

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 NOVEMBER 2020
QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 9

1. From Kevin Barry to Councillor Swindlehurst

“Given that recent reports in the news indicate that there will be a much greater need for social and affordable housing in the aftermath of Covid-19, and with talk of the former ICI Paints Plant site being a major supplier of Slough's housing numbers going forward, can you please provide an update on the progress in bringing this site forward?”

Reply

Thank you Mr Barry for your question.

As members will be aware the resolution to grant outline planning approval for a mixed-use scheme on the former Akzo Nobel (ICI) site was approved by the planning committee on 26/8/20. This included an area zoned for housing on the southern area of the site, which could accommodate up to 1,000 residential units.

The question gives me an opportunity to set out what officers and lead members have been negotiating on behind the scenes with Panattoni for some months.

I am delighted to be able to inform members tonight that we have agreed heads of terms with Panattoni to purchase the freehold interest of the residential development footprint of their site.

We are currently in period of exclusivity where we are undertaking robust commercial, legal and technical due diligence. Subject to the outcome of this exercise and Cabinet approval of the business case, the Council is seeking to acquire this site in early 2021. We are modelling on the basis of an 800 unit mixed-tenure scheme, which we intend to be at least 50% social and affordable housing and is more likely to have 500 units of social and affordable homes among the 800 housing mix. This mix will include housing of various types, including family homes with gardens, to create genuine mixed residential neighbourhood, which clearly improves on the outline permission.

For Slough residents on our waiting list this means a further 400-500 social and affordable homes will be delivered which will become available to them.

This Labour council is proud to commit building out our current waiting list – whether this be by our own development or by working with partners to deliver the outcomes our residents need.

And you don't have to take my word for it, the evidence speaks for itself.

Our current waiting list is around 2,000 households.

This scheme will reduce that to 1,600

We can then add the 500 homes the HRA will start over the next 18 months to reduce this number to 1,100.

This comes down to 700 when we add the 400 affordable units that will be built on the TVU site – near on 100 of these in its first phase of development.

The privately developed Horlicks and other major town centre sites, like British Land site, will produce at least another 550 affordable units. Bringing us down to 150.

We then have our developments at Montem and Stoke Wharf which will add around another 120 affordable units, which effectively allows us to say we will build out our current waiting list.

And this is before we include smaller schemes which will be coming forward.

Assuming the current negotiations with Panottoni conclude as planned this will ensure the council makes a major contribution to place shaping the eastern side of the town centre and delivering a significantly supply of 500 new affordable and social homes.