

## Finance Committee – 18 March 2024

### Petitions and Questions Received from Members of the Public

Petitioner	Petition
<p><b>Georgia Milne</b></p>	<p><b>Title:</b> Save Land at Rock Street and Neville Drive as Community Green Space (12 signatures)</p> <p><b>Statement:</b>                      We the undersigned petition the council to withdraw the sale of the green space at Rock Street and Neville Drive (S3 9JB) to instead preserve it for use as a community green space. Recognising the critical shortage of council-run allotments and community green spaces in the local Burngreave and Kelham neighbourhoods, we urge the council to reconsider the sale of this land for private development. Instead, we propose that the space be repurposed for the benefit of the community, either as social housing or as a dedicated green area accessible to all residents. We therefore request the council to: - Reevaluate the decision to sell council-owned green spaces, particularly the 2 acres at Rock Street and Neville Drive (S3 9JB). -Consider alternative uses for the land that prioritise the well-being and recreational needs of the local community, such as community gardens, allotments, public parks, or social housing. -Engage in open dialogue with local residents to gather input on the future use of this green space.</p> <p><b>Justification:</b>                      We are greatly concerned by Sheffield Council's recent decision to put up five council-owned green spaces for private sale, including 2 acres of land at Rock Street and Neville Drive (S3 9JB). In light of the limited access to community green spaces in the Burngreave and Kelham areas, we believe that preserving this land as a community green space is crucial for the well-being and recreational needs of local residents.</p> <p>The local areas of Burngreave and Kelham are underserved in their access to community green spaces, such as council-run gardens or allotments. If the council's suggestion that 24 privately owned dwellings be built on the land is carried out, this will not only remove a large area of green space from the existing community but also increase the local demand for accessible green spaces.</p> <p>It is well-known that once publicly owned land is sold, the chances of it being returned to public ownership are slim. Therefore, we strongly advocate for a comprehensive plan to retain public ownership of this green space, ensuring its continued use for the greater good of the local community.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p>

The Housing Small Sites Project aims to identify surplus housing owned land/ sites which would be suitable for housing development. A priority where possible is to deliver new affordable homes on sites identified as suitable.

Due diligence has been completed on the first phase of sites. This has included:

- Site visits
- An internal SCC Planning review
- Legal and service/utility review
- Capacity proving to understand how many homes could be delivered on the site.
- A formal declaration that the sites are surplus to the Housing Service and the Neighbourhood Services Portfolio
- Development of the marketing particulars

In addition, consultation on the first phase of sites has been undertaken with key stakeholders. These have included:

- Local neighbourhood housing managers and teams
- Housing's asset management team
- Local ward members
- LAC managers
- Registered Providers (Housing Associations) who develop in the city.

**Sites**

The first phase of potential site disposals is being run as a pilot project. The sites are:

Site	Area	Ward
Daniel Hill Street	0.05Ha	Walkley
Neville Drive, S3 9JB	0.8 hectares	Burngreave
Morrall Road, S5 9AF	0.21 hectares	Southey
Remington Drive, S5 9AH	0.16 hectares	Southey
Knutton Rise S5 9NW	0.62 hectares	Southey

The sites have been marketed via the right move portal and the review of offers for the 5 is nearing completion with due diligence being completed on preferred bidders. The decision on which bids to progress with is taken by the most senior property officer. The evaluation has consisted of a review of the following:

- The bidder's proposal for the site in terms of numbers and types of properties. Where bidders took advantage of an informal planning review of their proposal this is also being considered.
- The financial offer for the site
- Review (if applicable) of any conditions the bidder may want to place on the potential purchase.
- A review of how the bidder is intending to fund the scheme.
- A review of the bidder's development appraisal for their proposed scheme
- A review of the bidder's development timeline for their proposed scheme
- A review of the bidder's track record in delivering similar schemes and their current capacity to deliver the scheme.

### **Neville Drive**

In terms of Neville Drive there has been interest from the press and the public in advance of the receipt of the current E Petition.

