

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

REQUEST NUMBER: 5 - 2020

REQUEST DETAILS:

The following questions are asked under the Freedom of Information Act:

1. In view of the restrictive covenant attached to the Police H.Q land, we wish to know if it is to be 'honoured' or are plans being made to circumnavigate it by means of an outright purchase from Grainger's or by the use of an insurance vehicle?
2. We understand that the Martlesham Heath Neighbourhood Plan was accepted and included in the Suffolk Coastal Plan, but 'post acceptance and inclusion' SCDC's Cabinet decided to include 'at the eleventh hour' details of the proposed sale of the Police HQ in the documents it presented to Mr Philip Lewis, the Government Planning Inspector; an action contrary to the will of the Parish Council and local residents, who had overwhelmingly endorsed the Martlesham Heath Neighbourhood Plan when it was tested in a referendum. We therefore ask: is it the intention of the PCC, backed by SCDC/ESC, to ignore the Martlesham Heath Neighbourhood Plan?
3. What stage has the proposed land sale reached and importantly how much tax payer's money i.e. SCDC / SDC / ESC and the PCC collectively, has already been spent and is projected to be spent on furthering this sale?

RESPONSE

1. Discussions have taken place with Grainger PLC upon the plans for the site before the application is submitted. It is anticipated that the application will be made within the next few days.
2. Three meetings have been undertaken with representatives from Martlesham Parish and Kesgrave Town Councils. Two pre-application meetings with East Suffolk Planners have also taken place to discuss the proposed outline application which has been drawn to reflect the Planners recommendations. It will be for East Suffolk, as lead Planning Authority, to consider and reference the Martlesham Heath Neighbourhood Plan within their review once the application is submitted.
3. There has been no progression of any potential land sale. This will not occur, at the earliest, until the planning application is determined, as this will influence the value of the site.

The total amount that has been billed to date to Suffolk Constabulary is £442,351.62. This figure does not include the planning fee that will be incurred on submission of the planning application.

It is difficult to quantify ongoing fees and expenses at this stage as this will depend on the outcome of the planning application and any action in respect of the covenant. Whilst some may think the sums involved are significant, it is anticipated that the whole exercise, which involves a major policing asset, will ultimately maximise greater value for the council tax-payer and potentially release seven figure sums for reinvestment.



Through the One Public Estate Initiative a sum of £75K has been made available from central government to assist with the ongoing feasibility work to provide costs and recommendations for all options which are being considered including site sale, consolidation on the existing site and/or sharing with other public sector partners.

Questions with regard to costs of other statutory bodies need to be addressed to them directly. We hold no information about their costs.