

**COUNCIL QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BDC**  
**26<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

**Question 1**

**Mr P Marshall to ask the following questions:**

**1. To ask the Leader of the Council:**

In a recent Babergh Cabinet meeting which was broadcast on You Tube, it was advised that the proposed terms to a lease with Hotel operator for the Belle Vue site in Sudbury were being changed from 25 years to 24 years. The Chief Executive did also propose that the terms could be changed to 24 years and 364 days. Please can you confirm that the change to the proposed lease terms has NOT been done to circumnavigate any of the Asset of Community Value implications under the Localism Act 2011 which would be a consideration if the base term were 25 years and if not close to circumnavigate what was the reason for the change.

**Response Cllr Ward**

**Belle Vue House and the former swimming pool site have been listed as an Asset of Community Value since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. The District Council gave notice on an intention to dispose of this site originally in 2015. A community bid was received in 2015 but was unsuccessful when assessed against the other bids received, and this did contribute towards the delay in bringing this site forward with the selected party, a hotel operator.**

**The 18 month protected period was triggered again in November 2019, primarily due to the request for expressions of interest in Belle Vue House and the unknown nature as to whether that interest would be on a freehold or leasehold basis. Whilst the protection is in place against disposal of both the house and swimming pool site, a lease of either building for less than 25 years would not constitute disposal as defined by the Localism Act 2011. Therefore, should the Council wish to proceed with a lease to the Hotel Operator we would be able to do so on a lease of less than 25 years. A final decision on this has yet to be made. Also, the design of the hotel scheme has been an iterative process and several changes have been made including changing it from two separate buildings to a single stacked building to reduce the land needed for the scheme. The hotel scheme has been consulted on recently in the “What Next for Sudbury” Event; these responses are currently being analysed and a final review of the whole scheme will be required before an agreement for lease is entered into or a planning application is submitted.**

**This project is good for Sudbury and the whole district and it has a lot of support, which is why the Cabinet voted for it and the full Council approved its financing.**