

Good evening, I have been asked to present this statement by **Tony Heaford**, Chairman of Publow with Pensford Parish Council. Tony has an unavoidable prior engagement and isn't able to join us, hence my presence this evening.

Our Parish borders the Old Colliery, Stanton Wick and as a consequence the Parish Council and its parishioners have been seriously affected by this unhappy episode which is just passing 14 months. It has been said many times at many meetings how this Cabinet has presided over a catastrophic piece of forward planning, moving from bungle to hurried bungle and leaving distressed communities in its wake.

Incompetence or something more sinister ?

It is to your detriment that despite the overwhelming, structured and knowledgeable questioning and detailed examination of your preferred sites proposals and extraordinary logic applied to this most unsuitable site, it took an expensive legal action to stop your determination to allocate this site for a Gypsy and Traveller development of massive proportions.

Now, despite public statements of your determination to complete the DPD efficiently, openly and quickly, we arrive here some 10 months later with a progress report which appears to be a further attempt to cover up another failure.

Do you fully understand the consequences of this lamentable episode? Consequences to the good, hardworking, open and welcoming taxpayers of my Parish who have had the spectre of a development of overwhelming size hanging over them for 14 months. 14 months of fear that their community will be overwhelmed, that community unrest will become engrained and 14 months where those who want to move house have been faced with real difficulty.

How different it could have been had you fully and openly engaged with your settled communities, instead of forming an exclusive alliance with a particular Gypsy and landowner and attempt to steamroller a predetermined site on the back of your new found responsibility to an undefined travelling community.

I believe that this episode and the open sore of your failure to conclude the DPD process will have serious consequences to your Core Strategy proposals and your political standing in the whole of BaNES.

I urge you on behalf of your taxpayers in Publow and Pensford to get a firm grip and conclude this DPD and allocate your sites without further delay. .

My statement on the status of the second major planning application for this site is short and simple. Please, for the sake of confidence in your Planning Department, ensure that your officers apply careful attention and deal with this callous and outrageous application robustly and so protecting as far as possible, our communities from unnecessary cost, time and stress.

Don't give cause for concern that there may be a hidden agenda – unless of course, there is.