

Director of Law and Governance,  
Wirral Borough Council,  
Distribution Services,  
5, Sandford Street,  
Birkenhead, CH41 1BN

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: PAR/LHRAM/33687 Land at Arrowe Park Road

I wish to object to the appropriation/proposed disposal of land at Arrowe Park Road. The above proposals must be judged in the context of the Council's Declaration of Climate Emergency, made in July 2019, together with a pledge to tackle the Climate emergency. It should also be judged in the context of deteriorating levels of air quality in Birkenhead, and in the context of burgeoning supermarket profits together with few community or environmental benefits offered by these retailers. On the contrary, these retailers take away from community assets, and increase environmental harms.

#### Environmental considerations

This land is an area of public open space, supporting 20 mature trees and other important habitat. The area of land outlined is part of a green sward extending along Upton Bypass. This is a key green corridor linking Bidston Hill with the Millenium Wood in Upton, and as such provides essential travel lines to vertebrate and non-vertebrates. Its existence adds to Wirral's climate resilience and range of habitat.

Given the scale of encroachment of the built environment within the Wirral's green spaces over the last 4 years, it is vital that the Council protects our remaining areas and does not appropriate or sell this land for development.

#### Supermarkets and their contribution to Wirral's economy and environment

There has been a recommendation by Council to sell the land to Lidl Supermarkets for a very small sum. The likes of Lidl turn over many times what they are likely to pay for this land, so that should the land be sold to them, they will enjoy a bargain, courtesy of the people of the Wirral.

Lidl does not contribute to improving our environment. For example, the store on Balls Road promised to plant trees, but has not done so, and it is difficult to see where they could be planted given that the car park extends to the boundaries of the store.

I believe the plan for the Woodchurch Road site is to build the car park for Lidl on the green land, thus destroying a precious open area as above. This negates Wirral Borough Council's pledge to tackle the climate emergency.

If a further supermarket is to be agreed, the supermarket concerned should be built on brownfield, and a levy made upon them to offset the erosion of the high streets in our community.

#### Traffic density and pollution

There is a major retail park at Sainsbury and their Home base stores together with a petrol station and fast food outlet across the roundabout from the proposed site. This results in major traffic problems, particularly at busy times of the day, and should a further supermarket be added, will present with increased queuing and traffic pollution in the area.

Police, hospital and ambulance, on Arrowe Park Road, as well as the Fire Service in Saughall Massey will be critically impacted with this increase in traffic, with cars and other vehicles entering and leaving the site in

competition with the heavy traffic already on the main roads which converge on the site. This presents a strong possibility of deaths due to delays in egress for emergency vehicles.

#### The future of Upton Village

The proposed appropriation and sale for development to a retailer will further hollow out the village of Upton retail community, who are already struggling to survive. Local small retailers should be supported by the Council as they provide income for the Council, and community cohesion, which the giant supermarkets do not.

#### Public access

The land proposed for sale contains a right of way used for access from the estate behind, to the centre of Upton village. This amenity will be at risk with any sale of the land adjacent.

#### Mental Health

It is more important than ever to retain green space, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic, so that residents have access to and enjoyment of open and green areas. The land at present affords a valuable amenity of greenery and trees which help people maintain their mental and spiritual health. If this were to be removed, there would be a concomitant reduction in health.

I oppose the proposed appropriation/sale of the land at Woodchurch Road for the above reasons, and would strongly urge the Council to rethink this plan, and to safeguard this area for the future wellbeing of local residents, and to protect our environmental assets in a meaningful way.

Yours faithfully,