



Palfrey & Pleck LNP

Camden Street Sports Arena

18th September 2006

Portfolio: Councillor Louise Harrison, Leisure & Culture

Service Area: Greenspace Services

Summary of report

Officers of Walsall Council to enter into dialogue with the Union of Muslim Organisations (UMO) & local residents in relation to the future of Camden Street sports arena.

Recommendations

That the Pleck & Palfrey LNP note & support the contents of this report

Background and report detail

Members will recall that at their 31st July 2006 meeting they requested that a report be provided in relation to the future of Camden Street sports arena and the Union of Muslim Organisations' request to take over the management of the arena.

In the late '90's Camden Street resident staff were withdrawn from the sports arena as a result of financial constraints and the maintenance of the site was brought into line with other green spaces which includes a fortnightly litter pick & twice yearly herbicidal treatment.

In 2001 a public consultation exercise was undertaken involving all residents who lived around the site.

75 letters were sent out to local residents requesting their views on the arena. 9 individual replies were made requesting that the area be replaced with private housing, one petition was received with 7 signatures requesting that the site be closed, one petition was received with 40 signatures requesting that the site be replaced with 'owned and managed residential houses', one letter was received requesting that the play area be removed and the area landscaped and one letter was received asking for private houses to be built but for the play area and landscaping to remain. Clearly, the significant majority indicated that the sports arena be replaced and that a residential development be considered.

On the 24th September 2002 the Walsall District Committee resolved that Camden Street sports arena site be declared surplus to requirements.

At this time the Borough did not have a Greenspace Strategy and it was therefore not possible for Walsall Council to formally declare the site surplus to requirement.

In October 2006 it is proposed to submit Walsall Council's Greenspace Strategy to Cabinet for formal approval and adoption. The Greenspace Strategy confirms that the Palfrey & Caldmore area is deficient in green space provision and therefore the site should not be declared surplus to requirement. The Strategy further states that compared to other green space in the borough of Walsall Camden Street sports arena and play area is a high quality / low value site and therefore the site should be looked at from the perspective of maintaining the quality and undertaking further assessment on the value of the site with the aim of enhancing its present primary purpose or considering if it would be of a higher value if converted to another primary purpose.

It is therefore the intention of Greenspace Services to:

- Enter into dialogue with the Union of Muslim Organisations (UMO) to further investigate their proposals in relation to the site
- Consult with the local community in relation to the options of the arena remaining but its management falling under the remit of the UMO or for the primary purpose of the site to be changed i.e. landscaped areas that would reflect the needs & aspirations of the local community.
- Provide an update report to the next meeting of the Palfrey & Pleck LNP.

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