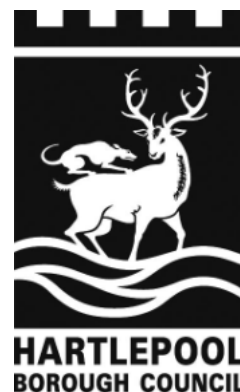


CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO

DECISION SCHEDULE



Tuesday, 19 April 2011

at 10.00 am

in Committee Room A, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Councillor H Thompson, Cabinet Member responsible for Culture, Leisure and Tourism will consider the following items.

1. KEY DECISIONS

No items

2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

2.1 Allotments – Consultation Exercise – *Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)*

3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

3.1 Hart Heritage Project 2010 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

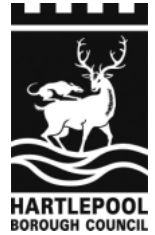
4. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

No items

CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

19 April 2011



Report of: Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)

Subject: ALLOTMENTS – CONSULTATION EXERCISE

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to consult with allotment holders, key stakeholders and the wider community to identify the main concerns on allotment sites throughout Hartlepool and prioritise remedial actions.

To seek approval to consult with allotment holders to ascertain whether current rental income is sufficient to address priority issues.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report refers to issues on allotment sites in Hartlepool, which are of concern to allotment holders, key stakeholders and members of the public. The report details the proposals to carry out a consultation exercise with interested parties in order to establish what the key issues are and to prioritise any remedial actions.

As part of the consultation exercise, it is proposed that allotment holders will be consulted on the current levels of rent in order to ascertain whether these are sufficient to address the priority issues.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for the allotment service provided by Hartlepool Borough Council.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non Key

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio on 19 April 2011.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

That the Portfolio Holder approves of the proposed consultations with allotment holders, key stakeholders and the wider community to identify issues on allotment sites and prioritise remedial actions.

That the Portfolio Holder approves of the proposed consultations with allotment holders in order to ascertain whether current rental income is sufficient to address priority issues.

Report of: Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)

Subject: ALLOTMENTS – CONSULTATION EXERCISE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to consult with allotment holders, key stakeholders and the wider community to identify the main concerns on allotment sites throughout Hartlepool and prioritise remedial actions.
- 1.2 To seek approval to consult with allotment holders to ascertain whether current rental income is sufficient to address priority issues.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under Section 23 of the Small holding and Allotments Act 1908, Hartlepool Borough Council has a statutory duty to provide a sufficient number of allotments and to let them to residents of Hartlepool.
- 2.2 Hartlepool Borough Council has 1012 allotment plots across 16 sites throughout the Borough; these are as follows:

North Area (492 plots)

Nicolson's Field (169 plots)
Chester Road (147 plots)
Olive Street (1 plot)
Thornhill (86 plots)
Throston (82 plots)
Thompson Grove (5 plots)

Central Area (394 plots)

Briarfields (13 plots)
Burn Valley (76 plots)
Brierton/ Rossmere (62 plots)
Stranton (174 plots)
Catcote (56 plots)
Waverley Terrace (13 plots)

South Area (143 plots)

Station Lane (79 plots)
Woodcroft (31 plots)
Greatham (3 plots)
Haswell Avenue (30 plots)

- 2.3 The 1969 Thorpe Report recommends a minimum allotment provision equivalent to 15 per 1,000 households, but this is not a statutory requirement. Hartlepool currently has an above average provision of 26.1 plots per 1,000 households.
- 2.4 There are currently 304 residents waiting for allotment plots to become available.
- 2.5 One site, Woodcroft, is self managed with rents going directly to the allotment association; the other 15 are managed by Hartlepool Borough Council.
- 2.6 The amount of money currently allocated for providing the allotment service in Hartlepool is around £70K a year, of which £40K is generated from allotment rents. This allocation provides for water charges and reactive maintenance costs for all the plots; however, it does not cover administration, management and policing costs and accordingly these charges have to be absorbed within alternative budgets.
- 2.7 In Hartlepool the price for the average 250 m² plot in 2010/11 was £36.10, or around 70 pence per week.

3. SIGNIFICANT ISSUES & CONCERNS

- 3.1 The condition of Hartlepool Allotment sites is assessed on a 'rolling programme' as part of the 'non schools assets' by the Property Management section of the Resources division. This is to give a 'snap shot' in time of a property or sites elemental condition, together with associated costs that will enable the preparation of planned programmes for repair and maintenance of Local Authority Assets. The last survey carried out in 2009 highlighted the need for essential repairs to prevent serious deterioration to the fabric of the service, which includes roads, fencing, water pipes and general grounds maintenance.
- 3.2 The Waste & Environmental Services section has more recently carried out a condition survey on individual plots, which has revealed a number of issues, some more serious than others. These include:-
 - Fly tipping
 - Illegal waste disposal
 - Illegal burning of waste
 - Illegal use of plots for commercial reasons
 - The keeping of animals
- 3.3 Key Stakeholders including the Police, Fire Brigade and the Safer Hartlepool Partnership also report incidents of theft/burglary, arson and anti-social behaviour. These issues not only impact upon the activities

of the genuine allotment gardener, but they also have implications for the wider community.

