

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 19 June 2023

Wards: All

Subject: Reference from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Call in for Brickfield Road Travellers site

Lead officer: Rosie Mckeever, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Councillor Stuart Neaverson, Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Contact officer: Rosie Mckeever, Scrutiny Officer, 0208 545 4035

Recommendations:

1. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel requests that Cabinet note its reference set out in paragraph 2.11 below.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. During the 8 March 2023 meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Members were asked to consider the call-in relating to the licence fee for the Brickfield Road traveller's site.
- 1.2. Brickfield Road is a traveller site in Wimbledon Park ward, over which the council retain ownership, but it is managed by Clarion who charge a license fee to the occupants of the site.
- 1.3. The management agreement states that Clarion will make a recommendation for the licence, which must be reasonable, and that the Council will review annually.
- 1.4. A 7% increase was accepted by the Council.

2 DETAILS

2.1. Scrutiny process

- 2.2. The Panel welcomed Councillor Macarthur to the meeting, alongside the Director of Adult Social Care, Integrated Care & Public Health and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development.
- 2.3. The reasons for the call-in were outlined by Councillor Macarthur – the belief that two principles of decision making had not been applied. Those principles were a respect for human rights inequalities, and a consideration and evaluation of alternatives.
- 2.4. Councillor Macarthur also raised concerns as to whether correct management of the site is being upheld, considering there is a chronic rat infestation, failure to maintain running water to every pitch and disconnected firefighting equipment.

- 2.5. Panel Members asked detailed questions of the Housing Officers, Director of Adult Social Care, Integrated Care & Public Health and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development.
- 2.6. Members heard that with regards to the query over a lack of an Equality Impact Assessment, the Council originally utilised the national one completed by Government. However, the Council have now subsequently developed our own EIA.
- 2.7. Members were reassured to hear that in the last five years, since the records have been monitored, there have been no concerns or issues reported of any traveller having had problems with paying the rent. If any reports were to be made, there are systems in place to help. For example, Clarion has a specialist team that can go out and assist people to apply for benefits to maximise their incomes.
- 2.8. The Chair moved to a vote on whether the Panel wish to refer the decision back to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Integrated Care & Public Health for reconsideration, setting out the nature of the Panel's concerns. There were 3 votes in favour, 6 Against, and 1 abstention.
- 2.9. **Scrutiny response**
- 2.10. Whilst the Panel voted not to refer the matter back to the Director or Cabinet Member for reconsideration, they did RESOLVE to send the following recommendation to Cabinet.
- 2.11. "This Panel recommends that the Director of Adult Social Care, Integrated Care and Public Health and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development arrange for inspection of the Brickfield Road site, to explore the issues raised by the Councillors who submitted the call-in"
- 2.12. This was seconded with all 10 Panel members voting in favour.
- 3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**
- 3.1. None – Cabinet is required under the council's constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny.
- 4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**
- 4.1. None for the purpose of this report.
- 5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**
- 5.1. None for the purpose of this report.
- 6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**
- 6.1. Cabinet is required under the council's constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires Cabinet to respond to reports and recommendations made by scrutiny committees within two months of written notice being given.
- 7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**
- 7.1. There are no human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications as a result of this report.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8.1. These are no crime and disorder implications as a result of this report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no risk management and health and safety implications as a result of this report.

10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- None

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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