

APPENDIX 4

**BCC Education Committee minutes 11 December
1997**

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 1997

STOKE LODGE PLAYING FIELDS

(Report of the Director of Education)

(Stoke Bishop Ward)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To seek decisions on the future of the Stoke Lodge site.

INTRODUCTION

2. At the meeting of Education Committee on the 19 June, reference was made to the future of Stoke Lodge Playing field within a report (agenda item 39) primarily relating to Redland Court Road Playing Field. The Committee asked for further information on the options for Stoke Lodge Playing Field as a separate issue.
3. Stoke Lodge Playing Field comprises approximately 9.3 hectares of playing field land adjoining Stoke Lodge Community Education Centre, Shirehampton Road.
4. Currently, approximately half of the field is used by Fairfield School as its main playing field since the school has no on-site playing field.
5. The remaining half has been held pending the possible temporary location of Colston Girls' School and/or Redland High School for Girls should it have been possible to redevelop their playing field at Redland Court for a new primary school. Since this latter option has now been rejected by this Committee following a Planning Public Enquiry into the Bristol Local Plan, it means that this half of Stoke Lodge Playing Field is largely unused (there is a casual let to Shirehampton Colts AFC).
6. This was reported to the Education Committee meeting on 19 June, together with the outline of a proposal from the University of Bristol, and it was agreed that this further report be brought to the Committee with further details of this option and other options for the use of the Stoke Lodge site.

THE OPTIONS

Use of the site for a new secondary school

a.

7. Consideration has been given to the possible use of the Stoke Lodge site as a location at some time in the future for a secondary school site.
8. As stated above, the whole site comprises approximately 9.3 hectares. The half not used by Fairfield is therefore approximately 4.65 hectares. There are various possibilities for secondary site use which could therefore be constructed.
9. The 1996 Area Guidelines for Schools give broad guidelines for planning purposes of the sorts of school size which a given site size could sustain. In the cases of the possibilities outlined in the previous paragraph these would range from a 580 place school using the 'non-Fairfield' half to a 1,410 place school using the whole site (assuming alternative Fairfield pitch provision).
10. Currently, proposals for new schools have to be agreed by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. It is understood that under the new framework likely to be included in the new Education Act, this will continue.
11. A school factor in the Secretary of State's consideration would be the availability of places within a three-mile radius. Certainly this factor would currently preclude permission being given for (say) a five form of entry (5 FE) secondary school on the Stoke Lodge site. The pattern of secondary provision of secondary school places across the North of the City is considered in a report elsewhere on this agenda.

b. Use of the Site as Playing Fields

12. Currently, there can be little doubt that the playing field facility is under used. The position was defensible when it was being held for the potential relocation of users from Redland Court Road Playing Field. If the Committee is of the view that it should not be disposed of - not least for the reasons in the preceding section, and also due to the fact that other parts of the site are used by Fairfield School and for community education - then appropriate use of the unused half should be identified.
13. The Stoke Lodge site provides good playing field facilities, although the on site changing rooms are generally only adequate to serve the needs of the Fairfield use. Ideally, therefore, any short medium term use should be for playing field purposes.
14. The general situation of playing field provision at our schools in the North of the City is that the newer schools close to the City boundary have adequate playing field provision in quantitative terms (eg: at Henbury, Lawrence Weston, Monks Park, Pen Park and Portway). In the case of

Fairfield, however, all playing field provision is 'off site' at Stoke Lodge, this meets the school's needs, however, there is considerable disruption and inconvenience caused by the regular journey across the City. Until recently Cotham has used, in the main, playing field facilities at Kellaway Avenue. The school is concerned about the quality of the provision at Kellaway Avenue - in particular the drainage and currently is using facilities hired from the private sector.

