



18 April 2018

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – 342/18

Dear Sir/Madam

Your request for information has now been considered and the information requested is provided below.

Request:

Please could you send me Freedom of Information answers for my requests generated by:

- St Georges Barracks Report 54/2018

2.3 the report cites 1,500 - 3,000 homes as a statement.

a) Please share the documentary evidence showing community engagement, stakeholder ambitions for the site that then support these ambitions. In searching the comments recorded at the Focus Groups on both afternoon and evening sessions from 29th January I found participant expressions to the contrary. I would note that table leads / RCC placements were leading groups by design (apart from one very worthy and memorable group who had most robust participant engagement and discussions), and by doing so avoiding the core concern of over development and exceeding similar density to other villages with a maximum 500 houses/20 per hectare.

b) Cllr Hemsley is quoted in the press as saying ‘... shared commitment to **guard against over-development** and make sure whatever is built in the future *meets the needs of Rutland and the people who live here.*’ Please share the documentary evidence showing how 1,500 -3,000 homes in a rural county alongside villages of circa 400 – 500 homes is not seen as ‘over – development’.

c) How Cllr Hemsley or Chief Ex Helen Briggs justifies this volume range of units for ‘**the people who live here**’.

2.5 the calculations behind and social, environmental & infrastructure justification for, 'Effectively c70 homes' on land in such proximity to Edith Weston that should the proposed be developed would see an over 23% increase in housing in the immediate area - without even considering the so called 'garden village'.

3.2 Informal consultation has already started.

a) With whom, when and where; where are the minutes, how was this published prior to the event. How can I be assured there will be no more 'informal' consultations, decisions and planning meetings?

b) Have any external consultants been used or approached, if so who, for when, for what purpose, and at what costs?

Further:

c) Have any land agents approached RCC or has RCC consulted same?

Attending the afternoon and evening Focus Group sessions for stakeholders at St Georges Barracks on 29 January alongside the invited Parishioners were several RCC employees, elected members and MOD representatives; all of these were on the list of names available in the Introductory Presentation. **There were however several introduced by name and as Hampshire employees, who stood back.** They were not listed.

d) What are their names, positions in HCC or other business?

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i. Who paid their travel expenses?

ii. Did they and do they continue to play a part in the St Georges proposed development?

iii. If so what role do they play?

iv. Who in RCC made this decision?

v. How is this reported and understood by stakeholders?

Phase 2 Site Investigation and Risk Mitigation. What methodology will be used to make public the full findings of the surveys, all of which are of public interest.

Phase 3

Bullet point 4 It is alluded to that costs exceeding £1m for design fees will require Cabinet and Council approval. If in fact this funding is required,

a) from where it will be sourced?

- b) what will be sacrificed or postponed for its provision?

Bullet point 7 Says there will be 'a number of' starter homes.

- a) What precise quantity is meant by this?
- b) what would be the actual as a % of the yearly build rate?
- c) what is RCC definition of 'Starter Home' ?
- d) and their value in terms of realistic attainment for Rutland new buyers?

Phase 4

Bullet point 1 Talks of agreed site layouts and unit densities, house types and numbers will remain as previously agreed.

- a) What layouts, what unit densities?
- b) what house types?
- c) how many numbers?
- d) and who has previously agreed this?

Bullet point 2 Mentions a further report.....seeking the release of funds.

- a) How much more fund
- i. is this in addition to the £850k?
 - ii. is this in addition to the £1m?

Phase 5 Marketing ... outside the RCC area.

- a) What would be the projected cost of any such marketing, at what stage(s) would this take place?

b) Why are you even considering marketing outside the area when Cllr Hemsley is quoted in the press as saying '... shared commitment to guard against over-development and make sure whatever is built in the future **meets the needs of Rutland and the people who live here.**'

6.3 C £1m of capital receipts un-allocated.

a) The reason(s) why these are un-allocated?

b) What funds are allocated for the completion of Oakham Town Task & Finish Working Group?

8.6 Cllr Hemsley and Helen Briggs (Chief Ex).

a) Clarification is sought for *multiple conflict of interests* of each by sitting on multiple boards which then report to each other?

b) Cllr Hemsley also sitting on **Cabinet and Council**, holding portfolio for ROPE which is shown as separate participant on the delivery board. Surely the entire multiple board chair and seat is a most incestuous and unhappy state of affairs. Please clarify how Cllr Hemsley sees all this as being correct, moral and acceptable in the eyes of *the people*.

