

Environment and Green Investment Committee
12 June 2025

Item 4: Petitions and Public Questions

	Questioner	Question / Comment
1.	Councillor Lara Davenport-Ray, Huntingdonshire Green Party	<p>In 2021, This Land Ltd received planning approval to build up to 230 homes on land south of Cambridge. This Land Ltd is a company owned entirely by Cambridge County Council. The site between Babraham Road and Worts' Causeway is now named Eddeva Park. The planning approval included important conditions requiring heat pumps, good levels of insulation, and solar panels. In March, This Land applied to alter Phase 2 of their planning permission and remove the requirement to include solar panels. This Land claims that changes in building regulations and decarbonization of the UK energy supply should absolve them from their obligation to provide solar panels on their new homes.</p> <p>Across Cambridgeshire today, many new build houses will be sold, some just outside this building in Alconbury Weald. Sadly, very few will be fit for the future. They require immediate retrofit by homeowners and landlords to reduce energy bills and ensure the energy security of our country. In its published climate and environment strategy, this Council committed to a target for all buildings owned and occupied by the Council to be fossil-free by 2025. That's today. The actions of this Council serve as an example to others, so it's deeply disappointing to see such a discrepancy between the environmental policies of this Council and the actions of this Council's wholly owned development company, searching for a way to cut corners on sustainability at the expense of Cambridge residents, both now and in the future.</p> <p>As carbon neutral Cambridge has explained, This Land is owned by the County Council and has been lent over a hundred million pounds in public money. It's only fair that This Land also contribute to the public benefit by assisting with decarbonization. Given the pledges made by this Council and the urgent need for the UK to decarbonize, why has this Council's wholly owned company applied to emit solar panels in Phase 2 of its housing development at Eddeva Park?</p>

Respondent	Response
<p>Michael Hudson, Executive Director of Finance and Resources</p>	<p>The Council recognises the work of This Land under its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda across its sites. The Council requires This Land to bring forward and seek planning on sites that comply with the relevant local councils' Local Plans and frameworks. In relation to the recent planning application at Eddeva Park, we are aware the Company has put in place a number of proposals that meet and exceed the requirements of the City Council's Local Plan, in particular we note that the Committee considered advice which identifies that:</p> <p>“The scheme supports the aims of sustainable development with a range of measures [...] and the development will minimise its impact on the Green Belt with a reduced density and height to the east and wide planted edge.”</p> <p>The site is planned to have air source heat pumps, and each dwelling shall be fitted with a means for future occupiers to monitor / measure all of their own energy consumption (electric / water / gas) including the extent of the contribution made to energy consumption from onsite renewable energy sources. The electricity carbon factors have improved significantly under Part L 2021 due to the growing proportion of renewables in the national grid. This means heat pumps now perform much more favourably from a carbon perspective than they did under Part L 2013, further strengthening the case for the revised fabric first approach.</p> <p>The revised scheme improves significantly on the original approach. The thermal elements perform between 30%-50% better than the minimum requirements, and air permeability has been reduced by roughly 40%. These improvements mean the homes require less energy to heat, and crucially, the development can meet both regulatory and local energy targets without relying on an additional power source.</p> <p>We also note that 40% percent of the homes will be designated as affordable housing, and there will be a central square, a wildflower meadow, and areas for children to play.</p> <p>The original Phase 2 reserved matters approval (22/02646/REM) did include condition 10, which required Photovoltaic (PV) panels. However, that condition was removed under the recent S73 approval, which now stands as the consent.</p> <p>The decision was made following assessment of greater compliance with the Local Plan that reduces energy costs, the holistic and harmonious planning across the whole of Eddeva Park master development and the cost impact. As This Land is a wholly owned company of the Council, there is a</p>

		<p>fine line to balance between its obligation to repay the Council's loans, meeting Local Plan requirements and providing developments that are attractive to the market. In this instance, the cost of PV panels is deemed a significant impact on the Company's return which is already funding sustainable development activity. This does not prevent homeowners from installing PV panels later.</p>
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