- 3.4 Collectively, all these issues represent a major concern in that remedial works to infrastructure will carry a significant cost and intervention for illegal activities will be an overwhelming strain on existing resources. However, an effective policing and management regime would be fundamental to the sustainability of a quality allotment service once these issues have been resolved. In this regard, concerns exist because of the disparity between the cost of providing the allotment service and the income generated from allotment rents.

4. PROPOSALS/CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 It is proposed that consultations are carried out over a twelve week period and will involve the following individuals/groups and key stakeholders:

- Allotment Holders
- Allotment Associations
- The Allotment Holders Association
- Members of the Public/Residents
- Elected Members of the Council
- Resident Representatives
- Neighbourhood Managers
- Police
- Fire Brigade
- HBC Estates & Asset Management
- HBC Environmental Enforcement
- RSPCA
- Dogs Trust

- 4.2 The following mechanisms will be used in carrying out the proposed consultations:

- Allotment Holders/Associations meetings/forums
- Allotment Holders Newsletters
- Neighbourhood Consultative Forums
- Residents Association meetings
- Questionnaires (inc. on-line)
- Hartbeat/Hartlepool Mail/Local Media
- Executive Council Meetings (Reports).
- Hartlepool Borough Council website

- 4.3 The consultation process will aim to identify those issues, which cause disruption to allotment holders and the allotment service as a whole; it will also seek to identify issues that impact upon the environment and those that affect the quality of life for people in neighbouring

communities. Though not exhaustive, the following provides a list of examples:

- Allotments infrastructure e.g. water pipes, fencing, roads/tracks
- allotment abuse e.g. storing of waste/other materials, keeping of animals
- environmental crime e.g. fly tipping, illegal burning, noise
- anti-social behaviour; burglary

- 4.4 Concurrently, the consultations will look to determine whether income generated through allotment rents is proportionate to the task of not only meeting the aspirations of allotment holders, but that it is able to sustain an allotment service that complements the wider community.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Failure to consult with allotment holders, key stakeholders and local residents will be a failure by Hartlepool Borough Council to adhere to established protocol where such key decisions are based upon the opinions of people affected by them.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The consultation process will be absorbed within existing budget and staffing constraints; however, the outcome of the consultations may highlight the need for significant capital investment, which could impact upon current corporate and financial strategies.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The Level Two objective of the Allotments Development Strategy 2010 – 2015 aims to work towards the engagement of allotment tenants and in doing so bring the health benefits of allotment-based activity to all sections of the community.
- 7.2 As part of this objective, the consultation process will be conducted in a way that ensures all sections of the community are able to communicate their views on the allotment service provided by Hartlepool Borough Council.

8. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Notwithstanding the crime that occurs on some allotment sites, much of the current infrastructure is in dire need of major investment. Boundary fences are dilapidated; issues exist around safety and security; water pipes comprise of dated cast-iron material and are prone to leaks,

particularly during extreme wintry conditions; internal roads and tracks are also sub-standard.

- 8.2 Collectively, these issues are disruptive for allotment holders and the continuous need for responsive repairs is costly for the Council. Whilst the Council has responsibility for the upkeep of these assets, successive years of underinvestment and the spiralling cost of labour and materials has severely hindered its ability to carry out major works to allotment infrastructure. The infrastructure is therefore in steady decline and without intervention is likely to become an overwhelming strain on resources.

9. CRIME & DISORDER – SECTION 17

- 9.1 There is both hard and anecdotal evidence to show that crime and anti social behaviour exists on allotment sites. This not only impacts upon the activities of the genuine allotment gardener, but it also has implications for key stakeholders and the wider community.
- 9.2 Consequently, issues around crime and disorder will be a strong feature of the consultation exercise.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That the Portfolio Holder approves of the proposed consultations with allotment holders, key stakeholders and the wider community to identify issues on allotment sites and prioritise remedial actions.
- 10.2 That the Portfolio Holder approves of the proposed consultations with allotment holders in order to ascertain whether current rental income is sufficient to address priority issues.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The decline of allotment sites has resulted from under-investment, and a failure to address key issues at an early stage. It is now vital that Hartlepool Borough Council implements a realistic and achievable plan of action, which not only addresses those elements responsible for the decline of allotment sites, but one that provides for a sustainable allotment service.
- 11.2 Whilst there is both hard and anecdotal evidence of the issues that exist on allotment sites, it is necessary to formally gauge the opinions of allotment holders, key stakeholders and local residents in order to prioritise remedial actions and implement a realistic timetable for improvement.

- 11.3 Furthermore, if current allotment rents are deemed to be disproportionate to the level of investment required to carry out remedial works, or they are considered inadequate to maintain the standards required of the allotment service, then it will be necessary to carry out a review of the same. In this respect, allotment holders will need to be consulted before any proposals are placed before the Council.
- 11.4 Consultations with allotment holders, key stakeholders and residents will therefore be fundamental to any realistic and achievable action plan and it is necessary to embark upon this process at the earliest opportunity to halt the further decline of allotment sites.

