

Council 26th February 2024

Item 8 refers

Questions submitted by Members

Question to the Leader

Submitted by Councillor James

Question:

The Management of Public Open Space

Several members will recall that in November 2019 I put forward a case for the review of the Councils open spaces strategic plan whereas newly developed open spaces should be handed over a private management company. The review was supported at the time by my fellow ward member Councilor McHugo.

The review was duly undertaken and no change to the strategic plan was recommended.

We are now some 4 years on from that review and serious problems still exist.

The Overstone House development still has no residents company in place.

The major Kettering Road development has several concerns around public engagement, cycle routes and on-site community provisions let alone the future maintenance requirements for the open spaces.

The Hearsely Park development in Great Bowden has run up against the very same open space problems at Overstone House did some 4 years ago. The council has made no progress to satisfy residents caught up in this situation.

My question to the Council Leader is:

Given the lack of progress regarding the Councils open spaces strategy and the dissatisfaction of many residents will the leader commission the Scrutiny Communities Committee look at this matter again.

Answer:

The administration are aware of concerns being expressed by some residents across the district around the management and maintenance of public open space in new housing developments which has been transferred by a developer to a land management company. The Director of Planning is going to undertake a review of our current policy framework (set out below) for members to consider. It is expected that the review will be undertaken during quarter 1 of 24/25 with an initial report back to Scrutiny in quarter 2.

Current council policy on this matter is set out in the Council's Corporate Property Strategy that was reported to Council on 27th January 2020 and the Open Spaces Strategy reported to Council in June 2021.