

AGENDA ITEM: 7 Page nos.10 – 16

Meeting	Cabinet Resources Committee
Date	4 November 2004
Subject	Parks golf courses.
Report of	Cabinet Member for Resources Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport
Summary	This report seeks approval to grant leases for three parks golf courses and to the appointment of agents to undertake the marketing.

Officer Contributors	Dave Stephens, Chief Valuer and Development Manager David Dench, Greenspaces Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	Hadley, East Barnet & Friern Barnet
Enclosures	Location Plans
For decision by	Cabinet
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	Not applicable

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That approval be given to market the leasing of the golf courses at Bethune Park, Tudor Park and Oakhill Park and that the appropriate Chief Officers be instructed to:**
- i. advertise the proposed leasehold disposals in accordance with the requirements of Section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972; and**
 - ii. seek fee quotes and marketing recommendations from suitable experienced private sector firms with the Cabinet Member for Resources approving the appointment of a firm to act as the Council's agent under delegated powers;**
- 1.2 That the results of the Section 123 advertising and the marketing be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for further consideration.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet Resources Committee 22 July 2002 – Considered a report upon the poor condition and lack of investment in the three parks golf courses and the revenue costs of running the facilities, and agreed to enter into a management agreement with Golfwise Limited.**
- 2.2 Cabinet Resources Committee 19 August 2004 – A report requesting temporary closure of the Bethune and Oakhill courses from October 2004- April 2005 whilst there future was reviewed was approved. Tudor is remaining open with the support of the associated club.**

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan commits the Council to “plan and manage land use and development in Barnet to enhance the quality of life and provide tangible benefits for the community. The proposals in this report may achieve this by attracting potential lessees who will be prepared to invest in the golf courses to improve the quality of the facilities.**

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Finding organisations willing to invest in these golf courses without them having the major control over the use and management of the facilities has been unsuccessful. In this instance it is proposed that leasehold interests in the golf courses be offered on the basis that the lessees can chose how they manage and market the facilities thereby having greater control over their financial viability. The Council's control will be limited to ensuring that the courses cannot be used for any other purpose and that their use does not prejudice the public use of the adjacent open spaces.**
- 4.2 There is no certainty that this latest attempt to find an operator or operators of the golf courses will be successful.**
- 4.3 The advertising of the intention of granting leases of the golf courses pursuant to Section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 is likely to generate some negative public reaction in the form of letters, maybe a petition and contact with Councillors. Any representations received will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee when the results of the marketing are reported.**

5. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If the golf courses are let there will be a saving in revenue costs in the sum of £155,000 per annum.
- 5.2 The Council employed 8 members of staff to maintain and manage the courses. These officers have accepted voluntary redundancy packages.
- 5.3 The grounds maintenance of the courses is currently carried out by the equivalent of 2 full time members of staff. This area of work would be under threat if the courses are externalised however, the officers would be re allocated to other work within the grounds maintenance teams.
- 5.3 There are no ICT issues.

6. COMMENTS, IF ANY, OF THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY OFFICERS (HEAD OF PAID SERVICE, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER, MONITORING OFFICER)

- 6.1 These are incorporated in the report

7. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The Council owns and manages three nine-hole golf courses – one each in Tudor Park, Oakhill Park and Bethune Park – shown edged black on the attached plans. Currently they are run at an annual revenue loss and each requires investment if they are to continue to be used for golfing purposes.
- 7.2 The first attempt to find private sector operators for these golf courses was made in 1992 when they were offered as part of a package which included the possible golf development sites at West Hendon Playing Fields and at Copthall. No-one was interested in the three parks courses. In 2002 a proposal to transfer the management of the courses to Golfwise Limited was approved by the Cabinet Resources Committee. Subsequently Golfwise Limited withdrew from the negotiations of the management contract.
- 7.3 The circumstances which led to the decision in 1992 to find a private sector operator of the courses have not changed – they are run at an annual revenue loss part of which is a consequence of a lack of investment in the facilities. If it is not to continue to incur revenue losses, the Council appears now to have two options – (i) to remove the courses and incorporate the land within the parks as fully accessible public space; or (ii) pursue a final marketing exercise to try and find people interested in taking leases of the courses. In the case of (i) there would be capital costs for which there is no budgetary provision. If option (ii) is to be pursued it will need to be on the basis that prospective lessees are offered reasonable length leases on terms which will not fetter their abilities to enhance the facilities and operate them on a financially advantageous basis.
- 7.4 As there is no capital provision to undertake option (i), it is recommended that option (ii) is pursued. It is also recommended that a private sector firm experienced in the marketing of golfing facilities be appointed to provide advice on the leasing arrangements and to act as the Council's marketing agents.
- 7.5 Because (a) the courses are located in parks; and (b) the grant of leases are deemed to be 'disposals', it will be necessary, pursuant to the provisions of Section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, to advertise the Council's intention to 'dispose' of the

