

## **1. QUESTION FROM MR BILLY PYE TO COUNCILLOR HANSON**

“As Cabinet Member with the Economic Regeneration and Planning portfolio, do you think that Lancaster City Council should be concerned that the general partner which controls Centros has its legal residence in an offshore tax haven?”

Councillor Hanson replied:

“Very recently Centros became part of the Sovereign Land group of companies. Sovereign Land is UK based.

Assuming the question is directed at the ownership of Centros, then clearly there are no offshore considerations.”

Mr Pye asked Councillor Hanson for a written response to a supplementary question about offshore tax avoidance measures and whether Councillor Hanson was happy for Council to continue its involvement in view of this.

Councillor Hanson said she wished to respond to that straight away at the meeting and that, if the question was meant to pick up on the guarantor position for the proposed scheme, then Centros was now seeking to secure a UK based guarantor. However, offshore companies regularly featured in many major developments and projects across the country and were therefore not an issue of general concern.

## **2. QUESTION FROM MR PAUL SMITH TO COUNCILLOR BRYNING**

“As Cabinet member with the Finance, Revenues and Benefits portfolio, do you think that Lancaster City Council is taking part in an open, fair and transparent process designed to maximise its returns from the Canal Corridor site?”

Councillor Bryning replied:

“Over the years, the Council has considered various routes to progress regeneration of the site in line with its corporate priorities and objectives. This last point is very important - the Council is not just seeking to maximise financial returns, it is seeking to maximise regeneration returns too.

Nonetheless, the Council has gained advice from two external sources regarding valuation matters and has received confirmation that the proposal represents 'best consideration' - in line with its legal obligations to look after council tax payers' interests .

Given the commercial nature of negotiations, inevitably the details should not yet be made public as this can weaken the Council's negotiating position and unfortunately this can call into question the openness and transparency of the process. Full information has been shared with the Council's external auditor, however, and ultimately, once any agreement is implemented and any commercial sensitivities removed, the development agreement will be publicly available through the annual inspection arrangements for the Council's accounts.”