Response:

The following answers are provided under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

1. Please share the documentary evidence showing community engagement, stakeholder ambitions for the site that then support ambitions to build 1500-3000 homes.

Community Engagement has consisted of Focus Group Sessions in January 2018 which sought to understand the aspirations and concerns of local communities and stakeholders. Documentary evidence of the sessions is shown at: www.rutland.gov.uk/stgeorges as part of the 'St George's Engagement Timeline'.

There is no documentary evidence of stakeholder ambitions. The figure of 1,500 – 3,000 properties as stated in Report 54/2018 is a preliminary working figure. This is based on the size of the site (300 hectares) and the desire to provide homes at a density that is appropriate for the location, in accordance also with relevant Local Plan Policies.

Engagement around specific aspects of a proposed development, including size/scale, will take place as part of a consultation on a High Level Masterplan for

the St George's site. This is currently scheduled to take place late spring 2018. Outputs from this consultation will be published once complete.

2. Please share the documentary evidence showing how 1,500 -3,000 homes in a rural county alongside villages of circa 400 – 500 homes is not seen as 'over – development'.

Documentary evidence can be found in the Rutland Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Chapter/Section 3: Creating Sustainable Communities

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/>

This will be augmented in the Master plan and in the Local Plan submission.

3. The calculations behind and social, environmental & infrastructure justification for, 'Effectively c70 homes' on land in such proximity to Edith Weston that should the proposed be developed would see an over 23% increase in housing in the immediate area - without even considering the so called 'garden village'

Calculations and social, environmental and infrastructure justification can be found in the Rutland Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Chapter/Section 3: Creating Sustainable Communities

- <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/>

- This will be augmented in the Master plan and in the Local Plan submission.

4. In relation to informal consultation. With whom, when and where? where are the minutes? How was this published prior to the event?

- The following engagement has taken place ahead of formal consultation in order that local communities and stakeholders are aware of activity in relation to St George's.

- Where there have been outputs from this activity, such as Focus Group sessions in January 2018, this information has been published on the Council's website: www.rutland.gov.uk/stgeorges

- 17th July 2017
Parish Council Forum

- 25th September 2017
Stakeholder Launch

- 25th October 2017
Meeting with Edith Weston and North Luffenham Chairs

- 26th October 2017
North Luffenham Parish Briefing
- 31st October 2017
Edith Weston Parish Briefing
- 1st November 2017
Empingham Parish Briefing
- 15th November 2017
Ketton Parish Briefing
- 30th November 2017
Meeting with Edith Weston and North Luffenham Chairs
- 25th January 2018
Focus Group Sessions
- 5th February 2018
Rutland County Council Members Briefing
- 4th April 2018
Meeting with Edith Weston and North Luffenham Chairs
- 11th April 2018
Meeting with St George's Tenant

5. *Have any external consultants been used or approached, if so who, for when, for what purpose, and at what costs?*

High Level Master Planning for the St George's site is being undertaken by RegenCo at a cost of £153,510.90 – consultancy service delivered by East Hampshire District Council.

In addition a Geotechnical Survey has been commissioned. This has involved Evolution Geological (£9k) – Appointed Autumn 2017. Apex Drilling (21k) Appointed Autumn 2017 and Envirolab (£7.6k) – Appointed Spring 2018.

6. *Have any land agents approached RCC or has RCC consulted some?*

RCC were contacted by one company. RCC informed the company that the MOD were the land owners and that contact needed to be made through them.

7. *In relation to the Hampshire employees who stood back at the Focus Group sessions on 29 January 2018;*

a. *What are their names, positions in HCC or other business?*

Personal information will not be provided. Employees in attendance from East Hants District Council were operating as part of RegenCo and present in order to observe for the purpose of the master planning process.

b. *Who paid their travel expenses?*

The travel expenses were included within RegenCo's proposals and will therefore be paid as part of their overall fee.

c. *Did they and do they continue to play a part in the St Georges proposed development?*

They will continue to provide support in the development of the Master Plan.

d. *What role do they play?*

Regenco have been contracted to undertake all works necessary to produce a Master Plan for the site.

e. *Who in RCC made the decision to appoint RegenCo?*

The Project Board supported the decision that was authorised in line with our procedures by The Monitoring Officer.

f. *How is RegenCo's appointment reported and understood by stakeholders? RCC have been open at all events that Regenco have been commissioned to deliver the Master Plan*

Master planning process for the St George's site is detailed Section 9 of MoU 'Developing a Master Plan'. This is published on RCC website:

www.rutland.gov.uk/stgeorges

8. *In relation to agreed site layouts and unit densities, house types and numbers;*

a. *What layouts, unit densities, house types and how many numbers?*

The site has an area of 3.887 Hectares and the plan at present is to develop 70 units. The plot layouts will be determined as the design develops and subject to all statutory approvals.

b. *Who has previously agreed this*

At present nothing has been agreed in terms of unit sizes or mixes. This will be determined as design progresses and will be subject to all statutory approvals.

