

(6) PUBLIC QUESTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, questions have been submitted as follows:-

(1) From Mr. P Moylan of Cirencester to Councillor RL Hughes, Chairman of the Planning and Licensing Committee

'In January, Councillor Sue Jepson reported in the Standard that the outline application by Bathurst would be managed by a planning performance agreement that would facilitate a 9-month period before the application could be considered and to facilitate a further period to discuss infrastructure contributions. Hidden away in the depths of the council's web site is the agreement, which was signed on 23rd December.

It would appear that CDC have once again been opaque in their communications. A planning performance agreement is of course much more far reaching and significant than merely a timescale of events. It is a very different way of dealing with planning applications. Other local planning authorities have given a much more comprehensive explanation of the agreements they have entered into. Will the Chairman tell us why CDC have been so elusive and will he undertake, on behalf of the Committee, to be more transparent with the community?'

Response from Councillor RL Hughes

The Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) was put on the website with the other planning documentation when it was registered. There was no attempt to hide it.

PPAs are commonly used by Local Planning Authorities when dealing with major planning applications as they allow for Local Planning Authorities to work with applicants on applications that will take longer to determine than the statutory 13-week period. It does not have any implications upon how an application is processed or upon the recommendations/decisions taken by Officers and Members.

The Government supports the use of PPAs, and the National Planning Policy Guidance states:

A planning performance agreement is a project management tool which the local planning authorities and applicants can use to agree timescales, actions and resources for handling particular applications. It should cover the pre-application and application stages but may also extend through to the post-application stage. Planning performance agreements can be particularly useful in setting out an efficient and transparent process for determining large and/or complex planning applications. They encourage joint working between the applicant and local planning authority, and can also help to bring together other parties such as statutory consultees. A planning performance agreement is agreed voluntarily between the applicant and the local planning authority prior to the application being submitted, and can be a useful focus of pre-application discussions about the issues that will need to be addressed.

The timescale within the PPA will be reviewed and any updates to the PPA will be added to the online documentation. Similarly, other relevant documents relating to the

application (e.g. amended plans, consultation responses, etc.) will be published when received, as is the case with all applications.

For clarity, the PPA was not accompanied by any additional payments from the applicant to the Local Planning Authority.

(2) From Mr. M Pratley of Cirencester to Councillor RL Hughes,
Chairman of the Planning and Licensing Committee

'I ask you to consider the following three points:

1. The Health and Safety Executive have now expressed concern over the high pressure gas main that runs across the Chesterton site. They demand that adjustments are made to the Bathurst masterplan to move specific buildings and recreation areas out of the exclusion zone.
2. Thames Water have said that there must be no development of the site until a new sewer line is established down to Shorncote.
3. Thames Water have also expressed that the current freshwater supply has insufficient capacity to meet the additional demands for the proposed development.

Is it now clear to the Council that Bathurst Development Ltd's Outline Planning Application should be modified?'

Response from Councillor RL Hughes

Any amendment to an application is a decision of the applicant. An applicant will be made aware of any consultation responses and other comments received, together with any officer views thereon.

However, we cannot force any changes to be made and, ultimately, the Local Planning Authority will be required to make a decision on the application before it, having regard to all material considerations and all available information.

Notes:

(i) The above questions were not submitted by the deadline by which responses could be guaranteed in advance of, or at, the Meeting - having been submitted on Tuesday 8th March 2016. However, the Chairman has been able to provide responses.

(ii) If either questioner is present at the Meeting, he will be entitled to ask one supplementary question arising directly out of either the answer given or his original question.

(iii) An immediate answer cannot be guaranteed to any supplementary question. However, the Chairman will try and answer any supplementary question at the Meeting; but if this is not possible, then the Chairman 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)