

**Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 10 February 2025**

**Question from: Councillor M Hey**

**Question to: Councillor Patient**

I note from the above report that the previous promise to build primary schools in the Garden Suburbs has been abandoned, which will substantially increase the number of being car journeys in an already traffic-clogged area of the Borough. More disturbing still is the research from Cushman and Wakefield that indicates that “the viability assessment results indicate that the scheme is at the margins of viability with the roof tariffs proposed ... which could result in a proposal to reduce affordable housing”.

Can the Cabinet confirm that there’s no circumstances where they would approve a reduction in Affordable Housing in the Garden Suburbs?

**Response:**

The Planning Committee rather than Cabinet is responsible for the determination of individual Planning applications. The application of affordable housing planning policy to any individual development is therefore outside the remit of Cabinet.

The advice of Cushman & Wakefield is not saying that affordable housing will need to be reduced, and it is heavily caveated. However, it is established practice to consider viability at the planning application stage. It is also established practice for councils to negotiate with developers over the scale of planning contributions. In relation to this, councils that cannot demonstrate sufficient supply of housing land and deliver sufficient new homes are highly vulnerable to speculative applications for development in the Green Belt.

In terms of the building of new schools within the Garden Communities, this can only go ahead if there are sufficient pupils requiring places. As explained in the Cabinet report, the need for new schools has now been reviewed in the light of *Children and Young People’s Services Directorate Planning of School Places 2023*.

However, as explained in the Cabinet report, there is justification for safeguarding the land identified for schools in the Masterplan SPDs. There is also a need to monitor the school place situation going forward, and if a requirement is identified in the future, Section 106 contributions could be sought in the usual way.