

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 13 DECEMBER 2022
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

In accordance with Rule No. 3.3.2 the following question was submitted to the Council from a member of the public:

Rowan Cozens

‘Will the Council support the local community to halt the progression of the current plans to build a housing development on the Lilley and Stone site in order to provide a realistic consultation period for other options to be explored which might better serve the people of Newark and surrounding area? MLN (Land and Properties) are acting as the agent to the trustees of the site and have already drawn up an initial proposal in conjunction with Broadgrove Planning for a development of more than 80 dwellings. Many local people are opposed to such an historic and vital green space in the centre of the town being used for more housing. Several well-attended public meetings have already taken place to discuss how these plans might be stopped and how the townspeople could be involved with alternative options, such as using the listed and other old school buildings as an educational and cultural centre, utilising the existing sports facilities for the townspeople and creating a park on the existing playing field which would provide a tranquil green space for local residents and a much-needed green corridor, linking the Library Gardens with Sconce Hills, for our wildlife. The support of the Council would be very much appreciated so that together we can preserve an extremely important piece of land in the centre of Newark and find a way to achieve the best possible outcome for the beneficiaries of the trust and for our town.’

Reply from Councillor Rhona Holloway – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Visitors

The Council is aware of this site, and the fact that it has been vacant for many years. It is also aware that the Trustees are exploring ways in which the site can be brought back into productive use, including via its redevelopment. The Council agrees that an appropriate alternative viable use for the site needs to be found and has made the Trust and representatives of MLN (the developer) aware of the importance of a number of matters which need to be considered in assessing future options. This includes the retention of a number of heritage buildings within the site and of the need to ensure that any alternative use(s) provide adequate replacement (on or off the site) for the loss of any sports land, irrespective of lack of use in recent years. Any proposals would also need to address a number of other matters including highways and ecology acceptability.

The current exercise being undertaken by MLN does not involve the Council and its part of a developers pre-planning application engagement process. We would strongly encourage residents to make clear their views as part of this process, as it appears you and others are doing. It is clear that a future viable re-use(s) is required with the Trust unable to maintain the status quo. The Council has made clear its willingness to work with the Trust on an alternative use(s), which could include a range of options from its former education status to residential, subject to the constraints detailed above having been addressed. The Council also continues to engage with the Trust in order to ensure that the heritage buildings on the site are adequately maintained, requiring some repair works to be undertaken.

As yet, no planning application has been submitted. The developers or Trust have not confirmed an intent to submit a planning application, or the likely timescales involved. If and

when a planning application is submitted the Council, acting as the Local Planning Authority, will then need to assess the proposals. This will be against local and national policies, and having regard to the views of local residents provided via a formal consultation process. Residents are informed of the planning application by the Council writing to surrounding properties and the posting of site notice(s) in various locations around the site. The Council will also publish confirmation that a planning application has been made in the press (Newark Advertiser). At that point, anyone is able to comment on the proposal applied for.

The Council will continue to make clear to the Trust that it will support a viable re-use of the site for a range of different acceptable uses.

Supplementary Question from Rowan Cozens

No supplementary question was asked by Rowan Cozens.