

PRESCOT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING (02/02/18)

RESPONSES TO ENQUIRIES

Question	Response
Q.1	Why has KMBC chosen to include land leased to other Councils, for which it has no maintenance responsibility for the next 83 years?
	<p><i>The surrender of KGV Playing Fields supports the delivery of a holistic solution for the borough of Knowsley, to safeguard the parks and green space owned by the Council in perpetuity for the benefit of the local community, the natural environment and for Knowsley's future economic prosperity.</i></p> <p><i>If land currently leased to third parties (including Prescott Town Council) was not included there is a risk that it would revert to Knowsley Councils ownership upon expiry of the lease, or if the Town Council decided to surrender the site back earlier than the lease expiry date (e.g. due to resourcing issues). In these circumstances, Knowsley Council would not have the funds or resources to maintain it.</i></p>
Q.2	Browns Field originally scored 74th on the list of parks, but has risen to be included in the 17 sites identified for surrender, a jump of 57 places Why?
	<p><i>It is recognised that KGV Playing Fields Prescott (Browns Field) scored relatively highly compared to other parks and green spaces within Knowsley. However the majority of sites that scored less than KGV Prescott are considered unsuitable for development (e.g. they are designated as Green Belt, there are site constraints preventing development or the site has no or very limited land value).</i></p> <p><i>There are only ten sites that scored less than KGV Prescott that could have been surrendered for development. However KGV Prescott was chosen for surrender instead of these sites for the following reasons:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The Council wished to surrender no more than 10% of parks and green spaces across Knowsley therefore had to identify parks with higher land value to raise the £40m endowment;</i> <i>• KGV Prescott offers a higher land value for housing development per hectare than other parks and green spaces;</i> <i>• If other parks and green spaces had been selected instead their land value for development have required the surrender of whole sites and would have impacted on the Council's requirement to protect the 18 Green Flag parks; and</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>KGV Prescott is not in Green Belt.</i>
Q.3	KMBC has a recently adopted local plan in place, which saw the release of a considerable amount of Green Belt land, how do these proposals fit in with the local plan. How can they be allowed to happen if they don't fit in with the plan?
	<i>These proposals have no adverse impacts upon the Local Plan, however the Council will consider the planning implications of each individual development, in line with the Local Plan and any other relevant considerations at the appropriate time.</i>
Q.4	Do KMBC want the Town Council to surrender leases on both sites?
	<i>The answer would be YES for the reasons identified in question 1.</i>
Q.5	What do KMBC consider the future benefit of selling off the largest piece of POS in Prescott will be to the Town?
	<p><i>The key objective of the project is to protect the majority of public parks and green spaces (e.g. 90%) for the benefit of all residents in Knowsley.</i></p> <p><i>The surrender of KGV Prescott will contribute to the creation of an endowment that would fund the management and maintenance of circa 530 hectares of parks and green spaces in perpetuity for the benefit of Knowsley's current residents and for future generations to come.</i></p> <p><i>Knowsley Council will work with the Prescott Town Council to identify the mitigation measures to minimise the impact of the loss of KGV; for example the re-provision of a new park and play area on the site, opportunities to re-develop Carr Lane Woods to re-provide the amenity offer and opportunities within the wider area.</i></p>
Q.6	In the knowledge that 750 new homes will be built at the bottom of Carr Lane is it not counterproductive to reduce amenity green space in the Town such as Browns Field.
	<i>To accommodate the new Prescott Park housing development, new public green space (including play provision) will be created. This new green space is based on the quantity standards set out in Knowsley's Local Plan (circa 1.5 hectares of new green space). It should be noted that any proposed housing development on KGV Prescott will also require the provision of a new green space on the site (circa 1 hectare in size).</i>
Q.7	What mitigation can KMBC offer for the loss of Prescott Carnival (the largest event of its type in Knowsley) the carnival cannot exist in its current form in any other greenspace with the Town.
	<i>As part of the community case to surrender this site, consideration will need to be given to better understand the carnival's key requirements (both in terms of practicalities of the event as well as visitor expectations) so that alternative options can be explored.</i>