Neville Drive is the largest of the sites in the pilot. The site is a piece of open space and is situated within the Burngreave ward. The site is predominantly grassed and relatively flat in the centre/ fronting Rock Street but sloped around the exterior up to the highest ground at Verdon Street. Previously the site contained flats which were demolished in approximately 2002.

At the point of marketing of sites there were no development proposals for the site and no final decision has been taken yet to sell. There was some understanding of the potential capacity of the site however the intention of the marketing exercises was to understand interest in the sites and bidder's potential schemes. This evaluation exercise is nearing completion with due diligence taking place on the preferred bidders.

Once a preferred bidder has been finalised there will be the publication of an open space notice that will indicate that the Council is proposing to sell the land. This will allow views on this proposed sale from the public with any objections being the subject of a Council committee report. Secondly any subsequent sale would be subject to the bidder securing a planning approval for their scheme. This will include statutory consultation with the public and other key stakeholders so they can view and comment on the proposed scheme. The planning process will also require further detailed site and environmental surveys.

### **Conclusion**

The decision to sell the land has not yet been taken and if there are any objections to the Council giving notice of its intention to sell the land, a

	report would come to the Finance Committee for consideration. The Councillors of the Burngreave Ward have also been notified of the petition.
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Questioner	Question
<p><b>Zak Viney</b></p>	<p><b>Q.</b> On the 7th February, I attended Full Council - asking Sheffield City Council to consider more ethical policies related to outdoor advertising.</p> <p>Cllr Ben Miskell, Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee, recommended I attend today's meeting of the Finance committee, where the council's new advertising and sponsorship policy is to be discussed. Cllr Miskell said Sheffield would look to draw on best practice from around the country and take an ethical approach to products and services. So it will be great to see the council joining the likes of Cambridgeshire County, Somerset and Coventry City Councils who have adopted strong policies against harmful advertising.</p> <p>I'm excited to attend this meeting today to share my proposals with the council, which have been advised by experts in this matter, the campaign Ad Free Cities - whom themselves this month released a startling report, showing the majority of advertisements in England &amp; Wales were placed in poorer areas. Notably in Sheffield, 60% of adverts were placed in the poorest 3 deciles, with only 2% in its most affluent third.</p> <p>As I mentioned on February 7th, these adverts thrive on insecurities, debt and unhappiness - promoting consumerism in an age of climate breakdown and economic inequality. Sheffield Green Party has asked the council to consider a policy which does not support high carbon industries and products harmful to people and nature. As a representative of the Sheffield climate and social justice movement, I'd support this approach, with such a policy seeking to regulate adverts for products such as junk food, alcohol, gambling, SUVs and all polluting cars, fossil fuel financiers, airlines, airports and destinations that necessitate air travel.</p> <p>A note that advertising of these products undermines the council's own policies related to Clean Air, health and wellbeing. The council could also consider, if for profit advertising must be used, to prioritise promotion of local Sheffield businesses, as opposed to multinational corporations that overwhelmingly pollute our public realm with their advertisements. Evidence from a ban on junk food advertising across the TFL network in London shows that the ban has not led to any drop in revenue for the authority, and once more it has prevented 100,000 cases of obesity as well as thousands of cases of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and could save the NHS more than £200 million.</p>

A proactive measure from the Finance committee could help us create a happier, healthier Sheffield, freed from the pressures of harmful advertising. Taking action on this issue can discourage mass consumerism, an attitude which is driving climate and ecological breakdown, as well as harming wellbeing and local resilience.

While a policy to restrict harmful advertising will be a great step forwards, many sites that are not under the council's control will still not be affected. Given the harms caused, the deliberately intrusive nature of digital advertising, and the relationship between outdoor advertising and inequalities as I mentioned earlier, I would very much like to see Sheffield ban and remove such advertising altogether.

**Response:**

*Answers were provided at the meeting and the webcast and Minutes (when published) can be found here: [Agenda for Finance Committee on Monday 18 March 2024, 2.00 pm | Sheffield City Council](#)*

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