

Tim Evans responds...

I write on behalf of the five Conservative Councillors in Lower Sunbury with their knowledge, support and agreement.

It is true that the Spelthorne Borough Council, like all local authorities including Surrey County Council, is under pressure to deliver services at a time of scarce resources, noting that we anticipate one source of income (Revenue Support Grant from Central Government) dwindling to almost nothing over the next few years-regardless of the colour of the next Government. In response to these pressures the Council continues to develop a medium term financial strategy "*Towards a Sustainable Future*" to deal with the situation. Some ideas are far reaching and when fully developed I'm sure residents will find them interesting. They do not however either include or require development on Green Belt land which includes Kempton Park. Yes, the Jockey Club has spoken to developers over the years and the Council is fully aware of that, but no planning application has been put forward. Our Local Plan forbids development on Green Belt unless "very exceptional circumstances" can be demonstrated. For the avoidance of doubt, the financial pressures on the Council do not and would not constitute such circumstances. There is no need to sell off a bit of Kempton Park to shore up the Council's Balance Sheet. The Council cannot support a policy which "flies in the face of its own planning policies" and has no desire to do so. Moreover such an action is no way "seductive" to me or my co-Councillors in Sunbury. We all live here too and have no interest in concreting over Green Belt land.

So if there is "an unwelcome tension" around, it has been generated by certain parties in continuing to speculate that there is some sort of conspiracy involving your Council-and by extension your Councillors-to deceive the residents of Sunbury. No such conspiracy exists. Whilst we are all happy to be held democratically accountable (there's an election next year!) we are tired of having our integrity repeatedly impugned in this manner.

Tim Evans Spelthorne Borough Councillor for Halliford and Sunbury West and Cabinet Member for Finance. Surrey County Councillor for Lower Sunbury and Halliford