

BDC COUNCIL – 20 FEBRUARY 2023

ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Question 1

Mr Ferguson to Councillor Busby, Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets & Investments

At the Council Meeting on Thursday 6th October 2022, I asked the Cabinet Member for Finance, Assets and Investments for a copy of the risk assessment of Gipping Construction's ability to complete the redevelopment of the old Babergh District Council offices at Corks Lane. One of the reasons that I gave for this request was my concern about Gipping's limited experience with working on listed buildings – part of the old Council HQ is listed Grade II.

In his response Councillor Busby refused to let me see that risk assessment, and Babergh District Council also refused to provide it when I subsequently submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. However, in his reply to my question on 6th October 22, Cllr Busby told me that Babergh Growth Limited would ensure completion of the project quote: "on time and on cost" through robust management of the contract. He went on to say that **April 2024 had been set as the completion date.**

Also, in response to a question from Cllr Dawson (the Ward member for North Hadleigh) to the Chief Executive (CE) with regards to the timeframe and financial impact of delays in the development work, the CE responded as follows:

"The work on site has been progressing well and in line with the project programme."

The Chief Executive went on to say that:

"There are currently no significant delays to the programme and therefore the financial implications are that there is some cost to the redesign work, but this is allowed for within project contingencies."

In the context of those assurances, it is apparent that work stopped on this project at the end of November 2022 (i.e. now almost 3 months ago), and as of Monday 13 February 2023, work has not restarted on the site.

My question to Cllr Busby is:

Against that background, are you still reporting that the Corks Lane redevelopment will be delivered quote: "on time and on cost," and that it will be completed by **April 2024?** If not, what has changed since you provided those assurances on 6th October 2022, and what are the potential implications on the 2023/24 Babergh District Council budget forecasts?