

(1) Question from Councillor S.A. Dunn:

"Can the Portfolio holder for Planning let me know if the owners of the site of the former Fordbridge Nurseries in Sunbury-on-Thames, or any developers, have been in discussion with the Planning Department regarding its possible use?"

Answer from the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor V.J. Leighton:

"Thank you for your question, Councillor Mrs. Dunn.

The Council has numerous 'pre-application' discussions each year where planning advice is given and the content of that is confidential, as is also the question of whether any particular developer has approached the Council for such discussions.

However, Members can approach our planning staff for confidential advice at any time on any planning matter and I encourage the Member to do so

I am able to confirm in relation to this site that it is in the Green Belt, and if any advice were sought, the Council's firm policy on the Green Belt would be made very clear."

In accordance with Standing Order 15.2, Councillor S.A. Dunn asked the following supplementary question:

"Can the portfolio holder assure me that any pre-application discussions are fed back to ward councillors so they are kept in the loop and do not find out the information too late in the day to do anything about it?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor V.J. Leighton, subsequently gave the following response in writing:

"I have discussed this with the Head of Planning and he has confirmed that Members may approach him on any planning matter but where residents, businesses or developers have approached officers for technical planning advice on a confidential basis this will need to be respected."