

Questions referred from Audit and Governance Committee – 23 November 2022

- ***A Member referred to the traveller site purchase and raised a concern that a recent assessment undertaken by external consultants concluded that there was no need for a traveller site and queried why there was £690k allocated in the budget for this.***

Response from Mike Gildersleeves/Andrew Sweeney as follows -

This is part of the Capital Programme following previous commitments to site delivery, the sites remain allocated in the Local Plan, and thus whilst the emerging evidence indicates there is no longer a need for the site allocations this has not been formally Examined. Thus the Local Plan allocations remain presently as they are, and as such, it is prudent for the Council to continue to allocate this funding to honour its previous commitments. Delivery of the sites has however proved difficult owing to the viability of the sites, and the aspirations of site owners. Officers will also continue to seek external funding for the sites, however, a recent bid to Government was not successful.

- ***A Member highlighted the original land purchase for the Horncastle Hub and the original budget of £2.088m which was now £4.006m, and asked for clarification on the figures.***

Awaiting a response.

- ***A Member referred to the Towns Fund projects where there appeared to be considerable jumps from the original to the revised budget and queried whether this was due to the increase in construction costs. A concern was raised that if the projects were considerably delayed, considering the current rate of inflation there was going to be a financial gap to plug.***

Response from Adrian Sibley as follows -

The budget now includes all of the Towns Funds projects whereas it did not before. There are no significant delays in the completion dates being reported at this stage and the only variations in the costs are as per the report that went to Full Council on the 15th December 2022.