

Letter to Residents

28th October 2020

Dear Resident

Thank you for your letter dated 7 October regarding the ecological works on the development site at Englishcombe Lane, Bath.

The council takes allegations of harm to wildlife extremely seriously and I personally was extremely concerned about the issues raised. I therefore asked our Chief Executive, Will Godfrey, to carry out a detailed investigation of these allegations.

That investigation has now been completed. As you would expect, the report does not consider the merits of the planning approval in this case, as this is not appropriate. Rather, the Chief Executive has investigated the specific allegations raised relating to the treatment of slowworms. He has put together a timeline of events, including details of the action taken by the council to establish whether any harm was caused to reptiles during their move to a safe area as part of the site preparation.

His report concludes that there is no evidence to suggest the ecological mitigation works have caused the death of the two slowworms. Three weeks elapsed between the tractor being on site and the council being contacted alleging the damage and we are unable to confirm the date on which the photos were taken.

I am satisfied that this draws a line under these specific allegations, but I should emphasise that I will always be committed to ensuring that works at these and other development sites take place in full compliance of the rules.

I am aware also that the Police investigation has concluded, and they will not be proceeding with this case. I understand that the investigating officer has updated the complainants of this decision.

This planning permission for this development was granted subject to the developer meeting clear ecological requirements. This includes offsetting the impact of the development on wildlife by creating new habitats at a larger site in Pennyquick Lane.

Given the importance of this issue and the concerns and publicity raised around it in recent weeks, I am publishing this as an open letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Dine Romero', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr Dine Romero
Leader of Bath and North East Somerset Council