

CABINET – 14 MARCH 2019

PQ 16/19 - Written Question from Rosalind Walford, Bembridge to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing

QUESTION

“On the back of widespread public outrage as evidenced in 850 planning portal comments recently, please could the Cabinet instigate an investigation into the series of planning applications which have resulted in the demolition of a thriving and highly popular coastal cafe in Bembridge (providing local employment, income and a magnet for tourists), and its replacement with an overly-dominant, poorly-designed and bulky private residence in this most beautiful of settings?”

RESPONSE

“I am aware of the high level of interest in the recent planning applications relating to the domestic property known as Kingsmere and the café at Lane End Road, Bembridge. Members may already be aware that one of the applications has subsequently been withdrawn by the applicant. In light of this public interest I asked officers to provide me information on the planning history of the site.

Due to the high level of correspondence I have received relating to the proposals for this site, I am aware of public concerns that previous applications were not advertised correctly. Having spoken to officers I believe that the relevant due processes were followed, and I have not been presented with any evidence to suggest that this is not the case.

Whilst I appreciate the strong local feelings regarding the reduction in size of a replacement café, I think it is important to recognise that there is no national or local policy in place that requires a like for like replacement in terms of size; rather, the focus is on the quality of the offer. I was pleased to learn that Officers are in discussions with the agent to negotiate an alternative building for the café element of the scheme, following the removal of the boat house and I can confirm that these discussions are ongoing.

An investigation into the planning history of the site can be undertaken by reviewing the publicly available case files, either online or through the paper files. Whilst I appreciate the strong local feeling regarding the proposals on this site, I consider that officer time is best spent determining planning applications and continuing progress on the draft Island Planning Strategy, rather than undertaking a review into historic applications.”