12. CONTACT OFFICER

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CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

19 April 2011



Report of: Director of Child & Adult Services

Subject: HART HERITAGE PROJECT 2010

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the progress of the partnership to record the historic environment of Hart.
- 1.2 To present reports on 'Smallholdings at Hart' and 'Hart in World War II' arising from the work carried out in 2010.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 In the Autumn of 2010 a partnership project took place to record aspects of the historic environment of Hart. The project was carried out by Hart History Group, local volunteers, Tees Archaeology, Hartlepool Borough Council's Landscape & Conservation and Museum Services and was financially supported by the Museum of Hartlepool through MLA's Renaissance scheme.
- 2.2 The project recorded smallholdings around the village that were established by Durham County Council in 1938 and recovered aspects of the physical appearance of the village and surrounding area during the Second World War.
- 2.3 The project has raised awareness of the historic environment of the area in the village and has provided information to assist Tees Archaeology and Hartlepool Borough Council in documenting and assessing the historic environment of the area.
- 2.4 Reports have been produced on the smallholdings and on the Second World War in the village. These are included with this report and will be

made available to Hart History group and the other participants in the projects.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

Tees Archaeology is part of the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-Key.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio meeting 19 April 2011.

6. DECISION REQUIRED

The Portfolio holder is recommended to note:

- The success of the partnership project between local people, Tees Archaeology and Hartlepool Borough Council to document and research the historic environment of the village of Hart and
- Note the attached reports on the smallholdings and the Second World War in Hart.

Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: HART HERITAGE PROJECT 2010

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the progress of the partnership to record the historic environment of Hart.
- 1.2 To present reports on 'Smallholdings at Hart' and 'Hart in World War II' arising from the work carried out in 2010.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2009 Hart History Group, local volunteers, Tees Archaeology, Hartlepool Borough Council's Landscape & Conservation, Countryside and Museum Services and Hart Junior School joined together in a project to document the historic environment of the village of Hart.
- 2.2 The project was based in Hart Church and supported by the Renaissance programme. Following a week of recording the buildings of the village a successful Open Day was held in the church.
- 2.3 The success of this project led to a desire to continue the work and a further programme of work was organised for September 2010.

3. HERITAGE OF HART PROJECT 2010

- 3.1 The programme of work for 2010 focussed on the recording of a series of smallholdings built on the outskirts of Hart in 1938 and on the village during the Second World War.
- 3.2 The project took place during the week beginning 27th September 2010 and finished with an Open Day in the church on Saturday 2nd October.
- 3.3 The project was carried out by Hart History Group, local volunteers, Tees Archaeology, Hartlepool Borough Council's Landscape & Conservation and Museum Services and was financially supported by the Museum of Hartlepool through MLA's Renaissance scheme.
- 3.4 In addition Hartlepool Borough Council's Countryside Service worked with Hart Junior School to complete a record of the trees within the village.

4. HART SMALLHOLDINGS

- 4.1 In 1938 Durham County Council developed 35 smallholdings around Hart village. They were set out in three groups, at Nine Acres, Burns Close and The Fens.
- 4.2 The smallholdings were part of a deliberate strategy to address the widespread unemployment of the time by providing unemployed families the opportunity to live off the land.
- 4.3 Each family was provided with a semi-detached house, between seven and nine acres of land, a piggery, hen house and large cold frame as well as the stock and seed to operate them. Advice on what to do was provided by a Supervisor.
- 4.4 The project involved identifying the properties and structures, photographing them, making a written record of each and then writing a short report on each.
- 4.5 Prior to the project taking place letters explaining what was proposed were sent to all the residents by the Hart History Group and the project had the active co-operation of the residents at the smallholdings throughout.

5. HART IN WORLD WAR II

- 5.1 The intention of this project was to document the surviving physical evidence of the impact of the Second World War on the village and to combine this with local memories to attempt to reconstruct the environment of the village between 1939 and 1945.
- 5.2 A variety of different features were recorded, ranging from air raid shelters to secret bases, local people provided their memories and previously unseen aerial photographs were acquired.
- 5.3 This information has been correlated to demonstrate how the village prepared to meet the threat of invasion in 1940. The measures that were put in place to resist any occupation, how the threat of bombing was combated and story of a prisoner of war camp in the village.

6. HERITAGE OF HART REPORTS

- 6.1 This project has helped raise awareness of the heritage of the village and the extent to which some has survives and some has disappeared.
- 6.2 The project has also provided useful information to inform the protection and conservation of a range of features.

- 6.3 Following the successful conclusion of these activities reports have been produced and are included with this report. Copies of the reports will be provided to the Hart History Group as well as the other participants.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To note the success of the partnership project between local people, Tees Archaeology and Hartlepool Borough Council to document and research the historic environment of the village of Hart.
- 8.2 To note the attached reports on the smallholdings and the Second World War in Hart.

5. CONTACT OFFICER

John Mennear, Assistant Director, Child and Adult Services.