

**Questions and Responses Posed at the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources  
Scrutiny Panel on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

**1. The Memorandum of Understanding, with its reference to a preference for a housing development of between 1500 and 3000 houses, was signed before the wider public, or indeed some councillors became aware of it. I can find no public record of Cabinet or Council discussion, which could have allowed wider debate or indeed a call in by this panel. Given that a modern housing estate with a population twice the size of Uppingham would likely cause some public disquiet to put it mildly, why such secrecy and what advice was taken and from whom about the possible range of alternative responses to the closure of the Barracks?**

**Answer**

The MOU was signed by RCC (CEO) and MOD in September 2017. The MOU is a non-legally binding document and the RCC constitution allows for this to be signed by the CEO.

Prior to the MOU being signed the following had happened working back from November 2016:

<b>Meeting / Event</b>	<b>Public / Not Public</b>
7/12/16 Meeting RCC CEO and EWPC and NLPC – advised of RCC working with MOD on base closure	Not
30/3/17 Meeting RCC CEO and EWPC and NLPC – advised of continued RCC working with MOD on base closure	Not
10/4/17 RCC All member briefing on St George’s Members advised RCC in “active discussions with MOD about a Public/Public Partnership and that a Draft MOU being prepared	Not
18/4/17 Cabinet approved OPE report – advised of the on-going dialog with MOD about the future of St George’s	Public
22/5/17 meeting with EWPC and NL PC advising of continuing progress	Not
17/7/17 Parish Council Forum – Presentation by RCC all advised active discussions with MOD about a Public/Public Partnership and that a Draft MOU being prepared EW 3 Representatives NL Not represented Manton and Empingham not represented	Minutes available

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### Post signing of the MOU

It is available on our web site and has been since February 2018. Initially elements were redacted. This included:

- The 'working name for the potential new community' – since dropped
- The MOD model for the Land Sale Delivery Partner

Both have since been un-redacted and the MOU has been for some months been freely available on our web site.

So no secrecy – we made it clear that we were working with MOD, made it clear we were developing a MOU and we made it publicly available on our web site in February 2018.

The St George's project Board including Leader, Deputy and Cllr Waller as Ward member signed off the MOU and commented at its meeting in August 2017 " a job well done".

### Alternative uses

- Previous to the closure announcement the Council's position was clear a preference for on-going MOD use
- Post closure the MOD position was clear - to maximise the value from the site and contribute to an MOD target to deliver 55,000 homes

## **2. Given the public pronouncements by the Leader that the St George's infrastructure will be in place before development takes begins, can he clarify exactly what this infrastructure will be?**

### **Answer**

As with any major development infrastructure will be required to support and mitigate against the impact of growth. This will include for example:

- Highways improvements
- Health provision
- Schools
- Utility (electricity, gas, water, telecoms and data) upgrades and reinforcement

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As part of the evolving master plan the specific infrastructure will emerge in more detail over the next few weeks and months.

One of the advantages of the public / public partnership is that we are working with MOD to develop within the master plan an infrastructure delivery plan. In addition it means that we are able to bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund for funding to support the delivery of infrastructure and in advance of the housing development. It is this that gives me confidence to say that we are working hard to ensure that the infrastructure does come first.

We have encouraged through the Advisory Board PC's to support the emerging picture of what infrastructure will be including a workshops on Community Facilities and at the stakeholder launch as far back as February and May 2017. In relation to comments made about infrastructure during consultation I believe we have responded to these as you are about to hear.

If we do not get HIF – in common with any development of this scale as Planning Authority a robust infrastructure delivery plan will remain a requirement

**3. Can I ask if any analysis has been undertaken to substantiate the claim that up to 2700 jobs i.e. one per household, as stated in the consultation document, can be provided at the St George's site?**

### **Answer**

Yes, the following analysis has been undertaken:

1. Trends in working patterns – presently approximately 16% of the workforce work from home or 'remotely' (i.e. not from a permanent physical base). This percentage is expected to grow significantly over future decades. We will install high-speed fibre broadband to all homes and facilitate the development of serviced workspaces to respond to this trend
2. Needs of existing Rutland employers – RCC has met with major local employers and discussed with them their needs (affordable housing to enable them to attract local employees; additional floor space) and will endeavour to meet these within the development
3. Public sector employment – on average 10% of employees in any location work within the public sector – schools, health, council, etc.
4. Rutland trends – RCC has had great success with its own employment zones in Oakham and elsewhere. The Council is keen to take the lead with respect to the employment zone at St George's, including a potential 'Science Park' and/or other hi-tec/digital industries

