

Hall Green & Selly Oak Connecting Communities & Assets Steering Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose of the project

The purpose of this project is to explore how the current corporate approach and processes the council has for disposing of its land and property assets can be better connected to local communities and priorities. This includes how funds can be used locally or for community purposes from any land or property sales. The group has been commissioned from the council's paper "Forward 21 / Chamberlain 21: Unlocking community assets and talents in the south of the city" (Cabinet Committee: Local Leadership, November 2016).

The overall aim is to ensure that land and property the council owns is being put to the most productive use possible for the benefit of the council, the city, the local area and communities in which it might be situated. This based on the assumption that the current council processes for managing and disposing of its land and property are either not doing this, or are not capable of fulfilling this aim. This is framed within the following:

- What other similar assets in the public estate and private ownership are being used for, or will potentially be used for in the local area
- What the present and future needs, as well as opportunities are for the local area and its communities
- What investment options and opportunities there are for particular assets, both within a local and citywide context
- What corporate priorities the council needs to consider with its land and property portfolio, including its finances

There are two main factors for the project to explore, the first being the information and intelligence the council can apply to land and property assets in order to understand what their value and best uses might be (including the costs of disposal, e.g. reputational, future potential). The second are the options, ideas and tools for how land and property could be used to realise its value and unlock its potential to the council, city, local area and communities. These two factors are intrinsically linked, with one informing the other and vice-versa.

What's in scope?

In immediate scope is BCC land and property which has been identified as surplus to council requirements and is in the pipeline for disposal. Geographically this applies to all relevant assets in the Selly Oak and Hall Green Districts. It also takes consideration of all relevant land and property assets in the wider public estate and private ownership.

The processes which are in scope are those which the council uses to assess and evaluate disposal options for land and property. This includes the processes and tools available to the council to dispose of its land and property, as well as subsequent uses of capital receipts to invest in local areas and communities, particularly for the purposes of "invest to save".

The concepts which are in scope can be split into two themes. The first is "alternative" approaches and methods for assessing land and property values, broadening the concept of value. The second is "alternative" ideas and models for the use and management of land and property, including capital receipts from their sale.

To understand current practices and the impact of those the project will also be reviewing previous and recently disposed assets. This is to identify whether the potential value of those assets is being realised and they are being put to the best use possible, as well as alternative options which may have been possible for their disposal.

If a successful model and way of working can be developed a subsequent project concerning the whole public sector estate may evolve from this one.

Outcomes – what will the project seek to achieve?

The following outcomes will help direct the project to ensure that its activity is relevant and beneficial to the council, city and local communities:

- To put local assets, particularly council owned land and property in the Hall Green and Selly Oak Districts, into the most productive use and value possible. This is value to the council, city, local areas and communities, as well as beyond what might otherwise have been possible through existing means and processes.
- To create confidence and participation in the council's approach to managing its assets, including land and property - this is internally, as well as with other organisations, communities and citizens.
- To ensure that there are opportunities for accountability and transparency in council decision making concerning the use and disposal of the city's assets that it has responsibility for, including the use of capital receipts from the sale of land and property.
- Through the use of council land and property, improve outcomes for local citizens and communities in line with the council's and local priorities.
- To improve cooperation and collaboration between Members and officers in the management and disposal of council assets.
- To improve the cooperation and collaboration between officers across Directorates and service areas which can improve how council assets are managed and disposed of.

Outputs – what will the project produce?

The following is not an exclusive list and this will likely evolve as the project develops:

- Alternative ideas and models for using council land and property, which reflect the feasibility and capacity for putting them into practice. Examples might cover the use of capital receipts, leases, asset transfers or social finance for instance, exploring emerging ideas and good practices inside and outside of Birmingham.
- Alternative ideas and approaches for assessing the value of council land and property, which will increase the role of Members and communities. This can also consider recognizing the potential “costs” (present and future) to the different disposal options. Examples of this in practice might be local planning documents or connecting to corporate plans and strategies.
- Recommended changes to the internal processes for the disposal of council assets and use of financial assets - principally concerning planning and pipelines, decision making, the disposal and subsequent financial processes. Examples of this might be using local bodies or groups to contribute to the decision making process.
- Scalable ways of working for Members, officers, partners and local communities to help ensure council assets which are considered surplus to council requirements are put into the most productive use available, across the whole city. This is likely to reflect the need to retain a flexible approach rather than “one size fits all”.
- Recommendations for activity and options the council can invest in, which can help develop an environment through which “alternative” ideas and models for the disposal of council assets can be realized. This might include the development of investment funds or blended finance models.

Stakeholders – who are the project members?

The steering group will evolve as it develops but it initially consists of Members and officers from the council as per the following:

- Councillors Claire Spencer and Karen McCarthy – District Chairs for Hall Green and Selly Oak District
- Councillor Tony Kennedy – Assistant Leader
- Ghaz Hussain and Neil Vyse – Planning & Regeneration
- Phillip Andrews – Property
- Karen Cheney and Austin Rodriguez – Neighbourhoods & Communities

Additional internal and external stakeholders will be invited to join the project as it develops. This will be through the formation of stakeholder and working groups.

Governance, oversight and relationship to other groups and structures

This will evolve as the project develops but a formal relationship is either defined or needs to be developed with the following relevant decision-making and influencing bodies and structures:

- Cabinet Committee: Local Leadership – which will provide direction and oversight to the project. This will require regular reporting of progress to the committee.
- Corporate Property Board – relationship tbc
- Hall Green and Selly Oak District Committees – relationship tbc
- Ward Forums in Hall Green and Selly Oak Districts – relationship tbc
- Partners Investing in Neighbourhoods & Communities (PINCh) – to coordinate emerging activity and ideas which are concerned with the investment (of funding and support) in the voluntary and community sectors in Hall Green District and Billesley Ward.

