

Council – 27 July 2022

Responses to Public Questions

Question 1

James Clark to ask Councilor Jan Goodeve, the Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Can the Executive Member for Planning and Growth update residents on plans to bring the Caxton Hill Industrial Estate back into employment use?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“The previous owners of Caxton Hill Industrial Estate proposed 200 apartments, 5 storeys high on a hill as part of a mixed use development claiming that the site was not viable without the residential element. Castle Ward members found this wholly unacceptable as did community groups and we resisted this. EHDC commissioned its own study to challenge the developer’s viability claims. Ownership of the site subsequently changed, Caxton Capital Partners (backed by Blackrock) have been meeting with local elected members and it is encouraging to hear that they propose that the site will be for 100% employment use in accordance with the district plan. The developer is now seeking PPA and in due course a planning application will be submitted to East Herts District Council and published for public consultation in the usual way.”

Supplementary question from James Clark

What steps will the Council take to ensure that the developer builds as sustainably as possible?

Response from Councillor Jan Goodeve

“We want our towns to be sustainable in their own right; places where residents can obtain goods and services and people can go to work locally and not to become dormitory towns.

On questioning we have been pleased to learn that the developer is proposing to bring forward:

- a BREEAM Excellent standard of building sustainably
- will include both EV charging points and solar panels on site; and that
- demolished building materials will be used onsite where possible

Caxton Capital Partners have also met with Hertford Town Council, Hertford Civic Society and have arranged to meet with the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) as part of their pre application community consultation.

I'd like to thank Mr Clark for his questions.”

Question 2

Jill Goldsmith to ask Councillor Geoff Williamson, the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

Have the Development Agreement and Development Management Agreement with Cityheart now been signed and when will they be disclosed on the Contracts Register? Why has the Contracts Register not been updated in June?

Response from Councillor Geoff Williamson

“Thank you for the question.

The Development Agreement with Cityheart has not yet been signed which is why it is not referenced in the Contracts Register. I know early last year I stated that we hoped it wouldn't be too long before

we signed it but there have been a few issues which needed to be resolved with regards to both parties sharing the risk and elements to work through regarding the land assembly and the Waitrose car park. We are now at the closing stages and anticipate signing the Development Agreement in a matter of weeks as opposed to months.

In terms of the Contracts Register, this should be updated every financial quarter so that information as at the end of June should be available on the website. I have spoken to Officers who have made it a priority to have the information published. Once the Development Agreement has been signed, the contract with Cityheart will be referenced on the register and available for public viewing by the end of September."

Supplementary question from Jill Goldsmith

Why was it left until September after the consultation on the Supplementary Planning Document to release any information to residents on the nature of the contract between the Council and Cityheart?

Response from Councillor Geoff Williamson

He said that the Development Agreement was due to be signed imminently and the next version of the Contracts Register would be published on the website in September. The Old River Lane Board meeting minutes were on record and if the agreement was signed before September, the minutes would record this.