

Council: 16 July 2024 - written responses to questions

Item 6: Leader's statement

1. Question from Councillor Birgitte Mager

Councillor Birgitte Mager referred to paragraph 14. of the Leader's statement which stated....'It [the draft West Suffolk Local Plan] includes policy designed to increase the delivery of affordable housing...' Cllr Mager asked the Leader for an update on the current position regarding the delivery of housing numbers and whether this was in line with the 820 houses previously delivered a year.

Response from Councillor Cliff Waterman, Leader of the Council and Councillor Jim Thorndyke, Portfolio Holder for Planning:

611 homes (net) were delivered in the last monitoring year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) in West Suffolk, of which 210 were affordable homes. The overall number of homes fell below the 1,003 homes (net) delivered in the previous year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), of which 212 were affordable. The council has achieved its affordable housing policy requirements of 30 percent where developments exceeded 10 dwellings or one hectare.

It should be noted that completions naturally vary annually. In 2020 to 2021, 821 homes were delivered; in 2021 to 2022, 865 homes were delivered; in 2022 to 2023, 1,003 homes were delivered and most recently in 2023 to 2024, 611 homes were delivered. Therefore, over a period of four years a total of 3,300 homes have been delivered which is in excess of our annual requirement of 806 per annum.

Item 9: Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre Maintenance and Refurbishment Project: Business Case

1. Confirmation to Councillor Andrew Speed

As part of his response to Councillor Andrew Speed's question, Councillor Shipp stated that West Suffolk Council had a 15-year Collaboration Agreement with Abbeycroft Leisure; however, he would confirm the time period in which the agreement covered.

Response from Councillor Ian Shipp, Portfolio Holder for Leisure:

The Collaboration Agreement between West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure commenced on 11 December 2019, for a period of 15 years initially, with the option to extend for a further five years, and then another five years.

The earliest date the Agreement would end (unless there was early termination) would be 10 December 2034 so there is at least another 10 years to run on the agreement, potentially 20 years if both extensions were agreed.