

DRAFT RESPONSE

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Call-In Meeting – 07/10/24

Call-In of Decision – KD5741 List No. 20/24-25 (published on 13/09/2024) Disposal of Surplus Council Property Assets & Land

Call-In Lead: Councillor Lee Chamberlain

Officer Response:

Reasons for the “Call in” are detailed below:

Reason for call-in
<p>Ford’s Grove Car Park</p> <p>A medium sized site, with limited redevelopment potential. This is a popular car park which serves an area of Green Lanes and residents from nearby wards. Its existence formed part of the administration’s case for the loss of parking from the new cycle lanes, a case which would be invalidated if the car park was sold and redeveloped. Its removal will clearly impact a local economy in Green Lanes already impacted by the loss of parking caused by cycle lanes. The impact would obviously also see increase parking congestion caused by the residual visitors and further encourage car drivers to make longer journeys to out-of-town centre sites with parking. It should be noted that the draft ELP proposed redevelopment of the Sainsbury site would also impact the area.</p> <p>In particular, the report fails to set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence to substantiate car park underutilisation. The car park is clearly well used and popular with visitors to the shopping locations.• How local residents who have gated overnight access to the car park for parking could be re-provided with parking provision?• An impact assessment in regard of local parking capacity is provided. A visual inspection of the nearby location indicates a high level of parking congestion.• An economic impact assessment of reduced footfall to businesses in Green Lanes with resultant reductions in business rates from businesses leaving the area.
Officer response
<p>The Cabinet report clearly sets out in section 1 that : “The list of assets identified in the appendix are a <u>draft list of “candidates”</u> for sale at this stage and have either been declared surplus to operational requirements by former occupying service departments, are otherwise not considered “fit for purpose” by other service departments, requiring accommodation, underperforming when judged against the</p>

principles set out in the core principles of the Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP 2019-2024) s.1.3 or exceptional circumstances exist. Further due diligence if formal approval in principle for sale is granted will be undertaken on each asset."

Furthermore, Recommendation 1 is clear that the Council will only proceed with a disposal subject to appropriate due diligence investigations and Recommendation 2 states that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement will only be called upon to authorise the sale if full due diligence and stakeholder engagement has taken place. Further reinforcement of this principle is also provided in sections 8, 9, 16, 19 and 25.

The rationale behind the approach to identify "candidates" of land and property assets for sale which are potentially underperforming with limited initial due diligence (as opposed to full due diligence from the outset) is based on the need to make efficient use of scarce staff resources. Expending considerable sums of money and staff time on full due diligence prior to provisional member approval runs the risk that significant and costly abortive work takes place on those "candidates for sale" which fail to obtain provisional approval.

Recommendation 2 also makes it clear that whilst authority is delegated to the Cabinet Member for Finance and procurement, as Portfolio holder, any decision to sell, following further extensive due diligence and stakeholder engagement is also subject to Call – In by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who will have the opportunity to review any given sale on a case by case basis provided that the consideration exceeds the key decision threshold of £500,000 which applies to the full list of "candidates" under review in this report.

The process outlined above applies to every asset listed in the Cabinet report.

The remainder of the officer responses below therefore address the specific areas of further due diligence investigations raised by the Call – In Lead the results of which will be included in the subsequent Portfolio report.

- Evidence to substantiate car park underutilisation. The car park is clearly popular with visitors to the shopping locations.

Agreed – further consultation will take place with our in-house parking team.

- An assessment in regard of alternate local parking capacity is provided. Multistorey parking is also a deterrent for some vehicle drivers.

Agreed – further consultation will take place with our in-house parking team.

- An economic impact assessment of reduced footfall to businesses in Enfield Town with resultant reductions in business rates from businesses leaving the area.

Agreed – further consultation will take place with in-house parking team for on and off-street parking capacity. Subject to outcome, an economic impact assessment could be considered.

Reason for call-in
Church Lane A small site, with very limited redevelopment potential, it provides a useful overspill for those parking to visit Silver Street and northeast side of Enfield Town. In particular the report fails to set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence to substantiate car park underutilisation. The car park is clearly popular with visitors to the shopping locations.• An assessment in regard of alternate local parking capacity is provided. Multistorey parking is also a deterrent for some vehicle drivers.• An economic impact assessment of reduced footfall to businesses in Enfield Town with resultant reductions in business rates from businesses leaving the area.• An impact assessment on the conservation area by development at Church Lane.
Officer response <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence to substantiate car park underutilisation. The car park is clearly popular with visitors to the shopping locations. Agreed – further consultation will take place with our in-house parking team. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An assessment in regard of alternate local parking capacity is provided. Multistorey parking is also a deterrent for some vehicle drivers. Agreed – further consultation will take place with our in-house parking team. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An economic impact assessment of reduced footfall to businesses in Enfield Town with resultant reductions in business rates from businesses leaving the area. Agreed – further consultation will take place with in-house parking team for on and off-street parking capacity. Subject to outcome, an economic impact assessment could be considered. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An impact assessment on the conservation area by development at Church Lane. Agreed – We will seek assurances/views from the Local Planning Authority whether or not on balance any development of the car park materially impacts adversely upon the Conservation Area.

