



RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

to
COUNCIL
3 APRIL 2025

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's public speaking protocol the following question was received from a member of the public.

2. QUESTION

The following question was received from Mr Russell Forde on 1 April 2025:

"On behalf of the residents of Woodham Mortimer, I am appalled, at the consistent failure of the Council to act reasonably, reliably and effectively in managing issues relating to the threatened gypsy site on land south west of Oak Acres, A414 Maldon Road, WMR. My question is simple, when and how will the Council fulfil its duty with energy, skill and precision to protect the residents of WMR to prevent the ongoing propagation of gypsy site by underperformance, and error to the detriment of the local environment, health and wellbeing."

3. RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER

I am aware that professional officers from across the Council's Environmental Health, Community Engagement, Planning Enforcement, Development Management and Legal teams are already involved in activities to evaluate and monitor activities taking place on the site referred to in the parish of Woodham Mortimer and Hazeleigh. I acknowledge that residents are extremely concerned about the scheme approved on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate and activities that have been taking place historically and since, as well as a newer planning application that has yet to be determined by the Council.

Historic issues with this site's planning appeal and the processes followed since are already being considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of its workplan and I trust that they will report on the outcomes of their enquiries in due course, including any lessons or recommended changes to procedures.

I understand senior officers have already been in discussions with Councillor Morgan and have agreed, in principle, to support a multi-agency meeting being held with representatives of the site and interested community parties. I support this stance and hope it will enable all parties to discuss each other's concerns and positions in a fair and safe environment.