

## **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Monday, 7 December 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

### **4b. Written answers relating to Minute 5(b) of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2020**

#### **Supplementary Question from Mr. Daniel Fulton**

“My concern is the Council is basically attempting to monetise its regulatory function as the local planning authority, and I’d also be concerned if the Council is going to become a ‘for profit land developer’, it could also potentially leverage this to give a competitive advantage over other local developers who are not the local planning authority. Have these concerns been given any consideration at all?”

#### **Response from Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council:**

“There is and has always been a clear divide between the Executive and the Planning Authority, and this is set out in law. The Council’s Investment Partnerships will need to comply with planning regulations just as any other developer would and there are safeguards in place to ensure this will be the case. For instance, a planning application submitted on behalf of an Investment Partnership will always be reported to the Council’s planning committee for a decision rather than being dealt with under delegated powers.

If the council were fully funded to run its services, we would not need to undertake commercial activity. However, following the 2008 financial crash, local authorities were heavily encouraged to become more commercial and to substitute diminishing government grant with new income streams. The alternative was to cut services, and we want to avoid this where at all possible.

Added to the financial pressures that we face as a council, we know our residents face extreme housing pressures both in terms of availability and affordability. We believe that we can play an important role in providing high quality, sustainable and affordable housing that would not be available without our intervention.”