Q.8.	The proposed timescales for the termination of the existing lease?
	<i>Knowsley Council would appreciate feedback from Prescot Town Council in relation to its future intentions for the surrendering of the leases by the 31 March 2018. A decision has not yet been made in relation to the timescales for termination of any leases.</i>
Q.9	Would KMBC consider selling the land to the Town Council or another trust
	<i>Yes, Knowsley Council would be willing to discuss a potential sale to the Town Council.</i>
Q.10	What is actual cost to KMBC of maintaining the other POS in Prescot not leased to the Town Council, i.e. Carr Lane Woods and Prescot Cemetery?
	<i>Knowsley Council does not budget for its grounds maintenance on a site by site basis, as staffing and equipment resources are shared over multiple sites to secure economies of scale.</i>
Q.11	Would KMBC consider the Town Council taking maintenance responsibilities for all designated Green Space in Prescot, thus lessening the funding requirement for the trust, removing the need to sell Browns Field?
	<i>No. KGV Prescot provides a significant contribution to the endowment, the savings made from the additional grounds maintenance responsibilities that Prescot Council could undertake would not equate to the land value and associated funding gap that removing KGV from the endowment would create.</i>
Q.12	What cash land value to KMBC consider Browns Field to have, what would be your asking price
	<i>Land values are determined by a number of factors within the market place, therefore until the site can be advertised with the market, Knowsley Council will not be in a position to provide an accurate land value. As part of the site assessments, the Council has made financial assumptions which have been shared publically (e.g. that KGV should secure £700,000+ per hectare).</i>
Q.13	What percentage of the endowment fund will be achieved by the capital receipt for Browns Field
	<i>KGV Prescot is one of the highest value sites and therefore represents a significant contribution to the endowment. At this stage, there are too many variables across the 17 sites to provide an accurate %, however an estimate would be around 12%.</i>
Q.14	KMBC list Two Butt as an alternative site to Browns Field in terms of provision, Two Butt lane offers much less amenity as site, why has this scored lower

	<i>Two Butt Lane Playing Fields would have been the first site for surrender based on its assessment score, however as this site is designated as Green Belt, it could not be surrendered for development.</i>
Q.15	Do your maintenance and capital figures include costs in relation to 8-13 year old play spaces, as these areas are outside of the existing lease agreement and are solely KMBC's responsibility?
	<i>Yes, the capital and revenue maintenance costs include the play pathfinder areas.</i>
Q.16	Should the Town Council decide against surrendering the lease, how would KMBC most likely proceed, would you force through the lease surrender through the courts.
	<i>The Council would exercise the break clause within the lease for the KGV Prescott site. There would be no requirement to secure this through the courts.</i>
Q.17	Browns Field is held in trust, how would KMBC satisfy the requirements of Fields in Trust Disposal Policy.
	<i>Knowsley Council is undertaking legal due-diligence on all sites, as part of the development of its outline business case for the project. The Council is in dialogue with the Fields in Trust and we are aware of their disposal policy and that a formal change request will need to be made.</i>
Q.18	Why have they chosen to disregard the advice of the independent panel on site selection?
	<i>The independent Review Board recommended that the Council should surrender up to 10% of its parks and green spaces. The Board also identified and tested the strategic criteria for site selection with members of the public through the consultation exercise.</i> <i>Knowsley Council has accepted these recommendations and identified 18 indicators which it has used to assess the sites in line with the suggested strategic criteria. Each site has been scored and the information made publically available.</i>
Q.19	Are there any contingency plans if the investment fails to reach its return? (Milton Keynes lost £1.2m last year)
	<i>Detailed financial modelling will be undertaken over the coming months as part of the outline business case to forecast the endowment investment strategy which will include contingency planning.</i>
Q.20	Why the constraint on KGV was not listed anywhere in the papers given to decision makers when constraints were listed on other sites?
	<i>I presume this is referring to KGV Prescott being protected by Fields in Trust as King George the V Memorial Playing Fields? This was not referenced on the documentation that was published as this protection was not registered against the title for KGV Prescott and therefore this did</i>

	<i>not show up during the initial legal due diligence that was undertaken.</i>
Q.21	Why was it not anticipated that the 10% constraint would put you in a position where you would need to ignore the recommended and agreed approach to site selection and select sites solely on the basis of value. If this was considered did you advise the leader and members of the position they would be in, if so what was their response?
	<p><i>Sites were not selected solely on the basis of value. The first exercise was to score each site against the criteria identified by the Review Board.</i></p> <p><i>There are a number of variables that impact upon which sites were identified for surrender, they include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The overall site assessment score;</i> <i>• Whether the site is suitable for development (i.e. it is not designated as green belt / it does not have significant physical constraints / it has adequate land value);</i> <i>• Whether the site has Green Flag Status; and</i> <i>• Ensuring the sites selected do not equate to more than a 10% loss of parkland.</i> <p><i>The identification of the 17 sites for surrender therefore meets the Council's criteria.</i></p>