



Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Monday, 10 November 2008
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

This agenda has been prepared in accordance with the Scrutiny Call-In Guidelines to be considered by Council on 3 November, 2008 and can be amended if any changes to the proposed guidelines are approved by the Council

Call-in of Cabinet minute 213 (16/10/08) - Land at the Warrens, Thingwall Road East, Thingwall

At its meeting held on 16 October 2008, the Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management which sought approval, in principle, for the disposal of an area of land at the Warrens Nursery in order to facilitate the construction of a health centre, subject to planning permission being obtained.

The Cabinet (minute 213) resolved,

“That

- (1) the land at the Warrens Nursery be declared surplus to requirements and authorises its disposal, subject to planning permission being obtained and satisfactory terms being agreed;
- (2) the District Valuer be jointly commissioned by the Council and the PCT to determine the value of the premium for lease;
- (3) any provisionally agreed terms of disposal be reported to a future Cabinet; and

(4) any objections received in respect of the disposal of Public Open Space, associated with this proposal, be reported.”

Cabinet minute 213 was called in by Councillors Jeff Green, Tom Anderson, Geoffrey Watt, Lesley Rennie, and Chris Blakeley on the following grounds:

Arrowe Country Park comprises some 250 acres of open parkland and deciduous woodland. Another 150 acres is taken up by an adjacent municipal 18 hole golf course and formal areas. The park woodland contains many fine examples of Oak, Ash and Beech as well as conifers such as Scots Pine and Cedar.

Some of its more unusual trees include Redwood, Cedar of Lebanon, Maidenhair and Indian Bean tree. The woodland birds include Rooks, Magpies, Jays, Nuthatches, Tree Creepers and Great and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers. Areas of grassland and woodland edges are now being cared for as wildflower meadows which attract butterflies such as Small Heath, Skipper and Speckled Wood at the woodland edge. The lake and brook provide a habitat for various species of birds, and those prepared to wait long enough may catch sight of a kingfisher as it darts along the brook. Ponds scattered throughout the park are breeding grounds for a variety of pond life including frogs, newts, damsel and dragonflies. Arrowe Country Park is situated in the centre of the Wirral Peninsula between the rural and urban areas and is the gateway to Wirral's Countryside.

Arrowe Country Park is not only highly valued for its peaceful pathways and woodland walks, it also has a toddler's play area as well as a children's adventure playground, plus many recreational facilities which include Golf, Pitch & Putt, Tennis, Bowls, Football, Angling, Orienteering and a Horse Track.

1. We therefore believe that the decision made by Cabinet on the 16 October to declare land within Arrowe Country Park 'Surplus to Requirements' breaks the commitments made by the Council to local residents, and the wider Wirral Communities and will impact on the integrity of 'Arrowe Country Park'.

2. We do not believe that this land can be declared surplus to requirements by the Council as it is clearly defined by the Council as being Arrowe Country Park.

3. The land is also shown on the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as being Greenbelt land. The Council has always, until now, defended Greenbelt land. We see no reason for this position to be changed.

4. The land in question is criss-crossed with community footpaths linking with Arrowe Country Park Woods, bordering the golf course, if this sale goes forward then all of the community footpaths will be lost forever.

5. We believe that if the Cabinet's decision to declare this land surplus to requirements is upheld, that it sets a dangerous, deplorable precedent that will pose a massive threat to all of our green, open and leisure spaces.

6. We also believe that any development of this site would not only cause loss of greenbelt and green space that the public have enjoyed for years, but it will also cause irreparable harm to wildlife and habitat.

The Cabinet report is attached with the exempt information redacted.

1. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Members are asked to consider whether they have personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they are.

Members are reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

3. EXPLANATION OF THE CALL-IN BY LEAD SIGNATORY

4. EVIDENCE FROM CALL-IN WITNESSES

5. EVIDENCE FROM CABINET MEMBER'S WITNESSES

6. SUMMING UP BY MOVER OF THE CALL-IN

7. SUMMING UP BY CABINET MEMBER

8. COMMITTEE DEBATE

9. COMMITTEE DECISION