

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 27 July 2023

Present: Councillor P Stuart (Chair)

Councillors J Robinson S Mountney
P Gilchrist L Rennie
EA Grey H Gorman
A Davies J McManus (In
T Jones place of S Powell-
JE Green Wilde)
H Cameron C Cooke (In place
of P Cleary)
A Onwuemene (In
place of J Bird)
GJ Davies (In place
of J Williamson)

31 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting as well as those watching the webcast.

32 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors Jo Bird, Pat Cleary, Sue Powell-Wilde and Janette Williamson.

Councillors Chris Cooke, Amanda Onwuemene, Julie McManus and George Davies were in attendance as substitutes.

33 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No declarations were made.

34 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair indicated that one public question had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

David Allen spoke on behalf of Wirral Archaeology Community Interest Company and outlined the significance of Brackenwood Golf Course as a site in the search for the location of the Battle of Brunanburh. His question was should the golf course be transferred to Brackenwood Community Golf Ltd, could a clause be included in the transfer to allow suitable access for archaeological investigation.

In response, the Chair outlined his recognition that the site was potentially vital for the location of the Battle of Brunanburh and that he intended to ask officers to explore how appropriate rights of access for archaeological investigations could be retained should the transfer be agreed.

35 **STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS**

The Chair indicated that three members of the public had registered to make a statement in advance of the meeting.

Christine Smalley spoke in relation to item 5 'Community Asset Transfer – Brackenwood Golf Course' as a local resident who used Brackenwood Golf Course as a place to walk her dog. Christine spoke of the biodiversity and wildlife on the site and the work volunteers had undertaken to keep the course fit for purpose during 483 days of uncertainty. Christine outlined that she felt there was an abundance of pitches nearby and urged the Council to transfer the site for the benefit of the local community.

Keith Marsh spoke in relation to item 5 'Community Asset Transfer – Brackenwood Golf Course' and outlined the support that Brackenwood Community Golf Ltd had received locally and internationally for the proposed transfer. Keith thanked officers for their hard work in supporting the group through the process and thanked the volunteers who had worked passionately, professionally and with tenacity to protect the land for the local community.

Robin Clarke spoke in relation to item 5 'Community Asset Transfer – Brackenwood Golf Course' and spoke of the members of Brackenwood Golf Club and the various reasons why local people chose to be members of the club for social, community, health and wellbeing reasons, urging the Committee to consider those people and transfer the site.

The Chair placed on record his thanks to the public speakers for their passionate speeches.

36 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

The Chair reported that no questions by members had been received.

37 **COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER - BRACKENWOOD GOLF COURSE**

The Assistant Director of Special Projects introduced the report of the Director of Finance which set out the proposed transfer of Brackenwood Golf Course to Brackenwood Community Golf Limited based on the Heads of Terms set out in the report. It was reported that the proposal included an improved rental offer and the provision of two mini 5-a-side pitches and four full size playing pitches, as opposed to two full size pitches as detailed in the report.

The Committee discussed the proposal in detail and considered the wider provision of playing pitches within Wirral, urging officers to encourage schools with existing facilities to make them available for community use to contribute to the Local Plan. The Committee further discussed the feasibility of the pitches at Brackenwood and the promotion of biodiversity on the site.

Members around the table placed on record their thanks to the volunteers at Brackenwood Golf Club for their ongoing maintenance of the site, the detailed information shared with members to aide their decision and the polite but determined, tenacity of the volunteers to progress the transfer. On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Jeff Green, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That

(1) the Committee agrees to the transfer of Brackenwood Golf Course to Brackenwood Community Golf Limited (BCGL) on the basis of the Heads of Terms set out in the report, noting the improved rent offer and the required provision of two mini 5-a-side pitches and four full-size playing pitches and also subject to appropriate provision made in the lease to enable appropriate access to be made for archaeological investigation.

(2) the intent to transfer is advertised as the asset is public open space. If no objections are received, then delegated authority be given to Director of Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to proceed to transfer the identified land. To note that if objections are received then the matter will return to Committee for consideration as set out in paragraph 5.8.

38 **COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER - WOODCHURCH LEISURE CENTRE**

The Chair reported that several members had indicated that they wished to discuss the content of the exempt appendices. Therefore, on a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Angie Davies, it was –

Resolved – That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds it involves the likely

disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

The Assistant Director of Special Projects introduced the report (of the Director of Finance) which set out the proposed Community Asset Transfer of Woodchurch Leisure Centre to Woodchurch Wellbeing.

Following a debate on the matter, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That

- (1) Committee notes and concurs with the key objectives set out in the business plan.**
- (2) Committee is minded to support the Community Asset Transfer of Woodchurch Leisure Centre to Woodchurch Wellbeing with capital funding up to a maximum of £330,000 and to that effect will issue a letter of intent accordingly.**
- (3) Such a letter is subject to:**
 - a. Receipt of additional grant funding by Woodchurch Wellbeing to match Council capital contribution of £330k plus 20% revenue costs by Friday 27 October 2023.**
 - b. Receipt of a revised business plan by Friday 27 October 2023 for consideration by Policy & Resources Committee on 8 November 2023.**