

Subject: Use of Council Land –
Groundwork Site Improvements

Status: For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2nd Aug 2006

Report of: Head of Street Scene and Liveability

Portfolio

Holder: Cabinet member for Street Scene and Liveability

Key Decision:

NO

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval in principle for the improvement of several areas of land which are currently owned and maintained by Rossendale Borough Council but which are perceived to be of poor environmental quality and would benefit from enhancement

These areas include:-

Name of site	proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackthorn Estate 	Alleygating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longholm / Balladen Woodlands Staghills Wood 	Woodland management funded by English Woodland Grant Scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sunnyside Park 	Playground enhancement to be developed within the Play Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snighole Park 	Play ground and general park enhancement

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the following corporate priorities:

- The council is committed to improving the areas of open space within the Borough and as such this project contributes to that priority.

- The projects will be developed in parallel with the analysis of the Open Space Strategy and will refer to the findings of the 2005 Open Space Audit.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- There is some risk of raising community expectations should funding not be secured to deliver. A package of funding bids will be prepared including ELEVATE, Big Lottery Fund and Landfill Tax Credit scheme, there is a very good chance that the necessary funding will be secured. The consultation process will make it clear that funding has yet to be secured and will avoid raising expectations unduly. This will avoid any reputational risk to the Council should any project not secure funding and hence not be delivered.
- Some of the projects have been identified by Community groups seeking the support of the Borough Council and Groundwork. Should the Council not support this initial stage there may be reputational risk of the Council not encouraging community involvement in the local environment.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 In line with the agreed process for developing joint projects a schedule of potential site improvements has been prepared. This is submitted for approval by Cabinet so that these potential projects can be worked up in detail. Final permission for project delivery will be sought once a detailed scheme has been prepared and appropriate funding has been secured. It is anticipated that permission for final delivery will be sought within 12 months.

The sites and the background to this approach are listed in schedule 1 of this report. The schedule identifies; the sites concerned a brief outline of the background and the current level of community involvement.

The options available are;

- To approve the proposal and authorise NEAT Officers, Groundwork and local community groups to devise detailed projects and seek funding to implement them.
- To reject one or all of the proposed projects and refuse to allow NEAT Officers, Groundwork or Community Groups to seek site enhancements.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

5.1 At this stage there is no cost to the council other than officer time and risk is minimal. Permission "in-principle" only is being sought to allow consultation and fund raising. Final permission will be sought once a fully costed scheme has been devised and appropriate funding secured.

Whilst there is no direct cost resulting from this current report, there may be maintenance implications contained within the final report recommendations that follow later. These will be prepared in discussion between Groundwork and Streetscene and Liveability.

Permission in-principle will allow Groundwork Rossendale to invest Project Officer Time with guidance from Street Scene and Liveability through the NEAT team.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

6.1 There are no legal implications

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

7.1 The process will involve partnership working between NEAT Officers, staff from Groundwork Rossendale and local community groups.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 There is minimal risk in encouraging the development of these community projects which are in line with Council objectives.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 To provide “in principle approval” for Street Scene and Liveability and Groundwork Rossendale to consult the local community and other stakeholders, devise detailed project plans and to commence fund raising.

NOTE ; The final costed proposal for the sites will be brought back to the Cabinet for final approval

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 All stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment and the outline suggested is in sympathy with openspace strategy designations.

Contact Officer	
Name	Carole Todd
Position	Head of StreetScene & Liveability
Service / Team	StreetScene & Liveability
Telephone	01706 252551
Email address	caroletodd@rossendalebc.gov.uk

No background papers

Schedule 1;

Site and proposal	Origin of proposal	Ward	Level of community involvement
Blackthorn Estate Alleygating proposal to secure a shared space for residents to provide communal facilities for recreation, recycling and community safety.	A combination of local residents wishes to see environmental improvements with a need to address kerbside recycling in an area of terraced housing	Greensclough	Existing community Group, Blackthorn Residents Association are keen to see general enhancements to the area and could be a partner for the alleygating proposals.,
Longholme / Balladen Woodlands Staghills Wood Management of existing woodland based upon English Woodland Grant Scheme applications	Concern over lack of management of existing woodlands discussed at LSP Environment Theme Group.	Longholme/Hareholme	No existing community groups involved with woodlands. Project will seek to involve existing Residents Groups or to develop "Friends of .." Groups for long term involvement
Sunnyside Park Enhancement of Children's play provision	Approach from Community Group to RBC.	Cribden	Existing Group. Cribden Neighbourhood Association. The group has previously worked with Groundwork on another site. .
Snighole Park Enhancement of children's play provision and general improvements to park	Approach from Community Group to RBC	Helmshore	Existing residents Group. Community Action for Snig Hole. They designed a questionnaire which has been circulated to 1000 local residents.