

Rugby Borough Council challenge Tim Fisher's account of site discussions.

The latest Freedom of Information Act request by the Sky Blue Trust has revealed a difference in the accounts of alleged discussions between Coventry City FC and a local Council.

At a meeting of the "Stadium Forum Committee" on 21 January 2015, its minutes show that Tim Fisher, CCFC's Chairman reported as follows:

"TF confirmed that to date there have been numerous sites considered during the land search process but he wanted to share information on 3 principal sites which had been considered in detail:

- 1. "Brandon Speedway. This site is 26 acres and is 4.6 miles from Earl Street. The club had met with Rugby Council. The Council had been clear that they felt that the site was not suitable for a football stadium. The highways challenges were too great. However, Rugby Council were extremely interested in an Academy/training ground facility and acknowledged the benefits for the local community. As such, the site could have been appealing for potential use of the Academy/Training Ground. Despite further work including an environmental investigation the club did not pursue. The issues around securing vacant possession were simply too big – there was an ongoing legal issue with the land owners and HMRC.*
- 2. "Ansty. The club also enquired with Rugby Council about this 100+ acre site which is 4 miles from Earl Street. Despite the potential suitability of the site itself, it was not possible to get a highways solution due to access issues with an adjoining site.*
- 3. "Ryton – 23 acres (net) – again a meeting with Rugby Council. Despite some highway issues there was a relatively straightforward solution with a spur off the A46. The subsequent sale process saw Prologis successfully close the land deal with a bid of £650,000 per acre. "*

Upon reading this, the Trust wrote to Rugby Borough Council asking them to confirm whether or not such discussions have taken place and, if they have, to let us know the date(s) when they took place, the parties involved, the nature of the discussions and their outcome.

The Council have, this week, responded as follows:

"I can confirm that in September 2013, the Leader of the Council and Executive Director met with representatives from Coventry City Football Club to discuss the club's proposals to develop a Category 2 Academy training facility at the Brandon Speedway site. The representatives of Coventry City Football Club were informed that the proposals were unacceptable to the council and there has been no communication with the club since that meeting."

Thus it appears that, according to Rugby Council, CCFC have had no discussions with them about a stadium development - just one, fruitless, meeting about an Academy at Brandon. Mr Fisher's description of the shortcomings of the three sites may well be fair and accurate, but it appears there were no discussions with the Council on the basis reported to the Stadium Forum Committee.

Also, whilst Mr Fisher says that *"Rugby Council were extremely interested in an Academy/training ground facility and acknowledged the benefits for the local community"* Council tell us that *"The representatives of Coventry City Football Club were informed that the proposals (i.e. for an Academy) were unacceptable to the council."*