

Council

21 July 2025

Member Question

1. Question from Councillor Jan Foster to Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries

It has been widely reported that Idsall Drive Car Park was sold by Cheltenham Borough Council last year for £282,500. It is now on the market, with planning permission, with an asking price for offers over £550,000.

Given the difference in value that the planning permission makes to a piece of land, why didn't the council apply for planning permission before they sold it?

Cabinet Member response:

I'd like to thank Councillor Foster for the question. It is important to set some background with regard to Idsall Drive car park. This was never intended to be a development opportunity for the council but rather the car park was offered to the parish council for purchase to be retained as a car park. Sadly, the parish council decided to not proceed with the purchase on behalf of their local residents and therefore the council decided to then proceed with a sale.

With specific regard to Idsall Drive, I am sure that Councillor Foster would acknowledge that the difference in the new asking price and what the council previously sold it for is not clear profit. The design, development and the planning process will have all incurred fees and costs. If the council had proceeded to secure planning for the site we would have had to make an assessment on the officer time and costs associated required to bring this site to planning and then balance that against delivering our other key development priorities. On this criteria, Idsall Drive did not meet the test of being retained and developed by the council.

This council has a long and successful track record of judging where and what to invest in and we are clear that we act as an enabler to support the economic prosperity of our borough and its residents.

At present, our highest development priority, as Councillor Foster knows, is the delivery of the Golden Valley Development. When fully completed, this project will bring hundreds of new, affordable and social rent homes - which are desperately needed in our town, as well as offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to many in our communities to gain skills and employment so they can succeed and prosper. In this context it is disappointing that Councillor Foster is seemingly supportive of developing Idsall Drive Carpark but voted against the Golden Valley Development planning application.