

Public Questions – Overview and Scrutiny 01/11/2022

1. I am Chair of Village Greens Community Co-Operative and our old lease ran out on the premises we lease off Bury Council in the Longfield Precinct over 3 months ago. We are still waiting for a new lease or head of terms for the new lease to be issued. Could I please ask when a new lease will be sent to Village Greens as we are currently on a temporary agreement and have no lease in place. This is preventing us from complying with some of our legal obligations

David Stanley

The council has drafted the Heads of Terms for the lease at Village Greens. The Councils property services department have instructed legal services (31.10.2022) to issue the lease which will be with you in the next week. Please accept our sincerest apologies for the delay. We will ensure your lease is progressed as soon as practicable.

- 1a. Will the Council cover any legal fines that could be incurred from the new lease being issued.

David Stanley

Jacqui Dennis, Monitoring Officer provided assurance to the member of the public that the matter will not get to the stage where fees or penalties are incurred as a result of the delay with the lease being issued as she will oversee the matter.

2. The Longfield Suite offered a wide range of health and well-being activities, clubs and events which benefitted residents and visitors of all ages, every day of the week. The Suite also acted as a destination which brought extra footfall into the shops, bars, restaurants and businesses in the area.

The re-development is not due to start until December 2025. Why does the Longfield Suite remain closed?

Mandy Gane

Following a review of civic venues, it became clear that significant investment is required in order to bring the building up to a useable standard. Closure due to the Covid 19 pandemic also reduced demand for activities, which has not returned. Staff resources, formally assigned to management of the building, have now been re-assigned and are no longer available. The decision to close the facility was made by Cabinet in May 2021.

- 2.a Please can you inform me where that information is documented so it can be read?

Mandy Gane

In response the Leader advised he can share the initial Cabinet decision when this was made.

***Julie Gallagher, Democratic Services who was supporting the public in the gallery provided Mandy with the link to access the report whilst at the meeting.*

3. With regards the Prestwich Redevelopment, the document being presented titled: Prestwich Scrutiny Prestwich Oct 22, the 'Indicative Plan' (section 7.1) states the Phase 1 'Public Engagement' period will start in October 2022 and end in December 2022. My question is: How long will the Phase 1 public engagement period actually last bearing in mind it is now the 1st November and no engagement has started.

Steve Devine

The team are keen to consult with residents throughout each stage of the design/development of the project. The planning for events and preparation of materials for the first phase began in October 2022, and we will begin the consultation process in late November. Regular events will be held throughout the design period and up to the submission of planning documents in October 2023.

- 3.a Does this mean the consultation period has been amended from three months to now just four weeks?

Steve Devine

The Leader clarified that the intention was never to run the consultation for three months. The intention was a 6-week consultation and there is still scope to do this. We want to ensure

the views of all residents and businesses are taken into consideration

4. How will Bury Council incorporate the neighbourhood plan that Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum are formulating into the Council's planning application for the town centre process - given the Council have a legal requirement to support and consult with the Forum?

Andrea Turner

At this stage the Prestwich Village Neighbourhood Forum is not formally constituted as a Neighbourhood Forum but we take the engagement as a positive step in people wanting to be engaged in a formal way. Letters have been sent to the forum to explain the processes and to offer support from officers along with being happy to support the forum informally. There is a process to go through to be formally recognised and therefore at this stage the Council has no legal obligation to support the forum.

5. I believe the Council does have a legal obligation to consult with the Prestwich Neighbourhood Forum under the Localism Act.

Steve Wright

If the forum was legally constituted then the Council would have a legal obligation to, however this forum is not yet legally constituted. However, we should engage with as many residents as possible, and we are willing and supporting the forum to become legally constituted.