

PROTECT COMMUNITY ASSETS. PREVENT ABUSE. PROTECT THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

Melwood football ground is a community asset with heritage, social value and public importance. It must be awarded and managed fairly, transparently and in the public interest — not influenced by media players or local connections for private development gain.

MELWOOD
FOOTBALL GROUND

**PUBLIC ASSET
NOT PRIVATE GAIN**



HOW TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ABUSE IN THE AWARD OF MELWOOD

1 MEDIA INFLUENCE



- Positive or negative media coverage used to shape public perception of bidders.
- Journalists or media figures have undisclosed links to bidders.
- "Narratives" promoted to discredit competing proposals.

2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST



- Decision-makers have personal, professional or financial connections to the preferred party.
- Lack of declared interests.
- Families, friends or associates stand to benefit.

3 LOCAL COUNCIL CONNECTIONS



- Close relationships between bidders and councillors or officials.
- Informal lobbying or political pressure.
- Councillors involved in decisions from which they should recuse themselves.

4 LACK OF TRANSPARENCY



- Evaluation criteria not published or changed without notice.
- Key documents, minutes or communications withheld.
- No clear audit trail of decisions.

5 UNDUE PROPERTY ADVANTAGE



- Award appears to favour future property development over community benefit.
- Planning or zoning advantages may accrue to the preferred party.
- Significant uplift in land value expected.

6 DISREGARD OF BETTER PROPOSALS



- Stronger bids (financial or community benefit) ignored without explanation.
- Subjective or vague reasons used to justify decision.
- No evidence of a fair and even-handed assessment.

⚠ THE RISK TO THE PUBLIC

- 👥 Loss of community benefit and sporting heritage
- 🏠 Undue enrichment of connected parties
- £ Wasted public and charitable resources
- 🤝 Erosion of trust in councils, charities and regulators
- ⚖ Potential breach of charity law, company law, and procurement rules

🚩 RED FLAGS – WATCH CLOSELY

- ✓ Winning bidder has media connections actively covering the project.
- ✓ Bidders or partners have history of working with local councillors.
- ✓ Meetings or communications not minuted or disclosed.
- ✓ Changes to plans, site use or timelines benefit the preferred party.
- ✓ Questions from the public or rival bidders are ignored.
- ✓ Regulators or stakeholders are not informed or consulted.

✓ WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Ask clear questions about the process and decision-making.
- 📄 Request disclosure of criteria, scores and decision records.
- 👤 Declare and record any conflicts of interest.
- 👤 Report concerns to the appropriate regulators.
- ✓ Speak up – protecting community assets is everyone's responsibility.

🛡 WHO TO REPORT TO

- 🏛 Charity Commission – www.gov.uk/charity-commission
- 🏠 Regulator of Social Housing – www.gov.uk/rsh
- 🏦 Financial Conduct Authority (if applicable) – www.fca.org.uk
- 🏠 Your Local Council – Standards / Monitoring Officer
- 🏛 National Crime Agency (Economic Crime Command) – www.nca.gov.uk
- 🗞 Local Press / Community Groups – keep the public informed

**COMMUNITY ASSETS ARE NOT FOR SALE TO INFLUENCE.
THE PUBLIC HAS THE RIGHT TO A FAIR DEAL.**

