

Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 10 February 2025

Question from: Jason Carlton

Question to: Councillor Patient

The paper on Infrastructure to support the delivery of the garden communities finally admits what we've been telling you all along - that the schemes are unviable as they were proposed. To fix the viability issues, the document proposes letting developers off the hook for paying their education obligations for the two primary schools and not index-linking future roof tax charges.

There is now a real risk that the public will lose out on the immediate benefits of well-funded infrastructure and the long-term value of integrated community investment, particularly in affordable housing and essential services like education.

Given that the Draft Charging Schedule (Community Infrastructure Levy) consultation is already underway and that your paper makes it clear both sites are only marginally viable, has the Draft Charging Scheduled factored these proposals into Brighouse's calculations?

Response

This question is predicated on a misreading and simplification of the information in the Cabinet report. In relation to this, the report self-evidently does not state that the Garden Communities are unviable.

The Cabinet report explains why it is recommended to remove the building of schools from the infrastructure funding. It is explained that this decision is based on data in *Children and Young People's Services Directorate Planning of School Places 2023*. Viability is therefore not a factor in this recommendation.

Not indexing linking the roof tariff means that the charges would be constant across its life rather than starting lower and increasing over time. Contrary to the suggestion behind the question, not index linking makes viability more challenging in the earlier years of development. This is clearly shown by the table at paragraph 4.42 of the of the Cabinet report.

As the questioner will recall from the Local Plan Examination, Garden Communities related infrastructure would be funded by the roof tariff rather than Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Garden Communities viability does not therefore directly impact on the viability of CIL.