

Cabinet – 4 November 2021

Questions from the Public

1 Jake Shepherd to Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):

Given the role of Carridon Property in presiding over Terminus House and Templefields House, two (of the twelve) Permitted Development Rights (PDR) conversions which have been described by one Carridon resident as "an open prison", why has this Council welcomed Carridon as the official 2021 partner sponsor?

Reply from Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):

As I have made clear many times, it was because of the previous administration's failure to act in introducing an Article 4 directive when they should have done so that allowed for office-to-residential conversions to take place in this town. I never heard that administration or anyone in it to apologise for their failure to act, nor did they purchase Terminus House when it was offered to the Council for the grand total of £1. For both of those reasons the issues that are faced are because of the previous administration's failure to act.

We are acting and we have applied to massively strengthen the Article 4 directive so that never again can this be allowed to happen in such a way. I look forward to updating councillors and residents on our progress in tackling the issues left by the previous administration in this area.

Specifically on the Harlow Town Centre Awards I am sure Mr Shepherd would agree that they were a roaring success with over 120 people attending and celebrating all that is great about our town centre.

Not only was it a roaring success, but it came at no expense to the taxpayer as 12 very generous sponsors paid for the fantastic event.

Sponsorship was open to all and Carridon were one of 12 sponsors. Sponsorship is not an endorsement by any of the partnership.

I believe we must deal with the world as it is, and not as we may wish it to be. That's why it is important to actively engage with all building, landowners and businesses to ensure that we deliver and do not hit the road block of no communication. This approach is the best way to deliver one of the primary ambitions for the town centre to be a hub for the community that everyone can share a renewed sense of pride in.

Supplementary Question from Jake Shepherd to Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):

Can Councillor Swords see why many will be mystified as to why this Administration would have chosen Caridon as a corporate sponsor for this years Harlow Town Centre Awards?

Supplementary Reply from Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):

I think perhaps anyone that was mystified after listening to my answer a few moment ago may no longer be mystified.

2 Jake Shepherd to Councillor Michael Hardware (Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth):

As the sole Youth Representative of HGGT's Village 1 Master Planning Working Group, I quote the terms of reference for the group: "In the event of a member organisation failing to attend two consecutive meetings the group can agree to inviting a different organisation or individual".

Cllr Michael Hardware, the named single representative on behalf of Harlow District Council, has failed (without offering any apologies to the Chair or via any other members) to attend two consecutive meetings. Will this administration take action to represent Harlow District Council within the collaborative design process, which directly seeks to represent and respond to the views and concerns of local residents?

Reply from Councillor Michael Hardware (Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth):

Yes, I was invited in May this year by Places for People, the Gilston developer, to join several groups to participate in the delivery of its engagement strategy to support the various planning applications it is progressing.

The master planning processes for all the developments around Harlow are important, especially so the seven villages at Gilston as this is where the majority of the growth for Harlow is going to come. Given the physical proximity of Gilston to Harlow and our shared vision for the Garden Town, they need to reflect our aspirations and be designed to be integrated with Harlow ensuring new residents feel part of this community, and that existing Harlow residents view them as an integral part of the town.

I have been unable to attend the first two meetings I was invited to: one in July and the other in September. I had prior engagements for each. I had no deputy to send in my stead and an officer representative was not allowed. Harlow Council is

currently in discussion with East Hertfordshire District Council about ensuring appropriate representation.

Hopefully we will be able to resolve this with the future meetings to ensure Harlow can participate fully.

Supplementary Question from Jake Shepherd to Councillor Michael Hardware (Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth):

Can Councillor Hardware understand why it is perhaps embarrassing as the sole representative from Harlow to be the only person from Harlow in attendance at two meetings in this very important process?

Supplementary Reply from Councillor Michael Hardware (Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth):

Yes I can and there were emails exchanged with the organiser of the meetings because I couldn't attend. Apologies were submitted but there was no way we could get around this rule of not being able to send a deputy or not being able to send an officer. Hopefully we will resolve that in the near future.