

Answer to question from a member of the public

Question from Dr Les Clyne to Councillor Matthew Barber at the Cabinet meeting on 30 October 2015:

“For the Grove airfield Section 106 agreement and the Crab Hill Section 106 agreement, who was the most the senior councillor, and most senior Council official, in each case that authorised the backended affordable rented housing profiles, and why did they agree these backended profiles, especially the one for Crab Hill where it is proposed that NONE of the first 150 houses will be affordable rented, when there is such a pressing current and foreseeable future need for affordable rented housing in the Vale to deal with the people on the housing register?”

Answer from Councillor Matthew Barber to Dr Les Clyne:

“The finer technical details behind the mechanics of the legal agreement are the responsibility of the major projects planning officer, supported by our lawyers and the planning service manager. Therefore, the final agreed document lies with those officers. Consequently and in this case Councillors do not give specific approval to the finer technical details. Cllr Robert Sharp approves the overall framework for affordable housing, but the detail of phasing is delegated to officers.

In the case of Grove airfield the provision of affordable rented housing is broadly the same throughout the development. It is a few percentage points above or below the overall provision of affordable housing which remains at a minimum of 30% throughout each phase of the development.

In the case of Crab Hill the profiling of affordable housing takes into account the need to provide vital infrastructure for the development at the earliest stage, particularly the payment for the primary school (a total of £8m indexed from 2012) and early up front payment for the Wantage Eastern Link Road. Whilst this does have the effect of delaying the delivery of the some affordable housing it should be noted that the provision of affordable rent has been negotiated at a significantly higher level. It is 18.75% higher than the Local Plan expectation which equates to an additional 90 units being available for affordable rent. Overall, planning policy places clear expectations that officers have to be proportionate and reasonable in the delivery of any form of infrastructure which includes affordable housing.”