

Scrutiny Management Committee

26 March 2007

Interim Report on Scrutiny Review of Council owned land at Tang Hall

Background

1. At the Scrutiny Management committee of 25 September 2006 members resolved to form an Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committee to examine the topic of Council owned land in the Tang Hall area. The results of the scrutiny review would be used to inform the process of drawing up a programme of work for the Area Asset Management Plan for Tang Hall.
2. On 23 October 2006 members approved the membership of this Sub-Committee as Cllr Janet Looker (Chair) and Cllrs Ian Cuthbertson, Viv Kind, Martin Lancelott and David Livesley.
3. This is an interim report of the Ad-hoc Sub-Committee presented to Scrutiny Management Committee for its information on progress to date. The Sub-Committee anticipates it will require one further formal meeting to agree its final report, having carried out its research and investigative work.

Remit

Scrutiny Management Committee agreed the remit for the Ad-hoc Sub-Committee in October 2006, as follows:

Objectives

- To carry out a local scrutiny review which impacts on the Tang Hall area.
- To work with local residents to find out the urgent issues and real needs in the area.
- To evaluate the options for resolving these issues
- To make recommendations which will inform the process of creating the pilot Area Asset Management Plan which is being prepared for this area.

To achieve these objectives, SMC agreed the Sub-Committee would need to:

- decide the boundary of the area to which this review refers.
- carry out an audit of the property within that boundary which is owned by City of York Council

- carry out local consultation on priority issues.
- identify possible improvements to provision in Tang Hall

Consultation

5. Members held consultations with residents at the Heworth and Hull Road Ward Committees in January and February 2007. This was because the Tang Hall area covers parts of both these Wards (see 8 below). Representatives of this Sub-Committee, together with officers from Scrutiny Services and Property Services attended the meetings with a small display of maps of the Tang Hall area and discussed the possibilities with residents. These consultations were publicised in the preceding Ward Newsletter which informed residents that Scrutiny Sub-Committee members would be available at the Ward Committees to listen to their views.
6. A special meeting was held in Tang Hall Community Centre on 13 February 2007 to which representatives of all community groups operating in the Tang Hall area were invited. Notices had been sent to all community groups who were known about by Sub-Committee and Ward members, posters placed in the local library, community centre etc and articles were published in the local press which informed people that the event was to take place.
7. A summary of comments received at these consultation meetings is attached at Annex A.
8. Cllr Ruth Potter discussed these comments with pupils at Tang Hall Primary School during a Citizenship lesson that she was contributing to. A summary of what the children would like to see in the Tang Hall area is attached at Annex B.

First Key Objective – To carry out a Scrutiny Review which impacts on the Tang Hall area

Information Gathered

9. The scope of the review agreed that the Sub-Committee would agree the boundary of the area to which this review refers and carry out an audit of council owned property within that boundary. It was agreed that the 'Tang Hall' area covered two wards – Heworth and Hull Road. The core area that forms the focus of this review was shown on a map which also highlighted the Council-owned property in the area. This was the same area that was agreed as making up Tang Hall by ward members at a meeting with Property Services officers in June 2006.

Issues Arising

10. Members discussed establishing a model or template for consultation processes in relation to future Area Asset Management Plans which might be produced. However the advice of Property Services was that the circumstances surrounding any future AAMPs would be widely different from that of Tang Hall with less Council owned buildings being affected. It would be advisable for each one to be developed according to the individual circumstances.

Options

11. No relevant options at this stage.

Recommendation

12. Members are asked to note at this stage that an appropriate Scrutiny review has been carried out impacting on the Tang Hall area, but that this does not require a recommendation to the Executive.

Second Key Objective – to work with local residents to find out the urgent issues and real needs in the area.

Information Gathered

13. Members held consultation events with local residents as detailed in Consultation above (also see Annexes A and B).

Issues Arising

14. Members also recognised that further and more extensive consultation could take place. This might include postal surveys of all or selected addresses within the wards, phone surveys, leaflet distribution, on-street or online surveys or focus group discussions.

Members considered whether it would be worth establishing a template or model for consultation in relation to creating future Area Asset Management Plans. Such a model might include a selection of the following:

- Area based consultation at appropriate location(s) within the community, involving residents and key stakeholders
- *Ward Committee consultation
- A questionnaire delivered to every house within the ward (postal survey)
- Questions asked via the Councils citywide consultation tool 'Talkabout' to ensure that local decisions affecting the City as whole are consulted on.

