

Council: Tuesday, 28 July 2015

Administration Motion: Cllr Kathy Levine

Abbotts Depot

Council notes the recent information uncovered by residents and Labour councillors that according to the Land Registry the purchase prices for the Abbotts Depot site (spelled incorrectly by the council in all reports to date) in the last 13 years have been £2.65m + VAT in December 2002 and £750,000 in June 2014.

These purchase prices are significantly below the figure of £8m that the council informed councillors the site had been sold for 7/8 years ago - information that was key to the November Assets, Regeneration & Growth Committee decision that the council should purchase the site for £13.5m and also key information for the subsequent December Full Council meeting where that decision was referred, but information that was not provided to councillors making those decisions.

Council notes that the first of these Land Registry records was received by HB Public Law on behalf of the Council on 09/12/14 and the same is likely to be true also for the second record. That is a week before councillors at Full Council on 16/12/14 took the final decision (on the Mayor's casting vote – there was no majority) to purchase the site for £13,500,000.

Council also notes that councillors were informed by the council that the site was vacant, which was later found to be incorrect as part of the site is being used by Winters Haulage.

Council believes that this information casts doubt on the robustness of the decision to purchase Abbotts Depot for £13.5m, and asks for the decision to be re-taken.