original question.

(iii) The Member to whom any supplementary question is addressed will try and answer any supplementary question at the Meeting; but if this is not possible, then the Member will answer as much as possible at the Meeting and then provide a full response within five working days. If, for any reason, a full response cannot be provided within those five days, then a holding response will be sent to the questioner, along with the reason for delay and a likely timescale for the full response.

(END)