15. As far as the quality of playing field provision is concerned for the schools in the North of the City, there is no doubt that most of the schools, even those with the correct quantity of pitches would benefit from access to high quality playing fields, eg: all weather surfaces. Facilities along these lines are being developed at Monks Park in connection with the Capital Challenge scheme.
16. In terms of indoor PE and Sports facilities, most of the schools in this sector of the City could benefit from access to improved facilities, although Lawrence Weston does have two gymnasia and Monks Park's facilities will be considerably enhanced on completion of the sports hall being provided as part of the Capital Challenge scheme. Fairfield has particular concerns about indoor facilities. These are restricted, and scope for their development is inhibited by the cramped nature of the site. The Headteacher at Cotham has also raised particular concerns about the 'on site' PE facilities at his school.
17. For these reasons, therefore, officers have been looking at how Stoke Lodge could fit into an overall picture to improve the PE and Sports facilities for schools in the North of the City.

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

18. A report to Education Committee on the 19 June referred to an initial expression of interest in use of Stoke Lodge Playing Fields. That interest came from the University of Bristol and since the June meeting, further discussion and meetings have been had between the City Council and the University.
19. The University has a substantial sports facility at Coombe Dingle, accessed from Red House Lane. This is only approximately one hundred metres away from the Stoke Lodge Playing Fields. The facilities at Coombe Dingle have recently been the subject of a £2 million award from the National Sports Lottery Fund for a substantial enhancement for community use. When completed, the project will particularly establish the Centre for five priority sports ie: Tennis, Hockey, Rugby, Cricket and Athletics.
20. The redevelopment at Coombe Dingle will lead to a loss of six grass pitches currently used mainly for soccer and rugby.

21. Due to the close proximity of Stoke Lodge, the relocation of the grass pitch use from Coombe Dingle to Stoke Lodge has great attractions to the University. The sort of arrangement which has been the subject of the preliminary discussions would be for the University to have use of the pitches at Stoke Lodge. This would be based on a twenty-five-year lease with full maintenance and repairing obligations. Fairfield's use would be protected and would continue as now. Other City Council schools would have use of the Stoke Lodge facilities by agreement. The City Council schools would have use of the new facilities and existing facilities on the University's Coombe Dingle site (Athletics) free of charge during term time for extra curriculum activities to be negotiated and preferential rates would be available for schools for other new facilities on the Coombe Dingle site. The University would be able to sublet Stoke Lodge, although the City Council would ensure that the existing hirers' position was protected.
22. This development would have benefits for both the University and our schools. It may also possibly allow a phase two Lottery bid to be made for the development of a four hundred-metre track at Coombe Dingle. This is because a leasing arrangement would allow the value of the Stoke Lodge land to be used as matching funding for the phase two Lottery bid. The four hundred metre track would then be available to schools under certain conditions.
23. If the option of a secondary school on the site is to be left open as is recommended, it would be appropriate to ensure that any lease had 'break clauses' at appropriate stages. Such clauses would affect the value of the Stoke Lodge site both in terms of its contribution to a second Lottery bid and also to the City's negotiating position with the University.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific policy implications arising from this report.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

1. Income arising from the lease of Stoke Lodge Playing Fields will accrue to the Education Committee centrally and the Base Budget adjusted accordingly.
2. Charges to schools using Coombe Dingle will have to be met from within existing delegated budgets.

OTHER APPROVALS NECESSARY

The arrangements with the University of Bristol for potential development are consistent with the Bristol Sports Strategy Plan, nevertheless, it is recommended that this report be referred to Leisure Services Committee for information.

The report needs to be referred to Policy and Resources (Land and Buildings) Sub Committee.

RECOMMENDED

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve, in principle, arrangements for sharing the facilities at Stoke Lodge and Coombe Dingle between the University of Bristol and the City Council's schools on the basis of a twenty-five-year lease with break clauses along the lines outlined in paragraph twenty-six of this report;
2. Request Officers to proceed to further discussions and negotiations with the University of Bristol on an arrangement consistent with the principles outlined in this report, which would provide use of the University's sports facilities for Bristol schools.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985

Background papers:

Report 39 to Education Committee Thursday 19 June 1997.

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