

Dear Sandra

I refer to your letter to me dated 24 October 2023.

With regard to your request for a public meeting between Whiston Town Council and officer of Knowsley Council, the Borough Council has already carried out a full and extensive public consultation exercise in relation to the Whiston Woods proposals with a view to seeking views from residents across Knowsley. That exercise included seven community drop-in sessions, an extensive leaflet drop to over 8,000 properties surrounding the site, and the publication of the proposals online via the Borough Council's social media platforms and via community groups. As I am sure you will also be aware, we also extended the timeframe for that exercise by a further month at the request of Whiston Town Council.

In addition, we are frequently updating our Knowsley News website as and when we receive queries or requests for information from the public (see [For the Record: Proposals for Whiston Woods - Knowsley News](#)). In view of the extensive activities outlined above and given that those who oppose the proposals have made their views extremely clear to us through various means and on several occasions, I do not believe that it would be an effective use of Borough Council officers' time to attend the meeting which you have proposed.

With regard to the consultation findings, I expect a report to be presented to the Borough Council's Cabinet meeting on 6 December 2023 to outline the consultation findings and agree the next steps. This report will be published on our website and will therefore be available to the public to review in advance of that meeting.

In your letter, you advise that concerns were raised regarding the 1994 planning application for Knowsley Cemetery and you state that correspondence at that time clearly documented the proposed cemetery being laid out, over four phases, with enough burial ground anticipated to last for 100 years. In fact, that statement is not accurate. The information which you reference was merely a proposal as part of a planning application in 1994. As the Borough Council has repeatedly explained, that proposal was **not** supported by the Council's Planning Committee at that time. Instead, permission was only granted for the first phase – indeed, the land identified in the application as “future expansion land” was specifically **excluded** from the permission granted and remained as green belt, i.e. it was never formally designated for cemetery expansion purposes. Again, the Borough Council has previously responded to residents' queries on this documentation and has published a “For the Record” article in response to the inaccurate information which continues to be circulated (see link: [Knowsley Cemetery – Sharing of Inaccurate Information - Knowsley News](#)).

To be clear, the “four phase” plan has never had any status beyond being a proposal which was rejected almost 30 years ago.

In your letter, you also note that residents of Whiston along with Members of Whiston Town Council would like the Borough Council to provide information on how the future phases identified in 1994 then formed part of the 2015 Local Plan for Halsnead Garden Village. Again, this information has been published on the Knowsley News website. In 2016, and again following extensive public consultation as part of Knowsley's adoption of a new Local Plan, Knowsley Cemetery and the surrounding land was formally allocated to be part of Halsnead Garden Village. The detail of how this land would be used was considered as part of the development of the subsequent Halsnead Garden Village Supplementary Planning Document. In 2017, the Halsnead Garden Village Masterplan and its associated planning documents formally designated an area for the expansion for Knowsley Cemetery, with the remaining land allocated for development purposes. Planning permission was

subsequently granted in 2018 for the expansion of the Cemetery into the land designated for such purposes as part of the 2017 Halsnead Garden Village Supplementary Planning Document and the land in question now forms part of the Cemetery as it exists today.

Finally, you request that the Borough Council reconsiders its proposals to utilise the Whiston Woods site and consider using the land owned by the Borough Council adjacent to the Cemetery. As I have noted above, the land adjacent to the Cemetery has been allocated for development purposes as part of the Halsnead Garden Village and therefore is not expected to be used for Cemetery expansion purposes. However, at this stage, no decision has been made on Whiston Woods, and the Borough Council's Cabinet will consider the matter on 6 December 2023.

Yours Sincerely

**Mike Harden** (He/Him)  
**Chief Executive**

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