Reason for call-in**Little Park Gardens**

A small to medium sized site, with limited redevelopment potential, providing a useful parking spot for those visiting Church Street and northwest side of Enfield Town.

In particular the report fails to set out:

- Evidence to substantiate the car parks underutilisation. The car park is clearly popular with visitors to the shopping locations when accessible.
- An assessment in regard of local parking capacity is provided. Multistorey parking is also a deterrent for some vehicle drivers.
- An economic impact assessment of reduced footfall to businesses in Enfield Town with resultant reductions in business rates from businesses leaving the area.

Officer response

- Evidence to substantiate car park underutilisation. The car park is clearly popular with visitors to the shopping locations.

Agreed – further consultation will take place with our in-house parking team.

- An assessment in regard of alternate local parking capacity is provided. Multistorey parking is also a deterrent for some vehicle drivers.

Agreed – further consultation will take place with our in-house parking team.

- An economic impact assessment of reduced footfall to businesses in Enfield Town with resultant reductions in business rates from businesses leaving the area.

Agreed – further consultation will take place with in-house parking team for on and off-street parking capacity. Subject to outcome, an economic impact assessment could be considered.

Reason for call-in**Southbury Corner**

A large area of land which could be kept as a strategic asset in LBE control subject to the outcome of the ELP review. It is a key plot of land in a prominent position in the borough providing a number of popular social and leisure services.

In particular the report fails to set out:

- Potential economic impact to the area of this site's redevelopment.
- Loss of the community facilities on this site, such as the cinema, church services and leisure centre. In addition to the popular restaurant facilities.

Officer response

- Potential economic impact to the area of this site's redevelopment.
Agreed – Further due diligence and cost/benefit analysis will be carried out in consultation with the Local Planning Authority on the impact of this development as compared with the benefit of up to c.900+ new homes.
- Loss of the community facilities on this site, such as the cinema, church services and leisure centre. In addition to the popular restaurant facilities.
Agreed – Further due diligence will be carried out concerning the future of the cinema/church services as the operator is, I understand, looking closely at the viability of their operations nationwide including this location. If the operator were to close the cinema, a change of use would inevitably be sought by the long leaseholder in any event. Further due diligence and cost/benefit analysis will also be carried out in relation to the potential loss of restaurant facilities.
The leisure centre remains unaffected as it is not contained within the long lease to Royal London. It is not therefore being sold. Access to and from the centre also remains unaffected by any potential sale.

Reason for call-in

Parker Centre

This centre is run for the borough by Age Concern and provides a vital service for people suffering with dementia.

In particular the report fails to set out:

- Evidence to explain how the building is no longer fit for purpose.
- An equality impact assessment on the vulnerable people this service cut will impact.

- What discussions, if any, LBE has had prior to the report with Age Concern in respect of the building's suitability and their view.

Officer response

Parker Centre

- Evidence to explain how the building is no longer fit for purpose.

Agreed – This will be fully explained in the subsequent Portfolio report, if promoted for sale, following satisfactory further due diligence. In addition, a separate report on relocating the service is being presented to the Portfolio holder at the earliest opportunity. It is anticipated that this will be a service improvement, not a service cut.

- An equality impact assessment on the people this service will impact will be undertaken.

An equality impact assessment will not be necessary given that the service is relocating and is not a service cut.

- What discussions, if any, LBE has had prior to the report with Age Concern in respect of the building's suitability and their view.

Age UK have been consulted on the relocation plan and are fully supportive. It is anticipated that this will lead to service improvements.

Reason for call-in

The remaining assets listed (i.e. Land adjacent 28 Camlet Way, Ridgeway Barn, Holly Hill Farm Barn, Land south of Barnet road) have a similar lack of supporting information or explanation (costs v benefits for example) as to why they cannot be kept or redeveloped for their existing planned uses. It also fails to show if the locations were considered for alternate uses such as the creation of a park at Camlet Way for example.

Officer response

Each of the remaining assets listed will be the subject of further due diligence prior to any final decision to sell, including (but not limited to) cost/benefit analysis, consideration of alternative uses and the case for retention either for in-house use or potential for generating revenue (rather than a capital receipt).

Proposal: Councillor Chamberlain has asked that the decision is referred back to the decision maker.