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5. Service sector – employment in the UK is increasingly focused on the service sector – finance, insurance, associated industries. Many of these employers are locating their ‘back office functions’ to more affordable locations away from major population centres. St George’s shares many of the characteristics sort
6. Construction jobs – for a development that will continue over 10 years or more a job in construction-related activities can become, in effect, a career. Evidence from our project at Whitehill & Bordon is showing that in liaison with local training providers it is possible to secure work opportunities (in construction and construction-related professional trades) for large numbers of local residents
7. It is too early in the development process to identify specific employers, but I believe this illustrates the analysis that has been undertaken to give us confidence that we will be able to provide 1 job for each new household over the course of the development.

**4. What analysis has been done by the MOD and RCC as to alternative uses of the site. For example, what receipts might be likely from housing / and or mineral extraction, warehousing, science park, solar farm, relocation of the MOD equine facility**

**Answer**

Alternative uses have been considered but very early in the discussions it was clear that housing was and remains a key driver for MOD.

The MOD have a national target to deliver 55,000 new homes – there is an expectation that the St George’s site will contribute towards this.

Relocation of the Equine Centre was considered by MOD and rejected.

There is likely to be mineral extraction as the site covers an area of nationally safeguarded minerals. This area have been identified and features in the emerging master plan.

Equally 14 hectares of employment land could include a science park. The emerging master plan indicates a preference not for warehousing.

The MOD clear preference is for housing to deliver against their national target this would certainly outweigh MOD support for a solar farm.

In relation to receipts – this will feature in the viability work which is on-going.

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**5. What is the 2017/2018 budget provision and expenditure to date in respect of the proposed redevelopment at St George's Barracks**

**Answer**

There is no budget provision for this project within RCC.

For the whole One Public Estate Programme the CEO has delegated access to £100k of funding to support bids for funding. To date £25k of this has been spent leveraging in £186k OPE funding.

Nil expenditure – other than officer time all expenditure to date has been met from Government Funding (One Public Estate) and MOD.

Work associated with the Local Plan has been met from within the Local Plan Budget.

**6. Can you please advise why local residents have not been informed regarding the outcome of the petition raised in Edith Weston which raised issues about the poor process of consultation regarding the St George's Barracks" master plan? Local residents were incensed about the way they were restricted by the design of the questionnaire and spoke forcibly against the master plan first draft. Please advise whether you believe RCC have followed due process?**

**Answer**

The consultation process is non statutory indeed most developers would not have undertaken such consultation. A good example of how our partnership has ensured that the project has gone beyond the usual requirements. We believe the consultation process was fair and this is supported by the overwhelming response received. I think you will see this evening that we have listened and will continue to listen.

**7. Many residents offered alternative uses of the site other than the master plan proposals. They still await answers to their suggestions. Why is this?**

**Answer**

I believe this has been answered in a previous question.

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**8. It would appear that RCC have amended their master plan but have still not listened to the large protest from Rutland residents who do not wish their rural county changed and spoilt by this plan. Can you advise if RCC have followed due consultation process in their small amendment to the first draft plan?**

**Answer**

We did not have to do the consultation we did – we chose to do so as the right thing to do

Actually we have listened and made what we believe are significant changes to the evolving master plan – reducing the number of homes by 23% based on 2,700 homes and this could still be less than 2,700. Bigger buffers, moved the local centre etc but more of this in our presentation.

We (RCC) understand that many people do not want the project to progress. There are also many people – especially younger people and families with children - who can see the benefits of the scheme. The reality is that even if the Council were not in partnership with the MOD the site would come forward anyway. It would come forward as a housing site. The MOD is required to contribute towards a national target of 55,000 new homes. This is a brownfield site – Government policy requires it as publicly owned and to come forward.

**9. RCC have a duty to ensure that they do not change the culture, nature and rural character of the county by their proposals at SGB. Can you advise whether they have followed their own procedure in proposing the Master Plan proposal?**

**Answer**

We are doing exactly that – what's Right for Rutland.

If we were not involved MOD and potentially other Government Departments e.g. Homes England would bring the site forward.

Not sure what procedures you are referring to. As indicated the site will come forward and we are working with MOD under their requirement to bring the site forward for housing. Planning policy requires the production of a master plan – we have done this jointly and we have consulted and engaged on this plan.