

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

8 JULY 2020

Item 4. Questions from Members of the Public

- i) Question received from Simon Crowther, Chairman, Sport Godalming

“With respect to agenda item 10 - Property Matter – Broadwater Golf Course – would the committee confirm that this area of land would remain solely for the purposes of sport and leisure.”

Response from Cllr Mark Merryweather, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial:

“The area of land is classed as D2 (Leisure) under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. D2 use includes indoor and outdoor sports and associated recreations. The land is also Green Belt land under Waverley Borough Council’s Local Plan Part 1 (policy RE2).

There are no plans to change the use of the land from D2 to another use.”

- ii) Question from Bruce Weller of Rowledge

“As a resident of WBC (resident of Rowledge) and somewhat experienced (30 years) in leisure development and golf course development (Weller Designs Ltd, Sports Pitch Design Build, Golf Land Solutions), I have one question:

Is it wise to spend £50k (which I assume is taxpayers money) on a report that is going to tell you what we already know, ie there are limited options on this site for open space leisure and even more limited if you want a tenant that will make a profitable operation.

Clearly there are the options of:

- Extension of Park, woodland nature, sculpture trail etc etc Laudable and given my qualification as a landscape architect completely understandable in current climate.
- Football (3G) / other sports pitches (possibly profitable) but limited public access. With most sports apart from football not making much or any money.
- Or golf / range / adventure / cafe...Golf is having a serious renaissance following Covid and the success of Adventure Golf putting courses is well known (there are none in the district)

What is wrong with the current approved application which remedies the uncapped landfill at the same time?

As an experienced golf designer and consultant £50k will tell you what we know would be the case and that is a small scale high end Family Golf or 3G football pitch(s) will be profitable. The rest not so. Extension to naturalistic park in whatever manner would be great (that's my landscape architect hat talking!) but I assume a cost burden to WBC?

I am based in Farnham and indeed set a few thoughts flying about Brambledon Park possibilities and happy to have a chat (at no cost sometime).

I was involved (some 5years!) with the planning application details to SCC for Broadwater Golf Club so clearly have an interest, but at the same time it's a lot of money to perhaps come to an already known conclusion."

Response from Cllr Mark Merryweather, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial:

"With regard to the process that brought us to this point, we do recognise that the outcome of the process was not what anyone involved, including the Council, aspired to when it was started back in 2018. I'm sure you will understand that the Council has to respect the confidentiality of the plans and the information that the company supplied to us, on which I therefore can't comment now any further.

However, that said, I still hope I can reassure you that the relevant claims you have made in your question regarding the site and the company's plans for it were examined exhaustively in arriving at the conclusion that we did. With regard to the separate process of the company's planning application for this Council-owned site, this was of course without prejudice to the outcome of the lease licence and diligence processes that were still unresolved at the time.

Broadwater Park is an important public asset and so as to the alternatives for it going forward, it is important for the Council to engage in appropriate expert and independent advice for the options appraisal to ensure it is securing Value for Money with regards to the use of the site. The property advisors, Montagu Evans, have been asked to identify all options for the site, some of which may not have been considered by the Council or 3rd parties yet. As per the Executive report, a Council delivered development on this site would support the Corporate Strategy's vision to sustain "high quality public services accessible for all, including sports, leisure, arts, culture and open spaces."