

Questions by Members of the Public under Procedure Rule 11.0
Council – 5 July 2016

Question from Mr Andrew Moore
Received on 23 June 2016

1. “At a West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust (WHHT) Meeting Board meeting in July 2015 the statement below is made on page 4. Can the council confirm when the additional 2m loan to the Trust was made and is the loan now recorded as a long term liability for its future accounts taking into account that the notes state that there was currently no structure to repayments. Additionally, will the council be forward funding the further maximum liability of 3.7M? I note that there is reference to the health campus link road funding at page 100 of the council’s 2014/15 audited accounts.

“Under the Camus Agreement and overarching Business Plan the Trust is obliged to pay up to £9M towards the cost of the project infrastructure including the construction of the new link / access road and associated services. To date the Trust has already paid £7M, with the remaining £2 due, in full or part, if the total cost for the Infrastructure Business Plan exceeds £16.613M. The current estimate for the work exceeds £18.6M. On this basis the full £2M would be required from the Trust.

Under the Agreement this money will be forward funded by Watford Borough Council, who will subsequently be reimbursed by the Trust through lump payments linked to the completion of clinical buildings built over the first 12 years of the project, or through annual instalments (timing and number not defined). Under the overarching Business Plan the Trust has a further maximum liability, capped at £3.7M, to support the remainder of the Business Plans included within the Agreement”.

Answer

The additional loan to the Trust was made on 5 April 2016 and paid to the LABV on the same day. It is not correct that there is no structure for repayments. The repayment schedule and conditions are set out in the Campus Agreement of June 2013. In reference to the Trust’s further maximum liability of £3.7m this will not be forward funded by the Council.

Question from Ms Sara Jane Trebar

Received on: 23 June 2016

1. “The Watford Allotments Promotion Programme updated in June 2015 states at item 17 that Watford Council and Veolia would “Outreach to community groups where lower take up of allotments were identified” with one of the measures of success taken from an increased uptake amongst targeted groups.

Can the council provide a list of the targeted groups that it approached, what it and Veolia exactly did, the results from the measurement of success after the delivery date stated in the programme of the end of Summer 2015 and any further subsequent actions. The assumption would be that the council approached a number of community groups located within Vicarage Ward taking into account that approximately 50% of the total population are from an ethnic background”.

Answer

The council quite rightly acknowledges within its Allotments Strategy that 95% of its tenants were from a White British background and the objective is to improve diversity.

However we currently have over 90% occupancy on our council managed, active allotment site. In total 176 plots were taken in 2015, up on the number let in 2014.

This is a result of our extensive promotion programme across the community and an active campaign to encourage more of our residents to become allotment holders.

The campaign included:

- bus shelter posters, particularly in areas where we identified lower community take up
- articles in About Watford
- updated website information
- regular social media messages (Facebook and Twitter)
- a new allotment leaflet - this was sent out across the community, including to a wide range of local community groups and organisations

We have also engaged face to face through our Allotment Stakeholder Panel and encouraged our site supervisors to promote allotments as part of their role. This weekend (9 July) we are holding our first Watford BC / Veolia Allotment Forum. Invitations have been sent to community groups and organisations directly but there has also been general information to the community via our website, twitter and Facebook.

Later this year, we Veolia will be carrying out an allotment survey with tenants, which will be an opportunity to find out more about the demographics of our current tenants. This will provide up-to-date data on whether the groups identified through the last survey are still under represented and will provide direction for future promotion work.