



Cambuslang Community Council

www.cambuslangcommunitycouncil.com



Chair: John Taylor • Vice-Chair: David Thomson • Secretary: Hamish B. Allan • Treasurer: John Bachtler

98 Brownside Road
Cambuslang
Glasgow G72 8AF
Email: CambuslangComCo@aol.com

Mr Lindsay Freeland
Chief Executive
South Lanarkshire Council
Administration Services
Council Offices,
Almada Street
Hamilton ML3 0AA

10 August 2015

Dear Mr Freeland,

Proposed sale of Douglas Park (Stewarton Drive / Douglas Drive)

I am writing as Chair of Cambuslang Community Council to object to the proposed sale of the land known locally as Douglas Park (at Stewarton Drive / Douglas Drive), Cambuslang, and to request that the sale be suspended immediately.

There are four main grounds for our objection to the proposed sale.

First, the designation of the land has been misrepresented by South Lanarkshire Council. It is variously presented in SLC papers as a 'gap site' (Executive Committee report, 29.4.15) or 'vacant land' (Development Brief). In fact, using the terminology of Scottish Government planning guidance and SLC's own Greenspace Strategy, the site has the character of amenity greenspace. Until the 2000s, the site was carefully tended, had a rose garden, park benches and children's play equipment – hence the local name of Douglas Park. Although it has been allowed by the Council to deteriorate in recent years, the greenspace is still actively used by local residents for children's play, dog walks and parents waiting for West Coats PS children at the end of the school day.

Second, the transfer of land is not in accordance with the Local Development Plan. The current version of the Plan makes no mention of the site being earmarked for development. We understand that the Council may be arguing that the size of the land is too small to require designation as a development site in the Plan, but this 'provision' is not specified or made public in the Plan. As such, we believe that the transfer of the site to the SLC Corporate Land Bank and its proposed disposal is contrary to the Local Development Plan.

Third, we are concerned that the proposed sale of the site runs counter to the Council's own policy on greenspace and Scottish Government planning guidance on open space which requires the Council to promote and develop accessible greenspace for social and environmental reasons. You will be aware that this is an issue of major concern in Cambuslang following the loss of a sizeable area of Holmhill Park

and loss of other greenspace at Langlea Drive and Richmond Drive. In the response of Cambuslang Community Council to the draft Local Development Plan we noted that:¹

According to SLC's own assessment of South Lanarkshire's settlement profiles, Rutherglen/Cambuslang has one of the worst provisions of amenity greenspace in the local authority area [the second lowest in South Lanarkshire]; other parts of South Lanarkshire have more than double the amenity greenspace relative to population.

New housing developments in Cambuslang have recently included minimal investment in new parkland, sports facilities or other amenity green space beyond relatively small-scale play areas. Some developments have seen existing greenspace eroded (e.g. Holmhills Park, Richmond Park, Halfway Park) without compensating provision of replacement open space – as required under Scottish Planning Policy. There are also examples from Drumsagard and Holmhills of developers not delivering on their commitments to maintain greenspace or provide agreed facilities.

Local open spaces play a vital part in the network of greenspace in South Lanarkshire and, in this context, the sale of the Douglas Park site would represent an important loss of local amenity.

Lastly, we are seriously concerned at the lack of consultation on this issue. The decisions to transfer the site to the SLC Corporate Land Bank and subsequently to market the site were taken without any consultation with the local community. You will be aware that planning guidance on open space specifically refers to the importance of establishing 'the needs and desires of the local community' and the 'aspirations of all interests'. This has not been done. In this regard, we are particularly dismayed that there has been no direct contact with Cambuslang Community Council which has particular rights to consultation on development and planning issues.

On the above grounds, we therefore request that the marketing and proposed sale of the site be suspended immediately to allow the above issues to be addressed with full consultation of the local community. As a starting point we request an early meeting with the SLC Head of Housing & Technical Resources involving Cambuslang Community Council, local residents and the elected members for Cambuslang West (Cllr Clearie, Cllr McColl and Cllr Tullet).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

John Taylor
Chair, Cambuslang Community Council

cc.

Douglas Park residents action group
Cllr Russell Clearie
Cllr Clare McColl
Cllr Richard Tullet
SLC Housing & Technical Resources

¹ <http://www.cambuslangcommunitycouncil.com/south-lanarkshire-council-local-development-plan/>