

Agenda Item 9

COUNCIL MEETING 10 JULY 2013

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Motion 1 (Conservative and Independent Member)

Submitted by Councillors John Bowcott, Margaret Brierly, Richard Chellew and Samantha George.

This Council notes Cabinet's agreement at its meeting on 16 January 2012 that:

- “the preferred management model for Morley Park should secure the best value and best facilities and services for the community within the borough and that, in addition to any lawful requirements, the process for selecting such should also be reasonable, fair and transparent”; and
- officers should continue “to review the details, rules and implementation of the Localism Act 2011 to ensure that the Council does not frustrate the aims of the legislation and, furthermore, to explore the opportunities presented by community trusts in respect of the management of parks and open spaces and to support local groups to achieve this objective where it can be demonstrated that there are clear and sustainable social, environmental and/or financial benefits to be gained from doing so”.

However, further to these resolutions by Cabinet and the motion passed by Full Council on 6 February 2013 welcoming the new Community Right to Bid and Community Right to Challenge, concerns continue to be raised by residents in the vicinity of the Atkinson Morley site about a lack of openness and transparency over the future management of the Metropolitan Open Land gifted to the Council under a section 106 agreement. In particular there have been concerns about:

- the Council's prejudicial antipathy to the proposal for an umbrella lease covering the whole of the open space;
- the process for awarding a formal sub-lease to Ursuline High School for use of the playing fields;
- the need to ensure the long term sustainability of the dowry received as part of the section 106 agreement; and
- the lack of information provided by the Council to enable the Morley Park Trust or any other community group to put together a detailed business plan for management of the open space.

This Council fully recognises the importance of assisting Ursuline High School to fulfil its outdoor sport and educational needs and therefore supports the leasing of the Morley Park playing fields to the school.

This Council also believes, however, that Merton needs to address the concerns highlighted by residents in a timely manner and so resolves to be much more open and transparent in its dealings with all community groups wishing to bid for local services or community assets.

This Council therefore requests that from now on Cabinet:

- a) sets out a clear and public timeline for considering each individual submission made by a community group in Merton under the Community Right to Bid or the Community Right to Challenge; and
- b) cooperates and engages closely with all such community groups, keeping both them and interested ward councillors fully informed at all stages of the process so that local assets and services can be maintained for the benefit of the whole community.