

Friends of Stockwood Open Spaces

Public Forum Statement to the Neighbourhood Committee, 20th March 2012

Parks Land Sales

For some two years, Friends of Stockwood Open Spaces have actively opposed the disposal of any of the Stockwood open spaces named as possible candidates for sale under the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.

The reasons were fully explained in the submissions we presented to the City Council in the course of the consultation. They included the fact that by far the majority of the sites could not be described as 'low value' and had none of the characteristics that were generally used to describe such sites, e.g 'backland' or 'characterised by antisocial behaviour'. Nor could we see any convincing case for developing the sites for housing, in a ward where the building mix is already heavily weighted towards housing.

Since we made that case, popular opposition to parks land sales across the city has led to the decision being delegated to Neighbourhood Committees, with a new 'incentive' scheme in place intended to reward those Neighbourhoods that agree to sell most of their allocated plots.

Given this potential change in the costs and benefits of disposal, we have revisited the issue, discussing it within FoSOS and inviting online comment from local people.

The outcome is that **our view is unchanged**. The case against selling is as robust as ever; the 'incentives' make no difference. We believe that all these sites contribute to the wellbeing and recreation of local people, and are part of Stockwood's special character. **We do not believe that any of these sites should be sold off.**

Further, we would like to see the strongest possible protection for valued open spaces in Stockwood and elsewhere in the Neighbourhood and the city. To this end, **we hope the Partnership will look closely at the potential benefits of Town Green registration**, with a view to asking the registration authority (the City Council) to consider voluntarily registering key open spaces to protect the freedom of local residents to use them for recreational purposes in perpetuity.

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