



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Meeting or Decision Maker:	Councillor David Boothroyd Cabinet Member for Finance & Council Reform
Date:	20 September 2023
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Sussex Street Play Area (Petition)
Wards Affected:	Pimlico North
Policy Context:	Fairer Westminster and in particular Fairer Housing and Fairer Environment
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	N/A
Report of:	Gerald Almeroth, Executive Director of Finance

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Administration's intentions with regard to the site at the Corner of Sussex Street and Alderney Street.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the examination of options for the redevelopment of the site at the corner of Sussex Street and Alderney Street to include public open space.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1 This report has been written in response to a petition received and sets out the Administration's approach to the site.

4. Background, including Policy Context

- 4.1 The playground at Sussex Street was used by Children's Services until 2016 with the decision taken to close it in 2015 due to budget constraints. The site was closed and nothing progressed in terms of redevelopment or the creation of public open space. Subsequently, in September 2018 the council entered into a lease with Eaton Square Schools for them to utilise the play area. This arrangement remains in place, reviewed on an annual basis. Following the adoption of the Fairer Westminster strategy in 2022, officers were asked by the Cabinet Member for Finance & Council Reform to identify potential sites for residential redevelopment and this site was identified.
- 4.2 The Fairer Westminster Strategy has five key pillars and the following are particularly pertinent:
- Fairer Environment
 - Fairer Housing
 - Fairer Communities
- 4.3 The site at Sussex Street is an underutilised historic bomb site, never previously used as public open space/green space, prior to its development as a play area.
- 4.4 The potential redevelopment of the site would enable the provision of much needed homes in Westminster as well as green open space which would, for the first time, be publicly accessible.

Redevelopment

- 4.5 The Corporate Property team instructed architects in 2022 to produce a massing study which examined how the site could be redeveloped to create new homes and publicly accessible open space. The study identified a number of options in efforts to demonstrate the most viable and efficient solution which not only maximised the development value of the site but offered green open space, accessible to the public.
- 4.6 Next steps would be to engage in further discussion with relevant stakeholders and commission a feasibility study to test the viability of proposals.
- 4.7 In response to the petition lodged, it should be noted that due consideration will be given to the Pimlico Neighbourhood Plan and its specific reference to the site and the desire to see it opened up further given its lack of open public access currently and historically.
- 4.8 The Development Team have identified a dedicated resource to progress the feasibility study and further developed options will be presented to relevant Cabinet Members in due course, once a preferred option has been identified. Engagement with local councillors and the local community will be undertaken to ensure that future proposals meet aspirations.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no current financial implications from this report. £9,000 has been incurred on the massing study. If options are developed that do include a new publicly accessible green space, this may have implications for the number of new homes that can be created and may increase parks maintenance budgets. However, this would depend on the development option recommended.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The council owns the site at the Corner of Sussex Street and Alderney Street and the Development Team will investigate the title at an early stage to ensure that any restrictions can be addressed in a timely manner. The Development Team will undertake pre-application discussions with the Planning Department to ensure relevant planning policies are taken into consideration as options progress. Pursuant to section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011, a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do. The legal powers to the proposal, together with any future possible legal implications will be reviewed as the options for the redevelopment of the site evolve.

7. Carbon Impact

- 7.1 A full assessment of the carbon impact of options will be completed to inform decision making.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 The Development Team will complete an Equalities Impact Assessment in order to inform decision making.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Full consultation will be carried out in line with the council's policies and the practices successfully implemented by the Development Team elsewhere.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact:

Claire Nangle, Head of Capital Programmes, Corporate Property

cnangle@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

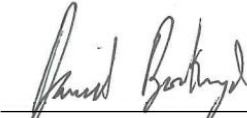
BACKGROUND PAPERS

Petition received entitled "A petition for Sussex Street play area to be redeveloped into a public green space for all."

For completion by the Cabinet Member for Finance & Council Reform

Declaration of Interest

I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed:  Date: 25 July 2023
NAME: **Councillor David Boothroyd**

State nature of interest if any:

(N.B: If you have an interest, you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled
Sussex Street Play Area (Petition) and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed: 
Cabinet Member for Finance & Council Reform

Date: 25 July 2023

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, City Treasurer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of People Services (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the

criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.