

COUNCIL QUESTIONS BDC 29th JULY 2021 FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question from Mr Morelli to Councillor Holt, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth.

“On the 5th July 2021, the Babergh Cabinet debated a report on Belle Vue Park in Sudbury – the recommendations from which the Council will consider today, at Agenda Item 11a of today’s meeting.

“Prior to that Cabinet debate, Councillor Lindsay asked a question regarding the contract the Council has agreed with Churchill Retirement Living.

“In his question, Councillor Lindsay pointed out that Babergh District Council will not be paid by Churchill until (and unless) Churchill is granted planning permission for the works it intends to carry out. In addition, Councillor Lindsay stated that – under the contract agreed with Churchill – Babergh does not have to start work on the retaining wall until that time. Councillor Lindsay therefore asked why money to pay for the retaining wall needed to be borrowed before Churchill receives planning permission (should that occur), and therefore before the contract with Churchill completes and the Council is paid.

“In response, Councillor Holt stated that borrowing money in advance of contract completion was necessary because – to use Councillor Holt’s own words – if Babergh does “not start this work prior to completion of the Churchill contract, [Babergh] will have insufficient time to meet the contract obligations to start on the site within three months”. I therefore understand that – in essence – Babergh has signed up to a contract that requires it to borrow money before Churchill has even received planning permission for its intended development (again, should that occur).

“Could I therefore ask Councillor Holt, in his position as Cabinet Member for Economic Growth: If I am correct in the understanding that I have described, why was a contract agreed that necessitated Babergh borrowing money prior to the said contract’s completion – from which funding is intended to be provided – especially given that there is no guarantee Churchill will receive planning permission for its development at all