- Phone surveys aimed at contacting 1 in 6 residents to get a representative view from ward based residents.
- On street interviews conducted at geographic sites of possible change.
- Leaflet distribution (see 3 alternative methods set out in Annex A)
- On-Line Survey
- Focus Group discussions

15. However, there could be considerable financial implications if any of these methods were employed – see Annex C – and those would need to be borne in mind.

Options

16. To consider whether to implement further consultation procedures or recommending their use in similar Area Asset Management Plan productions in the future.

Recommendation

17. Members are asked to note the possible research methodologies and costings which can be used for local consultation and as a minimum recommend the involvement of Ward Members at an early consultative stage in the preparation of future AAMPs.

Third Key Objective- to evaluate the options for resolving the issues raised as a result of local consultation (objective 2 above)

18. Information Gathered

Members gathered a range of information about local views (including Ward Members) on the area as a result of the consultative events undertaken. Annex A sets out the information gathered from these consultative processes and Members have considered so far that the consultation has been sufficiently representative of local views as not to warrant any further testing.

19. Issues Arising

Members assessed and summarised the main issues arising as being:

- To improve youth facilities in the area
- To maximise open space provision
- The provision of affordable housing

In relation to the Tang Hall library on 5th Avenue, Members found that no significant comments about the service or location of the library had emerged through their work and therefore have made no comments about it, other than to note the outcome of an existing lottery bid to further develop its facilities would be known by the end of the year.

20..Options

As a result, Members have developed the following options for consideration as part of the development of the first Area Asset Management Plan in Tang Hall, subject to the necessary legal, planning and other consents, together with available funding:

- a. The provision and retention of open space within the area. Members were keen that the **playing fields site** should continue to be predominantly open space, but recognised that part of the site may need to be sold to raise capital which could be used to enhance the remainder. It would be possible for this to be managed by the Community Centre if appropriate financial arrangements were made. Enhanced landscaping in this area could allow it to become part of the “green corridor” and cycle track which would link Heworth Holme and St Nicholas Fields with Osbaldwick.
- b. The provision of **play and leisure facilities for older children and teenagers**. Considerable investment is being made in the integrated children’s centre, however members were of the opinion that there was still a need for leisure opportunities for older young people. It would be important to work with Leisure Services to source suitable facilities, however members suggested the use of a mobile skateboard park which could perhaps be located at Burnholme Community college (as well as the Tang Hall Primary School to serve younger children). Also the possibility of play areas on the former Family Centre site or in the St Nicholas complex were suggested..
- c. The identification of sites which could be used for **affordable housing**. Members discussed the possibility of using part of the allotment site as well as other small sites which may meet housing needs. Broadly, however, they supported those sites already identified for affordable housing in the area.

Recommendation

21. That the priority areas identified above as a result of evaluating the consultative events (including Ward Members) be fed into the process for establishing the first Tang Hall Area Asset Management Plan and evaluated accordingly for feasibility at that stage.

Fourth key objective – to make recommendations that will inform the process of creating the pilot Area Asset Management Plan which is being prepared for this area.

Information gathered

22. Officers from Property Services have found the input of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee to be useful in their production of the suggested structure of the Area Asset Management Plan for Tang Hall. They have also had input from Ward members, the Executive Member and other relevant officers. Officers now feel they have enough information to draw up a draft plan. This should be complete by the end of March and can then be circulated to Ward Committees and community groups in May 2007 for comment, for subsequent approval by the Executive in June or July 2007. The suggested structure for the Area Asset Management Plan is attached at Annex D (to follow).

Issues arising

23. Members were concerned that the draft plan be circulated more widely, for example to allotment holders, Glen Lodge, Alex Lyon House, Tang Hall Library, Friends of Heworth Holme. They were also anxious that Ward members be involved in the planning of consultation procedures for any future Area Asset Management Plans.

Options

24. Members have considered a range of future planning and consultative processes to assist in the formulation of future Area Asset Management Plans.(Annex C refers) but, on balance felt that a 'template' as such could not be established for the future because each area would differ so widely in its make up. Rather, they felt that it was imperative, as a minimum, Ward Members should be initially involved in the consultation at an early stage, in view of their local knowledge, and to help establish what further consultative processes may be required.

Recommendation

25. That, as a minimum, Ward Members be included in the formulation of consultation plans for any future Area Asset Management Plans to be set up.

Contact Details

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Interim Report
Approved



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2007

Wards Affected: *Tang Hall*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

- Annex A – Summary of comments from consultation meetings
- Annex B – Comments of pupils from Tang Hall Primary School
- Annex C– Consultation/Research options and costs
- Annex D- Suggested structure of Area Asset Management Plan (to follow)