



Beacon Street Area Residents' Association

50 Beacon Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7AT

E mail: - bsara.committee@beaconstreetara.org

23th August 2013

Cllr Mike Wilcox
Leader of Lichfield District Council

Dear Mike

Friary Outer redevelopment

Thank you letter dated 09/Aug/2013 and for contacting me personally on the telephone to discuss further.

Just to be clear that I and our committee understand, we have summarised the key points below:

1. The main justification for parking at Friary Outer was demand arising from the Premier Inn hotel and the Friarsgate retail complex. The Council decided to proceed with Friary Outer, and incur debt of circa £2M to do so, in full knowledge that commercial partners were not able to proceed with their components of the project because tenants were unable or unwilling to commit to taking space in these developments. Are we correct in assuming that the Cabinet sanctioned this gamble? The substantial sums involved suggest that Cabinet, if not full Council approval, would be required.
2. Ruth Plant presented a Parking Review to the Operational Services Scrutiny Committee in Jun/2013. This document contradicts the description of the parking situation in your letter. It appears that there was falling demand, spare capacity and the Council was more concerned about falling parking profits than it was about failing to supply an adequate number of parking spaces. Can you please ask officials to double check the facts?
3. You concede that the project should have finished in spring 2013 and cite some factors to explain the delay, we are not in a position to judge if these are legitimate or not. The core of BSARA's criticism is the Council's failure to provide timely, accurate and honest information about the true progress of the Friary Outer development. A blog was set up for this specific purpose. The communications team shows great enthusiasm at the early stages of the project which at times verged on propaganda, however, when things start going wrong the Council blog fell silent. Why was this? The same thing happened during the Beacon Park upgrade, the Chasewater dam wall repair and the City Centre repaving (managed by the District Council). When the Scrutiny Committee met to review the Beacon Park "*lessons learnt*" report, undertakings were given that the Council's performance would improve. Are you satisfied with the Council's conduct in this regard?

To keep our members and followers fully informed we will place a copy of this along with our earlier correspondence and future update information on the BSARA website.

We look forward to being kept informed on future major issues that affect Lichfield City Wards.

Yours sincerely

Bob Smith - Chairman