

STATEMENT TO CABINET MEETING – 10 NOVEMBER 2022

My statement is with regard to the Development Update on the land to the rear of 89-123 Englishcombe Lane, in Moorlands ward.

This site has a long history of proposed developments and Cabinet will be aware of the concerns that have been raised by community members about this site.

I am grateful that the previous plans for this site were scrapped. These relied on an untested scheme to recreate and translocate habitat on a separate site, which was unrelated to the field or local community.

This green field is part of wider stretch of green space that runs from Bloomfield Road towards Rush Hill and the green belt. The wider area includes woodland as well as the property of Stirtingale Farm in Odd Down. This green corridor is important both to the character of our city, as well as a home for wildlife.

I want to put on record that I and a number of my residents have very strong concerns over the appropriateness of this site for any development.

We are concerned about the ecological features of the site (species and habits), the impact of any development on local springs, and the land stability. These are all features of the site before the specifics of any design or access arrangements are considered.

I know these issues are familiar to Cabinet members and I want to thank Cllr Tom Davies, Cllr Kevin Guy and Cllr Dine Romero for the time they have taken to speak with and listen to residents about this site.

Over the last six months, Cllr Tom Davies has met twice with residents to discuss the background and business case to these proposals. I am grateful for his openness and honesty.

This paper now proposes to allocate a substantial sum of money (£320k) to further project work and investigations on this site. My ask of you, on behalf of residents is that the administration continues with the open approach it has shown so far and:

- Provides details of the scope and focus of the technical studies that will be carried out to assess the site;
- Shares the findings with residents and I before a decision is made to proceed to draw up the planning application;

Furthermore, if the findings of any of these surveys and studies suggest that development is inappropriate for any reason, whether environmental or financial:

- Remove this site as an allocated site for housing development from the Local Plan.

I note that the paper includes a reference to the Building with Nature standards. I welcome this as any development should seek to protect and enhance green infrastructure.

The Building with Nature Standards provides a framework for good development and a means for independent assessment, and I hope that this is something we can look at applying more widely.

Cllr Jess David, Moorlands Ward