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**Date:** 12 December 2016 at 00:36:08 GMT

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**Subject:** FW: CPO of leaseholds held by Millwall Football club

**Dear Councillors**

Once again the question of the CPOs of leasehold interests held by Millwall Football Club by renewal is back for discussion. Renewal have an agreement in principle to purchase the freehold of these pieces of Land from L B Lewisham but are seeking also to have the leaseholds held by Millwall.

When this issue was brought up in September, the Labour group voted against confirming the CPOs at a meeting addressed by the chief executive. In spite of this the Cabinet voted in favour. The scrutiny panel subsequently expressed their dissatisfaction of the cabinet's decision by calling the decision in. In the meantime reporting both in "The Guardian" newspaper, "Private eye" and elsewhere have probed more at the background of the issues and have found that "renewal" are far from transparent as to their structure, ownership and intentions and demonstrate grounds to doubt that they are intending to develop the site themselves or sell it on to another party to carry out the redevelopment.

The report presented to Cabinet this week resolves none of these issues

- 1) The identity of the ultimate beneficial owner of Renewal, via a web of companies leading to the British Virgin Islands remains a mystery and, it seems the council are paying legal fees to ensure that it remains unknown. While, as the report says, this is not essential for the deal to go through it is, one would have thought a matter that a Labour Council, or anyone concerned with open-ness in public life should be concerned about, particularly as public money will almost certainly be involved. The position of the Executive Mayor is also troubling in that he seems to have interests to declare

- 2) It seems less than likely that Renewal will actually undertake to manage the regeneration themselves and will simply sell on to a further developer. Such information as is available about Renewal's finances indicate a company negative net worth.
- 3) There is little, if any information on how the "Sporting Village" which was integral to the scheme is to be financed either in terms of Capital or revenue and whether or how the facilities at the Millwall Community Scheme, which is held in high renown, will operate.

The function of a Compulsorily Purchase order, as normally understood, is to prevent land-holders stopping a development which has overwhelming public good by un-reasonably refusing to sell land and which otherwise would be able to go ahead. The redevelopment here is a long way away from this, nowhere near the whole site has been assembled let alone cleared for rebuilding. It seems more that the CPOs are sought because they will enable renewal to purchase land at minimal value and then be able to revalue it as development land making their assets look more healthy and, I would suggest make it easier for them to sell on. The advantage of working with Renewal was that they appeared to be a known entity who could work with the Council and stay within the terms of the planning consent; if renewal sell on then the Council will be faced with difficulties in ensuring that the developers stick to the planning brief and not use financial constraints as a reason for not providing the planning gain indicated in the planning consent.

Sorry to have written at length but you as Lewisham Council, should be fully aware of the situation you are bringing about and its dangers, not just to Millwall Football Club who have been a constant feature of life in that part London for over a century but the area involved as well. You should use your powers very carefully.

You should

- 1) Debate this at the Labour Group meeting and call for the CPOs not to be granted.
- 2) If this is agreed make a public statement to that effect and state that if the Cabinet approve the CPOs a full council meeting will be requisitioned to discuss the matter and if necessary overrule the Cabinet's decision

Sincerely

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