

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

**COUNCILLORS**

**PRESENT** (Chair) Susan Erbil, Margaret Greer, Lee David-Sanders, Birsen Demirel and James Hockney

**ABSENT** Mahmut Aksanoglu, Elif Erbil and Derek Levy

**STATUTORY CO-OPTTEES:** *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), vacancy (other faiths/denominations representative), Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

**OFFICERS:**

**Also Attending:** Councillor Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Mahtab Uddin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)  
Chris Ferrary (on behalf of Lead Petitioner)  
Mustafa Berk-Ak (Enfield Deputy Young Mayor)

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**WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Councillor Susan Erbil welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the process to be followed in hearing the Call-ins.

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**CALL-IN: LEASING OF WHITEWEBBS PARK GOLF COURSE**

Cllr Thorpe was welcomed as the Call-In lead and highlighted the following:

- All concerns have been highlighted in the agenda papers.
- There has been a lack of stakeholder engagement during the process. Residents and site holders have been consistent in their opposition to these plans. They have held protests and petitions and detailed submissions.
- Only 35% of the scoring bids related to rent or premium offered, yet we have been repeatedly told that financial implications have been cited as a main driver in looking to lease the site. The total rent received will

only be circa £2m for the 25 year period, which is hugely undervaluing the site.

- The proposal does not specifically say that the £500k upfront is ring fenced for improvements to Whitewebbs.
- The bidding process took place before lockdown. The pandemic has changed the economy, the retail, hospitality, and leisure industry but the report does not address this.
- The plan reduces public access as areas of the park that are currently open to the public are planned to be turned into a private training facility.

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#### **RESPONSE TO REASONS FOR CALL-IN: LEASING OF WHITEWEBBS PARK GOLF COURSE**

- The Cabinet Member acknowledged that Whitewebbs is an important area for the borough and that there is a level of anxiety with residents when it comes to our parks. We are here today to provide further assurance.
- The cabinet member confirmed she has a clear record of working in interest of the borough and often meets with major stakeholders within the borough for a variety of reasons. Members are welcomed to put in a complaint if they have concerns.
- Although others have a different view, there was adequate consultation done. This has been detailed in several reports and timetables. Delays were because our organisation was focusing on the direct response to Covid-19, this has not undermined the procurement process.
- Officers advised they have been clear throughout the process that the maximum rent would not be the deciding factor and the rent is comparable with other golf courses. An open and transparent bidding process was held. There was a focus on maintaining public access, positive investment and financial stability.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members, relevant to the call-in reasons:

- When Tottenham Hotspur but in a bid to part let part of the site, were they invited to revise their bid. Officers confirmed all bidders were given the same information and option to revise the bids.
- Regarding access to the site, development, and the impact on nature we are told it is a matter for planning, however the lease should define this. do we have the ability to legally challenge them on this? Officers confirmed that we would not award a lease until planning is granted. There will be a draft lease and the ability to amend this after consultation. The tenant is obliged to comply with any conditions in planning consent. We regularly review lease agreements with tenants.
- We are told you engaged with and involved stakeholders but there has been several detailed questions to the Leader which have had no response. The leader confirmed she received hundreds of emails a week and they are all responded to and would be happy to be

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contacted tomorrow with any outstanding questions. They are publicly available documents which answer these questions.

- There has been no transparency on cost and no detail on controllable internal charges, can you explain how this is losing money and what is in it for Spurs. They have lots of money and are getting it for a low cost, what profit share will we get back. Officers confirmed the questions have already been addressed by themselves and the director of finance and the finances are set out in public documents. Tottenham are a major stakeholder who have been in the borough for a decade. They have proposed the first women's training ground in the country.
- Concerns were raised for wildlife and access to the public. Officers clarified that the proposals maintain a majority of the woodlands to be controlled by the council, provides money to improve public footpaths and accessibility.
- Who were the stakeholders the discussions were held with? Officers confirmed there is a list on page 12, which has also been published on the website.
- Questions were raised around the bidding process, what gave Tottenham Hotspur the highest score? Officers explained they got the highest score but was not the highest bidder. The reasons for this score were based upon access to public space, contribution to social value, financial income and being a credible entity to what they proposed to deliver.
- Do we have a percentage for local employment in mind to meet the council's objectives in including the percentage of apprenticeships? How would this be enforced, and could this be included in the lease? Members were advised the weighting set out in the bid spec gives assurance that the social value will be met. Section 106 contributions will allow us to contribute to this. We can stipulate through the planning process the number of jobs created targeted to local residents.
- A letter was received a letter from Friends of Whitewebbs, highlighting uneven ground on the site, which will cause effects on wildlife and biodiversity. How does this align with the councils climate change emergency and green strategies. It was explained by officers that the bid spec outlined the winner would need to make a net positive contribution, Tottenham's bid demonstrated this. There is also additional investment offered to improve the woodlands and biodiversity. Part of the planning process will be required to demonstrate this, stakeholders are already in dialogue with them to ensure this is done.
- Tottenham has obtained pre planning advice, when can we expect this to come to the planning. The pre planning period can be lengthy so it can be looked at in great date, no date has been set.
- Regarding the scoring table in the repot, what long term benefits do they offer and how did they get such a high score. Officers explained the bidder submitted sufficient information to demonstrate their business plan was financially credible, others did not show that credibility. This did not directly reflect on benefits to the council.
- This will be the first female training ground of its type, what can we expect to gain? The Leader responded with, women's football is the

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fastest growing sport in the world, lots of young women are showing an interest. It gives residents aspirations; they will also be a local employer.

- Do Enfield own the land and will the open space land they will lease remain open? Officers confirmed that all of the land is in the councils freehold ownership. There are areas within Whitewebbs that are leased to others, such as the Toby Calvary. There is also a house in the middle which is privately owned. Historically the land was under a lease, we are currently the freeholder. The open space will remain an open space throughout the lease.

Councillor Thorp in summing up highlighted the following; he had not intended to put doubt in the leaders character. Discussions were held on the benefits of this for the whole borough. The cost being subsidised to this bidder was inappropriate. Whitewebbs belongs to the people of Enfield, progressing with this bid wont win us anything.

Overview & Scrutiny considered the reasons for the call-in and the responses provided.

Councillors Boztas, Demirel, Anyanwu, Greer voted in favour of the above decision and Councillors David-Sanders, Anderson and Hockney voted for against. The original decision was therefore confirmed.

## **15 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The dates of future meetings were noted and amendments have been sent via email.