

REPORT FROM: Acting Head of Economic Growth

TO: West Craven Area Committee

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Spring Mill Development, Earby – Landscaping and Land Adoption Update

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide West Craven Area Committee with an update on the reinstatement and proposed future use of the temporary compound area at the Spring Mill development in Earby, and to seek the Committee's views on whether to request adoption by Pendle Borough Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee notes the current position regarding the reinstatement of the compound area and the response from Earby Town Council.
- (2) That the Committee considers whether it wishes to ask Pendle Borough Council to adopt the land and manage it as public open space following the completion of landscaping works.
- (3) That any future decision to adopt includes a full assessment of long-term maintenance implications and potential funding arrangements, including a commuted maintenance sum.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To establish a clear approach to future ownership and maintenance of the land, and to ensure a coordinated design and delivery strategy for both the public open space and the former compound area.

BACKGROUND

1. The Spring Mill housing development in Earby is being delivered by PEARL Together – a joint venture between Pendle Borough Council, Barnfield Investment Properties, and Together Housing Group. The scheme includes affordable housing and wider public realm enhancements.
2. There are two separate parcels of land associated with the development that now require decisions regarding their future treatment and maintenance:
 - **Parcel A: Landscaped Open Space (Front of Site):**
This is a prominent area located next to the highway, shown on approved site plans as public open space. It has been designed as a landscaped feature intended to enhance the appearance of the development and surrounding area.
 - **Parcel B: Former Compound Area (Rear of Site):**
This land remains in the ownership of Pendle Borough Council and was used under licence as a contractor’s compound during construction. PEARL now proposes reinstating and enhancing this land as a natural woodland and wetland area.
3. A decision is needed on whether Pendle Borough Council is willing to adopt either or both areas, and what form that adoption might take.

UPDATE ON EARBY TOWN COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

4. Following a formal approach, Earby Town Council has confirmed that it does not wish to adopt or maintain the compound land or any proposed public open space. As such, PBC must now consider the way forward. Three options are currently being explored:
 - **Council Adoption** – Pendle Borough Council takes ownership and manages the land as public open space.
 - **Private Allocation** – The land is offered to adjacent households as additional garden space.
 - **Unmanaged Land** – The land is left in its natural state, without formal adoption or management.

LANDSCAPING PROPOSAL

PARCEL 1: LANDSCAPED OPEN SPACE (FRONT OF SITE)

5. This area is adjacent to the road and forms part of the development’s public realm. The developer, Barnfield, has proposed a commuted maintenance sum of £23,840 (equivalent to 10 years' maintenance) should Pendle Borough Council adopt the land.
6. A local Member has expressed a view that due to its visibility; the area should be laid out and maintained to a high standard and retained in public ownership to ensure it continues to contribute positively to the street scene.
7. It is proposed that responsibility for the surface water attenuation system installed beneath part of this area be excluded from any adoption agreement with the Council.

PARCEL 2: FORMER COMPOUND AREA (REAR OF SITE)

8. This land is currently within Pendle Borough Council's ownership and was used under licence during the construction period. As a minimum, PEARL is required to reinstate the land to a grassed condition. However, a more ambitious scheme is being explored, which includes:
- Woodland edge planting
 - Wetland creation in the boggy section where the natural spring is located
 - Informal pathways for public access
 - Exclusion of tree planting in areas affected by the underground attenuation system (e.g. adjacent to Stoneybank Road)
9. It is noted that public concern was raised following the felling of a tree in the landscaped area where the attenuation tank was installed. To address this, the contractor has committed to planting additional trees on other areas of land retained by Pendle Borough Council.
10. There is also a requirement for the intercept drain to the rear of Wentcliffe Drive to be renewed, which must be addressed as part of the handover or land management plan.

MAINTENANCE & FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. If Pendle Borough Council adopts the land, it will assume ongoing responsibility for:
- Vegetation and tree management
 - Drainage and infrastructure
 - Health and safety inspections
 - Litter picking and site upkeep
12. A commuted sum of £23,840 has been offered, equivalent to 10 years' maintenance. However, this may not be sufficient to cover long-term liabilities such as replanting or infrastructure renewal. The financial implications for Grounds Maintenance and ongoing budgets will need to be fully assessed.

OPTIONS

13. For both sites, the following options exist:
- Adoption by Pendle Borough Council – with or without commuted sums.
 - Reallocation to adjacent homeowners – as extended garden land.
 - No adoption – leave as unmanaged open space under existing ownership.

NEXT STEP

14. Officers are now seeking a recommendation from West Craven Area Committee to Pendle Borough Council's Executive Committee regarding the preferred way forward for both:

- The landscaped open space at the front of the site
- The former compound area at the rear of the site

15. Subject to the Committee's views, a formal report will be presented to Executive Committee. PEARL and Barnfield will be advised of the Council's agreed position following that meeting.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:

Financial: While a Commuted Sum of £23,840 has been offered, adoption would create new ongoing maintenance liabilities for PBC.

Legal: A decision on the way forward clarifies long-term ownership and management responsibility.

Risk Management: A decision on the way forward helps reduce the risk of unmanaged land becoming derelict or misused.

Health and Safety: A decision on the way forward ensures responsibilities are clearly defined.

Sustainability:

Community Safety:

Equality and Diversity:

APPENDICES Site Location Plan (Spring Mill, Earby - Compound Area)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS