

# Council – 23 February 2021

## Public questions

### (a) From Mr John Gaskell:

Would the Council accept where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a developer and / or a housebuilder has sold new-build residential properties which have been built to a generally defective condition (for example breaches of building regulations and / or a poor standard of workmanship more generally and / or breaches of build warranties), that acting in the public interest the Council has a duty to thoroughly investigate the matter, and that contingent on its findings, the Council should suspend planning permissions until the miscreant developer / housebuilder has fully addressed all legacy defects and proven that it has put in place robust processes to prevent the same or similar problems moving forward, especially in respect of timber-framed properties that by the nature of their construction tend to present potential fire risks and / or breaches of Part M Regulations on disabled access rights?

Notice has been given of the supplementary question as follows:

### (b) From Mr Alexander Cox:

The district council recently decided to install outdoor gym and table tennis equipment a mere few steps away from residents' front doors at Pioneer Park, Northstowe. This is just a few months after the Pioneer Park was delivered to its residents. The plans for the park featured none of this equipment.

This council purports to be “a modern and caring council”, yet in this instance, council officers and the local members for Longstanton, Oakington, and Northstowe planned and orchestrated this controversial development project behind closed doors and carried it out with no meaningful public consultation whatsoever.

Since carrying out this development, officers and members of this council seem more concerned about avoiding another embarrassing judicial review than with actually doing what's right in terms of democratic engagement with the community.

Will the Leader of the Council ask officers to revisit this matter and instruct the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development to mediate a discussion between local residents and the council members and officers responsible for this ill-advised development?

**(c) From Mr Daniel Fulton:**

Last year, every pond except one in the village of Longstanton ran completely dry, and for the past six years, South Cambridgeshire District Council has refused to investigate residents' complaints about the environmental effects that the development of Northstowe has had on the hydrology of the aquifer that underlies Longstanton.

Instead of acting impartially as local planning authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council has done everything possible to facilitate the development of Northstowe regardless of the ecological impacts and has been more concerned about protecting itself from political embarrassment rather than with protecting the local environment.

Finally, last year the district council agreed to fund an independent investigation into the hydrological impacts of the Northstowe development to be carried out by HR Wallingford.

However, according to an email sent recently by HR Wallingford, Part 1 of the company's report was being withheld from publication subject to the approval of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

How can the HR Wallingford report be considered to be independent when the very officers who failed to protect the Longstanton aquifer are now responsible for signing off the HR Wallingford report?