courses. Any representations received can be reported to the Committee when reporting upon the outcome of the marketing.

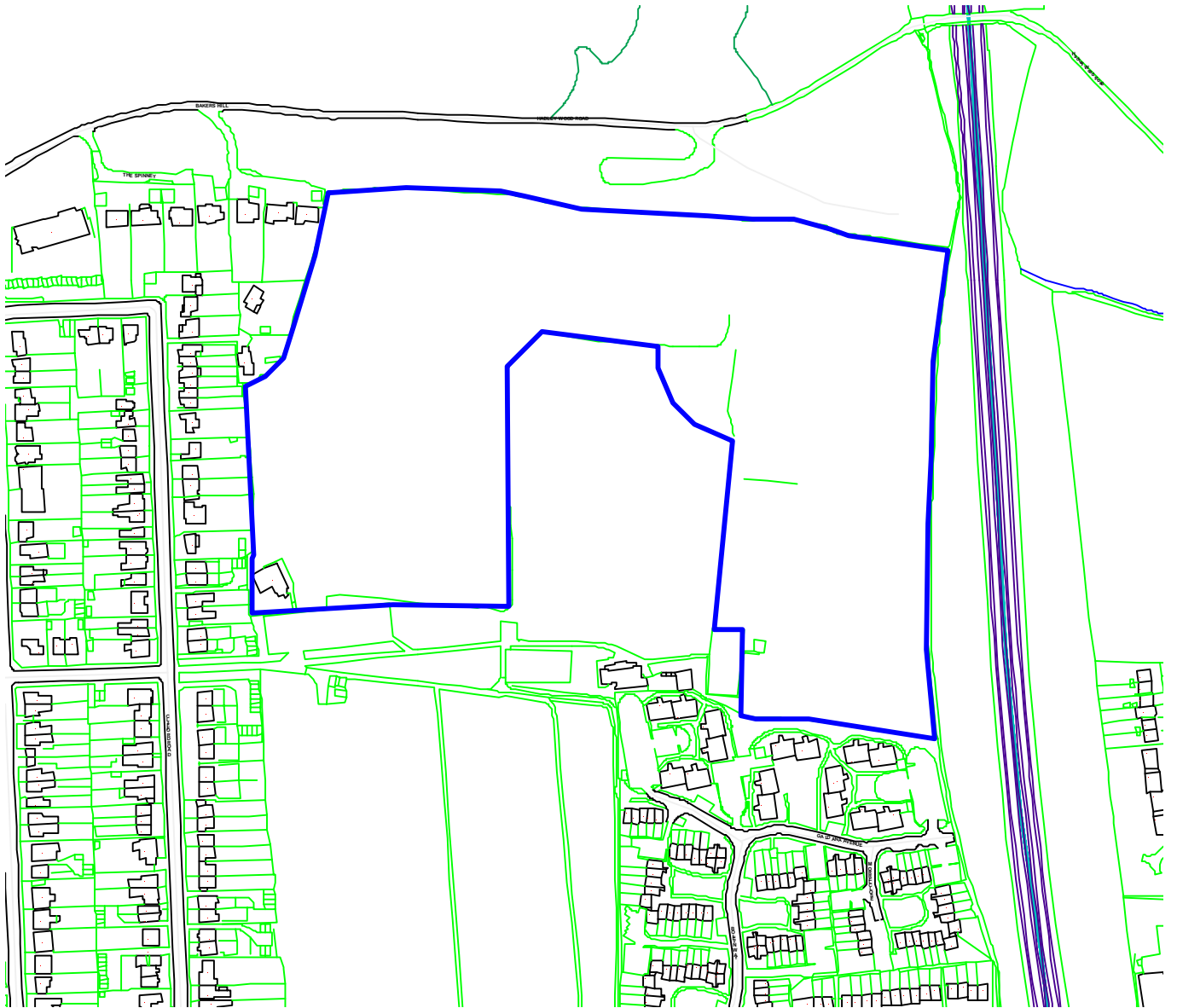
8. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

