

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Ms Louise Hodgetts asked:

1. What is the latest update on the award of a grant from MHCLG to the Council towards the funding of the Shapley Heath Garden Village project?

Councillor Cockarill responded:

Unfortunately, we have no further updates from the MHCLG on when they will announce the results of our funding bid for the Shapley Heath Garden Community. We submitted the latest funding bid back in September last year and, whilst I appreciate the difficult times, we are all living in, the radio silence from MHCLG since then is disappointing, to say the least.

Ms Hodgetts asked a supplementary question:

What is the current position from MHCLG with regard to continuing with funding the current 19 sites identified in the national Garden Village programme in light of the change in housing quotas and a shift in national distribution and what implication has this on Hart continuing with Shapley Heath Garden Village?

Councillor Cockarill responded:

As I said, we have had pretty much radio silence from MHCLG since about September/October when they acknowledged receipt of our latest funding bid. We've received no information or advice from them to suggest that they have no intention of not carrying on with the garden community programme. I am aware that some of the garden community projects around the country have for various reasons, come to points where they had to have rethinks, but this isn't unusual in significantly large developments and often plans have to change midway through. Until we hear from the MHCLG on the funding bid and until we have collected a little more data for the Opportunity Board to assess, we can't really say what the next stages are or whether or not they will actually take place, which is part of the reason for doing this evaluation process.

Ms Hodgetts asked a second question:

2. When does the Council intend to issue the consultation survey for the Shapley Heath Garden Village project to the public?

Councillor Cockarill responded:

The first consultation on the Garden Community will be launched week commencing 24th May and will run for 6 weeks. This consultation includes the entire District, and its aim is to understand what our residents feel makes a sustainable, healthy, well-

integrated community. The results will help the Opportunity Board to decide what the key priorities for any new community should be. This is an important step in providing the evidence base for the Opportunity Board when it considers whether or not to recommend continuing with the Garden Community to Cabinet; so, I encourage as many people as possible take part in the survey.

We will also be launching the full Garden Community website on or around the 24th May, which will have all of the details of the project as it progresses, including minutes of the meetings of the Stakeholder Forum and the Opportunity Board, which are currently on the Garden Community page of the Hart website.

Ms Hodgetts asked a supplementary question:

Given the next Opportunities Board is not scheduled until sometime in July (the date of which is still to be published), and the survey is due to be issued week commencing 24th May, how does Hart Council propose to engage with the Opportunities Board to consider the key concerns raised about the survey by 4 of your Parish Councils (Dogmersfield, Hartley Wintney, Odiham and Winchfield), as well as the community groups, Rural Hart Association and We Hart Heart, in a letter sent to the Joint Chief Executives and Head of Place on 26th March.

Councillor Cockarill responded

We have got that communication and the Opportunity Board has had sight of the draft survey as have the stakeholder forum and they have put forward their thoughts and their ideas. Cabinet has also seen a draft version of the garden community website and has made comments and it has been changed in light of some of the comments received. Consultation is about what residents feel makes a good community and what sort of things we should be thinking about in terms of developing communities in the future. It covers a whole range of areas, whilst primarily focused around evidence based for Shapley Heath, the results of this survey could be easily be applied to any future housing development anywhere in the district, whether it be a new settlement type development or a smaller development of the kind we generally see, so this is going to be a very important piece of evidence for us for this project and indeed for framing planning policy in the future.