

Notice requesting to call in Decision by the Cabinet Member for Resources: Entry Hill Depot Site, Entry Hill, Bath BA2 5NA – Recommendation for Disposal

**That the Entry Hill Depot site be disposed of by lease or sale on the basis that it is limited to employment use only.**

The undersigned Councillors wish to call in the decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Resources on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

(1) To determine that the Entry Hill Depot site be disposed of by lease or sale on the basis that it is limited to employment use only.

(2) To delegate to the Head of Corporate Estate in consultation with the Section 151 Officer the power to enter into a direct lease and/or sale to a local employer subject to:

- (a) a Red Book RICS valuation
- (b) Overage provisions

The reasons for why the undersigned Councillors wish to call in this decision are as follows:

1. Insufficient consultation

With only five days of consultation, this decision appears to have been rushed through without sufficient time to have been properly considered. This is unsettling, especially given that Entry Hill, next door, has been the subject of recent controversy. On this basis, to have taken a decision so quickly, appears controversial itself. Councillors have also expressed their apprehension that whilst there is purportedly a buyer, the site was not actually put onto the market. This has raised deep concerns over the transparency of the decision.

2. Impact on the May election

With the BANES Council election in May fast approaching, it is very troubling that such an important decision by Council has been made now. Though the decision may well have been made with no intention of having a political impact, it will no doubt have one regardless. As mentioned above, next door, Entry Hill has been the subject of controversy over previous Council plans for the area. For Council to wish to suddenly relinquish any plans for the area, so close to the election, could be seen as politically motivated. For these reasons, the undersigned Councillors take great issue with the decision and its potential to impact the election in May.

### 3. Ecological damage

No due consideration has been paid to the impact that the disposal of the Entry Hill Depot will have upon the local ecology of the area, including species with European legal protection, such as bats. Felling of trees on the site will have serious repercussions on wildlife and could result in permanent environmental damage. That the area's history and existing fragile ecosystem were not considered by this decision is very unfortunate and would contradict Council's commitment to safeguarding the environment around BANES. Whilst we understand that there may be Ash die back and an investigation was carried out, we would like to understand the surveys undertaken to come to that conclusion. Also, we would like to understand if an Ecological Impact Assessment has been carried out on a) the felling of the trees, even if they have Ash Die Back and b) on the disposal of that site, and the conclusions formed from that Assessment, given that the Council has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in the last 4 years

As such, the undersigned Councillors are greatly concerned that this decision would not meet the Council's stated aims to protect BANES's environment and that the decision would in fact undermine our Climate Emergency strategies.

#### Signatories

1. Karen Warrington
2. Vic Pritchard
3. Lisa O'Brien
4. Dr Kumar
5. Michael Evans
6. Sally Davis
7. Victor Clarke
8. Christopher Watt
9. Brian Simmons
10. Alan Hale
11. Colin Blackburn
12. Karen Walker
13. Shaun Hughes
14. June Player
15. Joanna Wright