

Written replies to questions from the public at the Council meeting held on 11 December 2013



This document sets out the written replies to a question asked at the Council meeting on 11 December 2013.

Question from Dr Les Clyne to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the Council

"Please could the Leader of the Council comment on the following observations and question:

On Wednesday 4 December the Vale Planning Committee ratified a recommendation from officers that the Grove airfield development should go ahead with in the order of 35 per cent affordable housing on the site. When Councillor Hayward queried the term 'in the order of 35 per cent' no clear response was given by the Development Manager. Policy H5 of the Vale states that 40 per cent of dwellings shall be affordable housing. In fact the officers report says that at present the developers are only willing to offer 32 per cent. Whilst it is commendable that the Planning Committee has recommended a minimum of 30 per cent affordable rented in line with Policy H5 and supplementary Vale housing guidance, it is regrettable that;

1. they have not met the 40 per cent overall target for rented and shared ownership;
2. that it was not explained clearly to the meeting in general, and councillors in particular, that the officers recommendation breached the Vale's policies.

Is it possible to instruct the officers to obtain at least 40 per cent via the Section 106 negotiations, or failing that at least 35 per cent, in both cases without jeopardising the 30 per cent minimum affordable rented requirement approved by the committee (in view of the continuing escalation of applicants on the Vale's housing waiting list, up from 1175 in April 2013 to 1272 by 29 November 2013)?"

Councillor Matthew Barber responded that it was not possible to instruct officers to obtain at least 40 per cent. It would be possible to instruct officers to get the highest proportion possible given the viability assessment and the need for other infrastructure, and we will do so. He was happy to say that in the case of 40 per cent or 35 per cent he would wish to maintain the 30 per cent minimum of affordable rented accommodation. He undertook to provide a written response to Dr Clyne.

Councillor Matthew Barber's written response:

"No, it is not possible to instruct the officers to obtain at least 40%. It is possible to instruct the officers to get the highest proportion possible given the viability assessment and the need for other infrastructure, and we will do so. I am happy to say that in the case of 40% or 35% I would wish to maintain the 30% minimum of affordable rented accommodation."