

Question from Councillor Caroline Jackson to Councillor Leytham

In view of the recommendation of Lancaster City Council Energy Strategy received by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Sept 2015 how many council houses are now scheduled to be fitted with solar panels in advance of the December Feed In Tariff deadline?

Councillor Leytham responded to say:

There are another four that we are hoping to put solar panels on by the end of December, all being well. We have been in discussions with residents and got quotes.

Question from Councillor Caroline Jackson to Councillor Leytham

In light of recent government announcements on social housing will the housing portfolio holder be revisiting the question of whether buying back former council properties would be a cheaper, quicker and less risky (in terms of right to buy) way of extending and retaining our housing stock?

Councillor Leytham responded as follows:

We have discussed this several times within housing and we will consider buying back ex-council houses but it will depend on the condition they are in and whether they meet our standards. It can be quite an expensive option.

Personally, I would like to get on with building new one-bedroomed properties because they are being future-proofed so that they can be changed if the need changes at some point.

Councillor Caroline Jackson asked a supplementary question:

Could you give us the average cost per property of the new builds proposed?

Councillor Leytham said she would send a set of powerpoint slides round to all Councillors that had been viewed at the Cabinet Liaison Group. These would answer this question and others about housing.

Question from Councillor Hamilton-Cox to Councillor Hanson

What is the evidence for the number of jobs actually created against the 'approximately' 2700 [FTE] jobs forecast to be created between 2011 and 2013 [paragraph 5.6 of the Lancaster Market Housing Assessment 2015]?

Councillor Hanson replied:

The evidence for the actual number of jobs created between 2011 and 2013 is found in Figure 3.6 Employment Change 2000-2013 and comes from Experian Business Strategies May 2013.

Question from Councillor Hamilton-Cox to Councillor Hanson

What is the portfolio-holder's opinion on the reliability of the jobs forecasts to 2031 expressed in the LHMA 2015?

Councillor Hanson replied:

My view is that recent scrutiny of the evidence base, and advice the council has received from the Planning Advisory Service about the Lancaster Housing Requirements Study 2015 demonstrates that forecasts have to be considered as evidence and are reliable and sound as far as forecasts go. The council is however allowed by the process to apply a test of grounding growth proposals in reality based on our experience and judgement of past trends

and future prospects, and that is what I will recommend we do. Councillor Hanson expressed surprise that Councillor Hamilton-Cox had not asked questions at the recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, at which a representative of the Planning Advisory Service had been present.