



**Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

*Council Leader – Cllr Kerrie Carmichael*

Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

*Please ask for:* Kerrie Carmichael

*Date:* 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Dear Baroness Benjamin,

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposals for Brandhall following your contact with the Brandhall Green Space Action Group.

The Brandhall site is a former restricted-access golf course and is only formally accessible via the public rights of way that cross the site.

The Council has a duty to consider and balance competing priorities for the area. These include ecology and the preservation of green space, the need for high quality school facilities and significant demand for new housing, including affordable homes.

On 20<sup>th</sup> July this year my Cabinet, after giving full consideration to the public consultation outcomes, a plethora of technical information, and the pressing housing and local school needs facing the Borough, took a decision to retain just under 70% of the former golf course as open space and formalise this space as a new public park. This would ensure equity of access and the green space would be maintained and invested in as park and held as public open space.

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The remaining 30% of the site (or thereabouts) would provide circa 190 new homes to help support Sandwell's growing need for housing (25% of which would be affordable) and would also allow for a replacement school to be built for Causeway Green Primary which is in a poor condition due to its original construction method.

The decision of the Cabinet was called-in by Scrutiny for review, in line with the Council's Constitution, which was welcomed. Our Scrutiny Board has asked for further consideration to be given by Cabinet on the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, alternative sites for the school (Cakemore Playing Field), and the weight given to the public consultation in coming to the decisions taken at Cabinet in July.

In response, Councillor Peter Hughes, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth has asked Officers to prepare a further report that provides a clarification of the information presented to Cabinet as part of its decision-making process. This will be presented at a special Meeting of Cabinet later this month, to enable us to put forward our rationale and a comprehensive explanation of the information available to use in reaching our informed decision and clarify any procedural or process aspects.

Turning specifically to the Deed of Dedication relating to the Millennium Forest, I am aware of this matter. The site is indeed affected by a Deed of Dedication, dates 15<sup>th</sup> July 1997 made between the Council (1), National Urban Forestry (2), and The Millennium Commission (3), under which the Council covenants for a period of 99 years not to part with possession of the property affected by that Deed, without the consent of NUFU and the Commission, nor without such consent change the use of the land. The Deed of Dedication only affects part of the site, and includes a provision allowing the Council to dispose of the site (after 25 years), provided replacement areas are dedicated by the Council.

It is intended to consult with the NUFU (or its successor body) and the Millennium Commission to confirm the replacement areas proposed by the Council are agreed. Any tree planting lost as part of the built elements of the scheme (circa 30% of the site) will be replaced on site and plans will be developed in detail to demonstrate how habitats will be improved and new habitats created wherever possible. Moreover, with around 70% of the

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former golf course (which had restricted access) becoming a new public park the amount of publicly accessible greenspace in Sandwell will increase.

All the technical information as well as the outcomes of the public consultation are available to view on our Council website using the link below.

<https://sandwell.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MID=6232#A12432>.

I hope the above addresses your concerns.

Yours sincerely,



**Cllr Kerrie Carmichael**  
**Council Leader**

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