

## Public Questions (with notice)

1. Having recently visited Close Park and feeling saddened at the deterioration of the park I decided to do some further investigation. My investigations showed that according to a report submitted to the Planning Control Committee dated 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019 in the 2017/2018 financial year Section 106 payments totalling nearly £37,000 had been spent on Close Park which I found surprising considering the appearance of the park. I emailed a request to the Senior Planning Officer in the Planning Policy and Projects Department who had submitted the report for a breakdown of the work done. After receiving a vague summary of the work done with no costings I asked them to email me an itemised breakdown with costs. This request was then transferred to an individual in the Department of Communities & Wellbeing who also provided a response that failed to further elaborate on the costs. Following a second email I received the following response in relation to the costs:

“As for the costs we don’t have those records, I have tried to pull something together but to no avail sorry, any costs I could pull together would be guesstimates and that would not do, I can only apologise on this matter”

Having worked in industry I know that failure to account for such large amounts of spending would be likely to lead to disciplinary action and possible dismissal. Do the councillors think that it is acceptable for any department to be unable to account for such large sums of public money? Also, what are they going to do to determine where this money was spent and what measures do they suggest taking to ensure that this situation does not happen again? Carol Birchmore

**I acknowledge that Close Park is not currently in good condition. However, this is largely due to the amount of preliminary work the Environment Agency has carried out prior to installing the flood defences. The trees that have been felled will be replaced at a ratio of 5:1, and planted throughout Radcliffe as well as Close Park, giving better tree coverage for the area.**

**The S106 funding sourced in 2016 has all been spent in Close Park. This has included tree works, vegetation clearance, planting and work towards the Green Flag Standard. The majority of this has been carried out by our Grounds Maintenance Service as additions to the routine maintenance they carry out. Further works are planned, such as bin replacement and furniture painting. This will be carried out once the Environment Agency have completed their flood defence work, which should be complete early in 2020.**

**I apologise that the previous answer lacked detail. A breakdown of how this money has been spent will be provided in the next few days.**

2. Would it be possible for you to explain in further detail why you have not included an allowance for large site windfalls in Bury's local plan and the GMSF? We have recently seen big windfall examples with the old Tetrosyl site, East Lancs papermill and Andrews textile site.

In particular what other large windfall sites have you identified for reuse as housing and why are they not being included in the housing numbers for both the local plan and the GMSF? **Stephen Cluer**

**In order to include a windfall allowance for large windfall sites, there needs to be compelling evidence that large sites will continue to come forward over the plan period.**

**This is difficult to evidence as Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments already provide detailed assessments of large sites and whether they are likely to come forward for housing over the plan period. It is this document that identified the supply of sites that are deemed suitable and available for redevelopment for residential purposes – and in fact – this information is being used for the GMSF and Local Plan. It includes the Tetrosyl and East Lanc's Paper Mill and it will be updated to include the Andrews Textile site.**

**Whilst it is accepted that some unidentified large sites are likely to come forward over the plan period – perhaps due to similar circumstances that we have recently seen with the closure of Andrew Textiles factory - the challenge comes in providing defensible evidence that there is a ready supply of sites that will become available for redevelopment.**

**The particular issue that we have in Bury, is that most of the old industrial sites have already closed and have already either been developed or are earmarked for housing in the Housing Land Assessment. However, I can assure you, that any unidentified sites that do come forward will be accounted for.**