Position statement on Libraries and provision to be made at / using contributions from the Ipswich Garden Suburb Development

11 February 2025

At the Round Table Session (RTS) on 05 February 2025 regarding disputed s106 contributions the Inspector asked for clarification on whether a permanent new library was to be delivered as part of the Ipswich Garden Suburb development.

Suffolk County Council, as the statutory authority for libraries, can confirm that no permanent library provision by way of a new static library will be delivered within the Ipswich Garden Suburb development.

The Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review (DP1), Policy CS10 allocates Ipswich Garden Suburb. Within the Policy it states the site will be developed as three neighbourhoods (Henley Gate, Fonnereau and Red House) and will deliver a number of land uses including residential development of approximately 3,500 dwellings. Another land use is; "A District Centre located within Fonnereau Neighbourhood, providing: e) A library."

Policy ISPA4.1 (DP1) covers land at the northern end of Humber Doucy Lane. There is no mention in this Policy that library provision for this allocation will be met on the Ipswich Garden Suburb. The Ipswich Garden Suburb allocation has a separate SPD in respect of infrastructure. The Humber Doucy Lane allocation is covered by Policy CS17: Delivering Infrastructure – which requires all developments to meet the on and off-site infrastructure requirements needed to support the development and mitigate the impact of the development on the existing community and environment. Appendix 2 referred to in Policy ISPA4.1 identifies libraries under Community and Cultural Facilities. Table 8A identifies the infrastructure proposals required to support growth and refers to £216 per dwelling for libraries including remodelling of existing libraries as one of the uses the money would be for.

The Neighbourhoods of Henley Gate and Fonnereau have previously secured planning permission. Due to viability issues these consents only secured a total of £14,575 s106 contributions (£8,372 and £6,203) towards library provision.

The 27 January 2025 consultation response letter sent to Ipswich Borough Council for the Red House planning application (IP/22/00013) states the library contribution (£216 / dwelling) would be "*towards the improvement and enhancement of the Ipswich Combined libraries, including Ipswich County Library (retaining it as the flag ship library in Suffolk) and any library provision – which might be in the form of a satellite provision – for the Ipswich Garden Suburb within the Fonnereau Neighbourhood. This is in line with the SPD*".

Policy CS10 (DP1) identifies a library within the District Centre land use, and the 2017 Ipswich Garden Suburb Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) identified District & Local Centres including community buildings with integrated library facilities. Due to the low level of s106 contributions secured from permitted IGS schemes, because of viability issues, there are insufficient developer funds for the delivery and running of a new static library within the IGS as originally sought. The contributions which have been secured would only maintain a pop-up or

drop off provision in the community building for a short period of time and due to their limited offer only serve residents of Ipswich Garden Suburb with a basic service.

Once the finite funds have been expended, it would be up to the local community to continue funding, or the provision would have to be discontinued. Suffolk County Council does not have funding to support pop up libraries in the long term and they do not meet the County Council's statutory/core service offer.

It should also be noted that satellite provision does not constitute part of the core library service provided by the County Council to meet its statutory obligations. It is in additional to this, and represents a temporary, part-time service, providing limited facilities, such as limited browsing stock, reserving and returning loans.

The key objective is to enhance the library service at the existing static libraires and to encourage residents to use these. It is for these reasons, that the library service requires s106 developer contributions to improve the existing static library service, as it represents a full range of services in the long term which would serve the residents of these developments.