

Final Report of the Scrutiny review of use of Council owned land at Tang Hall

Background

1. In December 2003 a scrutiny topic was registered by Cllrs Looker, Kind and Potter to look at Council owned land in Tang Hall. This topic was put on hold by Scrutiny Management Committee as the Executive had commissioned a feasibility study relating to development of this area and Members wished to avoid any duplication of work. In March 2004 the Assistant Director of Property Services presented a progress report to SMC to enable them to decide whether a scrutiny panel should be established to assist with the Tang Hall School Land Project.
2. It was suggested that scrutiny could be involved with this process, particularly in terms of consulting with the local community to identify their aspirations for the area and to ensure that these were real, robust, affordable and prioritised. Members also emphasised the need for any scrutiny to complement, rather than duplicate, work done elsewhere. The Head of Property Services informed the Committee of the intention to project manage the development and use Tang Hall as a pilot Area Asset Management Plan and a detailed report on how this might be achieved was submitted to the SMC on 28 June 2004.
3. In April 2005 SMC considered a report which provided an update on the potential development of Tang Hall and the piloting of an Area Asset Management Plan. Further updates were received throughout 2005 and in March 2006 SMC considered a report, which advised them of the progress being made to produce the pilot Area Asset Management Plan for Tang Hall and set out proposals for the next steps including the involvement of ward and other members.
4. The remit for this Scrutiny was agreed at Scrutiny Management Committee on 23 October 2006 and the sub-committee established. An interim report on the work of this sub-committee was considered at Scrutiny Management Committee on 26 March 2007 and the sub-committee was asked to consider if their work was completed and agree their final recommendations.

5. The sub-committee met for the final time on 24 April 2007 and agreed the final amendments to their recommendations.

Corporate Priorities

6. This could be considered to be relevant to corporate priority 3 – improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces.

Options

7. Members can support all, some or none of the recommendations proposed as a result of this review, for submission to the Executive.

Remit

8. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Scrutiny Management Team agreed that the scope of the review would be to decide the boundary of the area to which this review refers and carry out an audit of council owned property within that boundary and as part of the remit set the following key objectives:
 - ◆ To carry out a local scrutiny review aimed at making better use of council owned land and buildings in the area in both community and resource terms.
 - ◆ To evaluate the options for resolving these issues
 - ◆ To make recommendations which will inform the pilot Area Asset Management Plan being prepared for this area.

To carry out a local scrutiny review aimed at making better use of council owned land and buildings in the area in both community and resource terms.

Consultation

9. 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 13 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.
10. A special meeting was held in Tang Hall Community Centre on 13 February 2007 to which representatives of all community groups which operate 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 library, community centre etc and articles were published in the local press which informed people that the event was to take place.

Information Gathered

11. A summary of the comments made by local residents at the consultation meetings is attached at Annex A. They highlight how the community would like council owned land and buildings in the area to be used and developed.
12. As a Ward Member, 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 they would like to see in the Tang Hall area is attached at Annex B.
13. It was recognised that the boundary of the Tang Hall area to which this review refers lies across 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

14. Members 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. There would be considerable financial implications if these methods were employed – see Annex C.
15. Members discussed establishing a model for consultation processes in relation to future Area Asset Management Plans (AAMPs) that may be produced. Such a model might include a selection of the methods used as part of this review, wherever considered appropriate e.g. :
 - 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
16. However the advice of Property Services was that the circumstances surrounding any future AAMPs could be widely different from that of Tang

Hall with less Council owned buildings being affected. Members acknowledged their advice but agreed that some if not all of the above could be employed to consult in any area of the city and therefore a model could assist depending on the individual circumstances.

Recommendation

17. That Members ask Officers to adopt an appropriate range of the relevant research and consultation methodologies proposed in the model in paragraph 15 of the report when developing future Area Asset Management Plans. Area based consultation at appropriate location(s) within the community, involving residents and key stakeholders, and Ward Committee consultation are to be included as standard in all instances. The cost effectiveness of the consultation method and the particular circumstances of the area being considered will be taken into account when making the decision in each case.

Implications

18. There are no known financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime & Disorder, IT, Property or other implications associated with this recommendation.

To evaluate the options for resolving these issues

Consultation

19. Information is given on the type of consultation carried out in paragraphs 9-12 above.

Information Gathered

20. Three main areas of concern were revealed by the consultation events and liaison with ward members. These were:
 - ◆ The provision and retention of open space with the area.
 - ◆ The provision of play and leisure facilities for older children and teenagers.
 - ◆ The identification of sites which could be used for affordable housing.

Issues

21. In considering these three areas Members recognised the following issues:
 - a. 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. 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 Tang Hall Primary School for younger children. Also the possibility of play areas on the former Family Centre site or in the St Nicholas complex.
 - c. Members discussed the possibility of using part of the allotment site as well as four other small sites which may meet housing needs.
22. Members acknowledged that the implementation of any of these options would be subject to the necessary consents and funding being available.

Recommendation

23. The Executive be asked to ensure the specific areas of need identified through this scrutiny review in paragraph 21 of the report are considered, as part of any future Area Asset Management Plan for Tang Hall.

Implications

24. Although there are no direct implications associated with this recommendation, Members recognised that there will be financial and property implications should these issues be addressed as part of a future Area Asset Management Plan for this area.

To make recommendations that will inform the process of creating the pilot Area Asset Management Plan which is being prepared for this area.

Consultation

25. Members consulted with officers from Property Services on the findings from the community meetings completed as part of this review, as set out in paragraphs 9 & 10 of this report.

Information Gathered

26. Officers from Property Services found the input of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee to be useful. They also received input from Ward Members, the Executive Member and other relevant officers during their production of the suggested structure of the Area Asset Management Plan for Tang Hall. A draft of the plan was expected to be complete by the end of June 2007. This will be circulated to Ward Committees and the Corporate Asset Management Group and community groups (hopefully by July 2007 with approval by the Executive later in 2007). The suggested structure for the Area Asset Management Plan is enclosed at Annex D.

Issues arising

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

Recommendation

28. As standard practice, Ward Members should be included in the formulation of consultation plans from the start of the process for any future Area Asset Management Plans.

Implications

29. There are no known financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime & Disorder, IT, Property or other implications associated with this recommendation.

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**Final Draft Report
Approved**

Date

Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report

All

Background Papers – None

Annexes

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