MO: DP

BT: BS

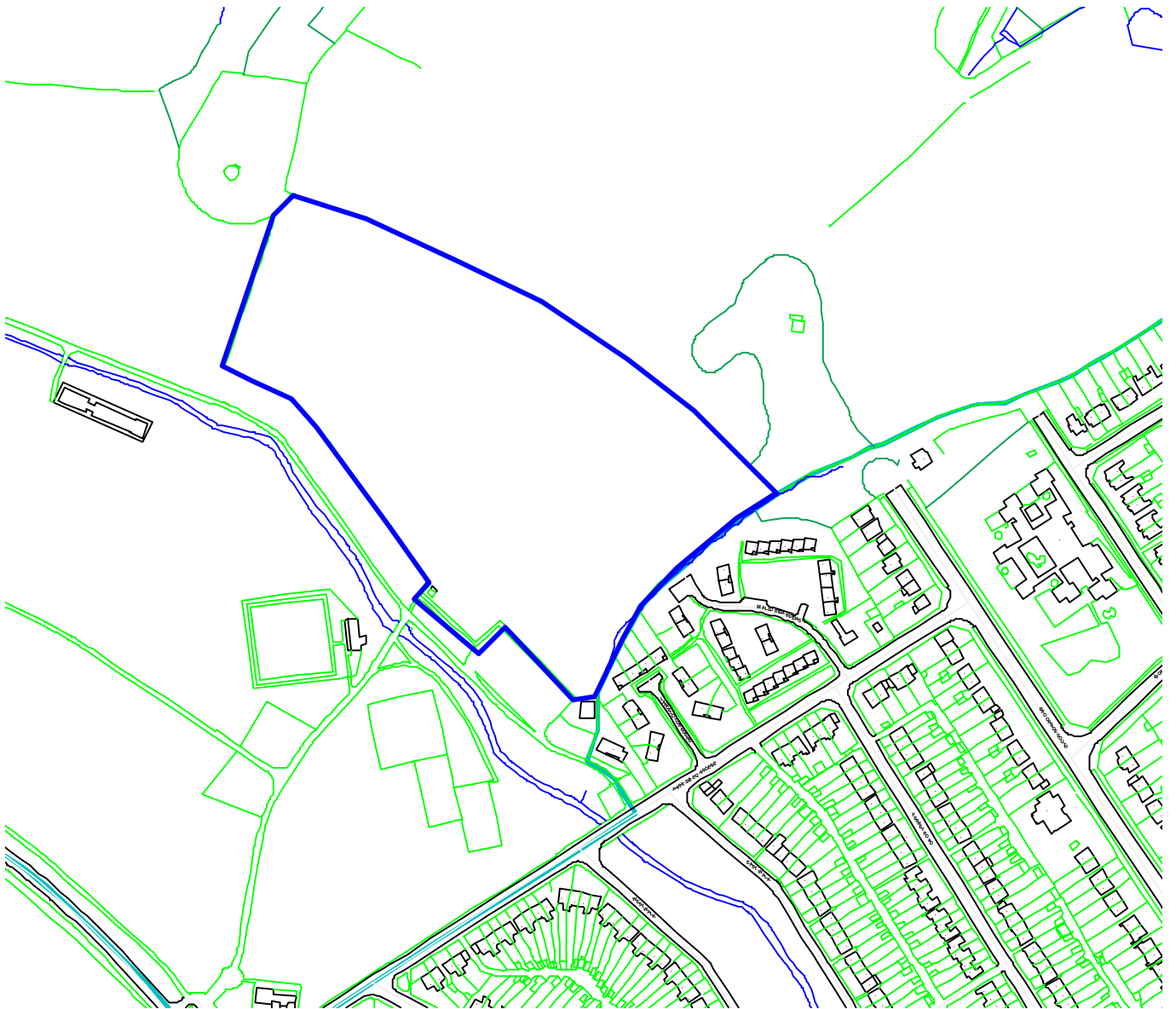
TUDOR PARK



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