

**ARBORETUM, DUNKIRK AND LENTON AND RADFORD AND PARK AREA
COMMITTEE - 27 FEBRUARY 2013**

Title of paper:	Greenholme Playing field site, Johnson Road/Derby Road	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Sue Flack, Director of Development	Wards affected: Radford and Park
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Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority: (you must mark X in the relevant boxes below)		
World Class Nottingham		
Work in Nottingham		
Safer Nottingham		
Neighbourhood Nottingham		x
Family Nottingham		
Healthy Nottingham		x
Leading Nottingham		
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
This report sets out the current position with regard to the status of the land at the former Greenholme school site off Derby Road, within the Radford and Park Ward, close to its Derby Road boundary with the Dunkirk and Lenton Ward.		
Recommendation(s):		
1	That the Area Committee be invited to place on record its preferred intentions for the long term development of this site.	

1. BACKGROUND

Description of the school and its context

1.1 Greenholme School is an independent school which closed in September 2011 and since then has been on the open market. The school consists of the main school building, which fronts onto Derby Road and playing fields which were owned by the County Council and originally formed the playing fields for Sandfield School. The playing

fields form a T shape stretching from behind the school along the frontage to Derby Road, across to Johnson Road. The school constructed a fenced multi-use games area at the rear of the school in 2001.

- 1.2 The school was originally a large family dwelling but has been a private school for over 30 years and has been heavily extended to create additional classroom accommodation. A small hard surfaced playground is located immediately to the rear of the school buildings which wraps around the southern side of neighbouring properties to front Faraday Road. A small gateway from the playground provides access to the school to the playing field.
- 1.3 The site is located within a residential area and has residential properties on three sides. The Derby Road Health Centre was built on part of the playing fields in 2002, at the corner of Derby Road and Johnson Road. The City Council had refused planning permission for the health centre on the grounds of protecting the playing field and due to the land forming part of the open space network, but the application was allowed on appeal by the Secretary of State.

Current status of the school and its playing field

- 1.4 There are currently no redevelopment proposals for the school and its playing field. The site appears to be sold, subject to contract, but details of the future owners and their intentions for the school are not known. Any potential redevelopment proposals could take a number of routes and could lead to the loss of the playing field area either in all or part.
- 1.5 In planning terms the existing use of Greenholme School falls within Class D1 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order which relates to non residential institutions. The school could therefore be used for similar uses which fall within Class D1 without the need for planning permission. Such uses include non-residential education and training centres, children's day nurseries, places of worship, clinics/health centres and community centres. These may involve use of the existing playing field but could also lead to its separation from the existing school buildings being surplus to requirement and result in increased pressure for its development.
- 1.6 The school playing field forms part of the Open Space Network (OSN), which recognises the importance of existing open spaces, sports and recreational facilities to the health and well being of the city's population and neighbourhoods. However, as a private playing field, there is no public access to the facility and its sports and recreational value is currently limited. The OSN still recognises the importance such private facilities in their contribution towards biodiversity and the visual character of the city.
- 1.7 Any development proposals which would affect open space and sport facilities within the OSN would be judged against policy R1 of the Nottingham Local Plan. This policy seeks to protect land within the OSN from development which could adversely affect its overall integrity. The policy does not preclude limited release of open space

which would not be detrimental to the Network but seeks, through a comprehensive 'action area' approach, to identify wider areas of improvement, such as developing enhanced facilities, improved public access or including an element of residential development to improve surveillance, which these small releases of open space would secure.

- 1.8 In addition, Sport England has been a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect playing fields since 1996. It is Sport England's policy to object to any planning application which will result in the loss of a playing field unless it meets one of five exceptions as defined in Sport England's 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England.' Protection of playing fields was further enhanced in 1998 with Circular 9/98 (replaced in 2009) which stipulates that where a local authority is minded to grant planning permission against Sport England advice on land owned by a local authority or owned for educational purposes, then the application should be referred to the relevant Government Office for possible 'call in'.
- 1.9 Central government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), produced in March 2012, promotes access to high quality open space and opportunities for sports and recreation. In line with the policies of Sport England and those of the City Council, it seeks to resist the loss of existing open space unless it can be demonstrated that it is surplus to requirements, or the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity or quality in a suitable location.
- 1.10 Sport England has stated that their preferred option would be to see the retention of the Greenholme School playing field in some form of sports use. Alternatively, if evidence can be provided that one of Sport England's exceptions can be met, for example a replacement facility of the same quality and quantity can be provided which better meets the sporting need of the local community, then the loss of the facility could be considered.
- 1.11 Parks and Open Spaces support the views of Sport England and consider that whilst the loss of this private playing field would not impact upon accessible open space, it would impact upon overall open space and sport provision in the local area, due to the loss of a sports pitch. There are also current deficiencies in the area of "City-Level" parks, play areas and allotments. Its loss, without qualitative or quantitative replacement would, therefore, not only be contrary to the policies of Sport England and the NPPF, but also the City Council in the form of policy R1 of the Nottingham Local Plan.
- 1.12 Its retention in its current form, as a private playing field, would be unlikely to provide enhanced recreational benefits to the local community, apart from its value to wildlife and its visual character as an area of open space. The City Council's influence over its use for sports provision and future maintenance of the pitch, as a private facility, would also remain limited.
- 1.13 As part of redevelopment proposals for the school site, the option exists to explore with Sport England and the future landowner the benefits of partial development of the playing field. Negotiations relating to partial development of the site could include public access to

the retained element, an enhancement of this facility, secure future maintenance and a compensation package of measures to provide replacement facilities in the locality which in terms of its quality and quantity would outweigh its partial loss. Any such negotiations would need to meet the requirement set out in national and local policy and would need to be supported by Sport England.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 Within the priorities of the Radford and Park Ward Plan residents and Councillors have emphasised the importance of retaining and, where possible, developing green open spaces.

2.2 Such improvements, using a systematic approach, will help to 'balance' local communities and contribute to greater levels of individual well being, helping to support key health priorities such as cardio vascular, respiratory and diabetes.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

4.1 The Greenholme site is not owned or leased by the City Council and, as such, there are no immediate financial implications.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 The lack of a clear plan to find a suitable use for this private sports facility could, in the short to medium term, lead to issues around poor visual appearance of the site i.e. overgrown greenery through lack of a proper maintenance regime and/or increased levels of anti social behaviour which would require some managing – out.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 None.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1 None

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 Historical planning applications for the Greenholme site.

8.2 National Planning Policy Framework, produced in March 2012.

8.3 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England.' Sport England.

8.4 Policy R1 of the Nottingham Local (Adopted 2005).