

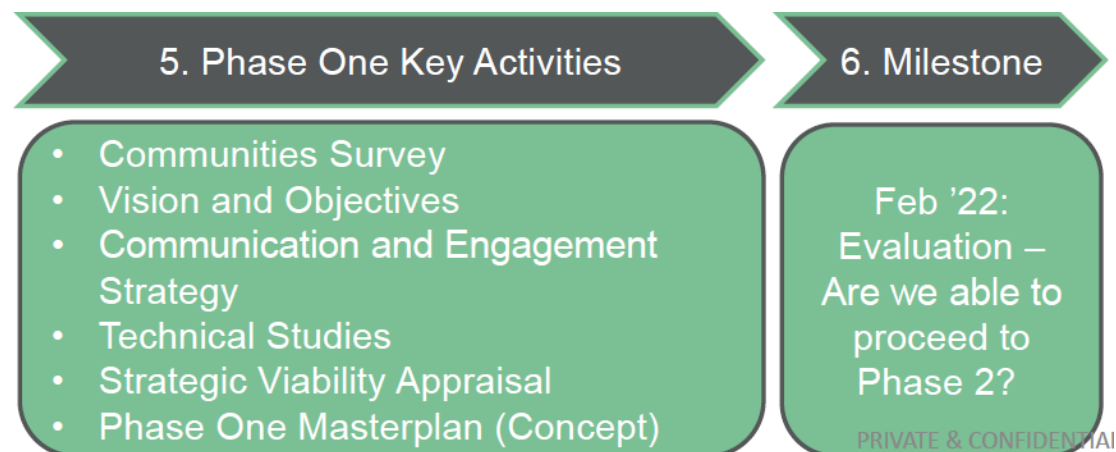
Questions for Hart Council Meeting 29 September 2022

Mr David Turver

This is a series of questions to Cabinet members regarding their recent statements about the Shapley Heath debacle at Council and Cabinet. Where appropriate I have also included images from key documents for extra clarity.

To the Leader, David Neighbour:

- 1) At September Cabinet you insisted the Shapley Heath Audit took place “at a point in time” in November 2021 which is before it was even commissioned. Do you now agree that the Shapley Heath Audit was only agreed by Audit Committee at their meeting in December 2021, the developer studies were published in January 2021, the audit work was carried out afterwards by TIAA in March and April 2022 and the first draft report was delivered in late June 2022 with the final report circulated in early July 2022?
- 2) The deliverables that had to be completed to achieve the first milestone of the Shapley Heath project were: the Communities Survey, Vision and Objectives, Communication and Engagement Strategy, Technical Studies, Strategic Viability Appraisal and Phase One Masterplan (Concept). The Technical Studies comprised 13 Baseline Studies and 14 Strategy Reports. At the September Cabinet meeting you said you disagreed with TIAA’s assessment that no milestones had been achieved. Can you set out which of the planned deliverables were published and how on earth they constitute the achievement of the first milestone?



13 Baseline Surveys Planned

| Type of Evidence | Evidence |
|------------------|--|
| Baseline Surveys | Topographical Survey and Ground Survey |
| | Transport |
| | Landscape |
| | Agricultural Land Classification |
| | Heritage |
| | Flooding & Drainage |
| | Water Cycle/Management |
| | Utilities |
| | Air Quality |
| | Noise |
| | Contamination |
| | Ecology/Biodiversity |
| | Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows |

14 Strategy Reports Planned

| Type of Evidence | Evidence |
|------------------|---|
| Strategy Reports | Homes |
| | Economy and employment |
| | Retail |
| | Education |
| | Green Infrastructure (including Community Facilities/Sports/Leisure/Play Space) |
| | Health Needs |
| | Health Impact |
| | Active Lifestyles |
| | Climate Change Mitigation |
| | Renewable Energy |
| | Innovation/Future Proofing - Transport |
| | Innovation/Future Proofing – Technology and Lifestyle |
| | Urban Design |
| | Place Stories and Branding |

To Cabinet Member for Place, Graham Cockarill

- 3) At the July Council meeting you stated the Shapley Heath project was stopped because the Government had ceased providing financial support. When was the Council informed that it would not receive any further Government funding, what reason was given for that decision and will you publish that letter as it is a matter of public record?
- 4) You also said that nobody from the Opportunity Board raised any issues with you about the Shapley Heath project as if that somehow absolved you as Chair of any responsibility. Three of your Cabinet colleagues, David Neighbour, James Radley and Stuart Bailey sat on the Opportunity Board with you, does this mean that they are more, or less, responsible than you for the failures of the project?
- 5) At the same meeting, you claimed that the project has “met its primary objective” despite the fact that no milestones have been achieved. The stated objectives were to “establish a vision for a Garden Community and evidence whether such a vision is both viable and deliverable”. Where is the published Vision that has been established and where is the evidence that the vision is both viable and deliverable?

Purpose of the Shapley Heath Garden Community Opportunity Board

- The Shapley Heath Garden Community Opportunity Board (the Board) will have overall responsibility for steering the evaluation of the Shapley Heath Garden Community opportunity (the Opportunity); **the project is to establish a vision for a Garden Community and evidence whether such a vision is both viable and deliverable.** In due course, the overarching description of the project will be further defined through an agreed Vision and set of place shaping outputs.
- 6) On 25th February 2021, along with the rest of the Council, you approved the overall budget including funding for the New Settlement. The New Settlement budget covered staffing for only 2-3 people and £25K for consultants. Did any

budgetary alarm bells start to ring when the Thematic Groups were stuffed with unbudgeted Council Officers, advertisements were placed for contracts worth up to £56K, a new website appeared along with an extensive survey and you appeared in professionally produced videos to promote the survey; wasn't it clear then that the spending was going to massively exceed the budget?

To Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, James Radley

- 7) Back in July 2021, I asked you a number of questions about obvious budgeting and financial reporting irregularities in the Shapley Heath project. The Shapley Heath Audit Report confirmed these concerns, saying there was no evidence that “the project had been accurately and appropriately financially managed”. At the time you brushed off these concerns and actually defended the Council’s financial controls. As Cabinet member for Finance, what steps did you take to investigate the obvious weaknesses that were quite correctly highlighted by my questions?

Assurance over the monitoring and reporting of financial information.

10.84 While there were spreadsheets put in place for day to day financial monitoring, these did not follow the standard template documentation. They were also found to be significantly inaccurate in relation to recording actual expenditure (particularly relating to staff costs and recharges) and calculating available resources, and did not correlate with the project plan document. There has therefore been no evidence provided to support the project having been accurately and appropriately financially managed.