

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

COUNCIL – 17 JUNE 2021

QUESTION F

Councillor Gillias to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe:

“Rural communities are getting increasingly concerned with intentional unauthorised development, particularly in the Green Belt, could the Leader of the Council explain what is being done to address these concerns?”

Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council, to reply as follows:

“With any breaches of planning control, intentional or unintentional, the Local Planning Authority’s enforcement powers are discretionary and any action taken has to be judged to be proportionate as well as expedient. It is not a tool to reprimand or punish. Whilst the Local Planning Authority will try to negotiate a solution to regularise a breach of planning control without the need for formal enforcement action, it is aware that this is not always possible.

A person who has breached planning control may seek to try and regularise the matter through a retrospective application which the legislation allows them to do. In assessing an application ‘intentional unauthorised development’ can be a material planning consideration therefore, in certain circumstances this will be a factor when weighing up the planning balance of any such proposal. Each application will be assessed on its own merits in accordance with the Development Plan.

It is acknowledged that effective and proper enforcement of planning controls is essential to a credible planning service and helps keep public faith in the planning system. Therefore, the Planning Enforcement Team endeavours to investigate breaches of planning control in a timely manner in accordance with the Borough Council’s Planning Enforcement Policy Statement, September 2018, circulated to Councillors who recently attended the Planning Member Training. In addition, the Borough Council has already increased temporary resources in this service area to help support officers when investigating both intentional and unintentional unauthorised development. This will be followed by a report tabled at Cabinet with a recommendation to expand the planning service with an additional permanent Enforcement Officer. In addition, the Borough Council is exploring the use of new technology which will also increase its capability. The findings and recommendations will be presented to Cabinet on 28 June.”