

Mayor and Cabinet		
Report Title	Call-in of Mayor and Cabinet Decision – Disposal of Former Wide Horizons Sites in Wales and Kent	
Key Decision	Yes	Item No.
Ward	All	
Contributors	Head of Business and Committee	
Class	Part 1	Date: 5 February 2020

1. Summary

This report informs the Mayor and Cabinet of a call-in and associated comments by the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel (OSBP) on 28 January 2020 in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

2. Purpose of the Report

To inform the Mayor and Cabinet of the reason agreed for the call-in, and to ask them to reconsider a decision made in relation to the “Disposal of Former Wide Horizons Sites in Wales and Kent”.

3. Recommendation

The Mayor and Cabinet is requested to respond to the call-in made by the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel as described in paragraph 6 below.

4. Background

- 4.1 Members of the OSBP noted that Wide Horizons, an adventure learning charity formed in 2004 as a result of a joint initiative went into liquidation in 2018.
- 4.2 At the time of the liquidation, Wide Horizons were managing eight outdoor centres and an outreach service providing adventure experiences for children and young people. Three of these outdoor centres, two located in Wales and one in Kent, are owned by Lewisham Council.
- 4.3 Since the liquidation Lewisham Council undertook responsibility for maintenance and other associated costs for the three sites it owned.
- 4.4 A proposal to grant authorisation to dispose of the three sites owned by Lewisham Council was agreed at the meeting of the Mayor and Cabinet on 15 January 2020, subject to the Secretary of State for Education’s consent

being obtained. The decision taken by the Mayor and Cabinet was notified to Members of the OSBP within 2 days of being made.

- 4.5 At the Business Panel, Members received clarification from the Interim Executive Director of Children and Young People, and the Property Strategy & Technical Support Manager on the decision taken by the Mayor and Cabinet on 15 January 2020.

5. Comments by Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel

- 5.1 Having considered the decisions taken by the Mayor and Cabinet and clarification by Officers at the meeting of OSBP on 28 January 2020, Members noted that disposal of the assets would not be detrimental to children and young people in Lewisham because there were other easily accessible and safer alternative facilities elsewhere. Members of the OSBP however expressed a view that the sale of the land would be detrimental to future generations and therefore should only be considered as a last resort. Members of the OSBP also agreed that the offer available at Beckenham Place Park was excellent, but not comparable, as it was not residential.

6. Reason for Call-in of Decision by Mayor and Cabinet

- 6.1 Members of the OSBP resolved to call in the decision relating to the “Disposal of Former Wide Horizons Sites in Wales and Kent”, in order to enable Mayor and Cabinet to re-consider its decision, requesting that:

“consideration should always be given to retain the freehold on land we own. In the circumstance, options for income generation should be properly considered to help cover costs currently incurred from the land, including possible future use and opportunities.”

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council’s Constitution provides that where the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel requests that the Mayor & Cabinet reconsider a decision it shall not become effective until it has been done. There may be no further call-in of the decision.
- 7.2 It is essential that a decision is made on consideration of all relevant information and ignoring irrelevancies. On this basis a decision must not be one which no reasonable authority could come to.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Report Author and contact

- 9.1 Jasmine Kassim, Senior Committee Manager - 0208 314 8577

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Decision of Mayor and Cabinet of 15 January 2020.