9. *In relation to marketing outside of the RCC area, what would be the projected cost of any such marketing, at what stage(s) would this take place?*

Marketing beyond the Master Plan will be reviewed after the completion of the master plan. It will be a project cost met from receipts – cost would not be borne by the Council. We have received some funding to support consultation from the One Public Estate Fund.

10. What funds are allocated for the completion of Oakham Town Task & Finish Working Group?

No funds are allocated for the Oakham Town Task and Finish Group. Costs will be incurred but there is no specific budget.

The following information are not information which the Council holds and therefore the Council is not compelled to answer under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Council has however chosen to provide a response;

11. How much more funds will be need to released? Is this in addition to the £850k and the £1m?

Any additional funding required (if any) will be determined by the structure of future contracts, the outcome of site surveys and the final design. At present it is not possible to say.

12. In relation to Site Investigation and Risk Mitigation. What methodology will be used to make public the full findings of the surveys

When available and at a suitable time they will be posted on the 'Website' provided that no one party could gain a competitive advantage.

13. If costs exceeding £1m for design fees require Cabinet and Council approval from where it will be sourced and what will be sacrificed or postponed for its provision?

If required, this will be determined as part of the financial business case for the project. The Council does not envisage deferring or cancelling any other projects.

14. In relation to starter homes;

a. What precise quantity will there be?

This will be determined as the design develops. At present it is not possible to confirm the number of any particular units or number of bedrooms.

b. What would be the actual as a % of the yearly build rate?

This will be determined as the design develops and as a result of market assessments.

c. What is RCC's definition of 'Starter Home'?

The Council has no adopted policy for starter homes. However the intention is to provide a number of homes suitable for those who are just starting on the housing ladder.

d. Their value in terms of realistic attainment for Rutland new buyers?

This will be determined by the market together with any grant funding the Council is able to access.

15. Why are circa £1m of capital receipts un-allocated?

Capital receipts are only allocated when there is a requirement to support a project that meets necessary capital funding criteria.

16. Clarification is sought for multiple conflict of interests of Cllr Hemsley and the Chief Executive Officer by sitting on multiple boards which then report to each other?

The Chief Executive Officer/Leader are the strategic leads for the Council and therefore have oversight of most large decisions/strategic projects. There are no conflicts of interest.

17. How can I be assured there will be no more 'informal' consultations, decisions and planning meetings?

Decisions will be taken in accordance with the Project Board's Terms of Reference and the Councils constitution. The Council updates its website regularly to update members of the public about the project.

18. Why are you considering marketing outside the area when Cllr Hemsley is quoted in the press as saying '... shared commitment to guard against over-development and make sure whatever is built in the future meets the needs of Rutland and the people who live here.'

In order for Rutland to be sustainable in the future, the Council has a desire to provide the opportunity for those people who live in Rutland and also any persons within the surrounding areas to build a future in Rutland and contribute to its success in years to come.

19. Cllr Hemsley also sitting on Cabinet and Council, holding portfolio for ROPE which is shown as separate participant on the delivery board. Surely the entire multiple board chair and seat is a most incestuous and unhappy state of affairs. Please clarify how Cllr Hemsley sees all this as being correct, moral and acceptable in the eyes of the people.

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced the Cabinet model of governance for Councils. The Council adopted this model of governance and the full Council elected Cllr Hemsley to be the Councils Leader. He subsequently chose members of cabinet. The leader and cabinet are responsible for policies, plans, and strategies within their portfolios, which must be within the budget adopted by the full council. The majority of Councils within England and Wales operate this model of governance and it is normal practice that Councillors will sit on different decision making bodies. In addition, the Project Board is made up of numerous Officers and external people working on all aspects of the project. Further information about the

roles of elected members and the Councils decision making can be found on the Councils website.

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Yours faithfully

FOI Administrator
Corporate Support Team, Rutland County Council