

Hulme Street meeting notes 17 June 2011

Katja's notes: (Dave Hammond's notes at the end)

Present: Cathy, Lucy, Katja (notes), Alan, Niall Power (CSM), Dave Hammond (Groundwork), Mike O'Connell (BCA)

We had most of the meeting on Hulme Street and Jackson Crescent so that all could get a better idea of different aspects of the transformation (current car parking, location of trees, access points, link to Hulme Park etc.) It was a very constructive meeting because we were able to see how the transformation of the street should be planned as a whole. Different elements will be covered by different pots of money but they need to be part of one overall design.

CSM have decided to work with BCA on the fundamentals (somebody help me out here please with more technical, unambiguous words) which includes locating services like drains etc, sorting out planning and permissions processes, getting tarmac removed and much more. Therefore, Mike at BCA is starting to work on the first stages of their part of the planning process: listing all groups/agencies who need to be consulted with a draft timetable (for example Highways don't work very fast); collecting information for draft constraints drawings (think: "if there's a drain pipe here we can't plant a tree on top"). It would be good to get a list from Mike what exactly he'll be drawing up at this stage. Mike has been invited by residents to attend part of the next GtR meeting on 5 July (Tenants' Office, 6.30pm); he'll be circulating plans prior to the GtR meeting. Dave Hammond will also be attending.

It has become clearer how we (residents) can approach the question of professional roles for the Community Spaces element. There seem to be two options (but this is open to discussion; please comment before or at the GtR meeting):

Option A: appoint BCA to be the landscape architects responsible for the fundamentals which they are already doing for CSM. BCA can also manage the project (check Community Spaces Essential Reading for details what this can/should cover; discussion to be had on this); BCA could also manage the consultation process (need to check that we (residents) could determine the process for the consultation, like Planning for Real). Mike has mentioned that there would be no fees for all this to come out of the Community Spaces budget because it would be covered by their contract with CSM (usually about 15% of the overall budget). This money could be spent on more 'things' (plants, planters etc.). Other individuals and/or organisations can be approached by us (residents) for the design and creation of the actual 'things', like community artists to design and create art work with residents at workshops etc.

Option B: appoint a different landscape architect and project manager of our own choice who will need to be paid out of the Community Spaces pot. (I spoke to a woman at Victoria Park, Stretford who took eight months off work to manage their Community Spaces project for the 'Friends of Victoria Park' group; it sounded like she didn't charge for this. She spoke very much about 'her' project... Any volunteers?) They would need to liaise with BCA to coordinate plans etc. We would have the choice of all personnel but it would take up more Community Spaces money and would bring in the danger of duplication and confusion.

There are pros and cons to both options (there might be more options) which we need to become clear on, discuss and decide on.

One key issue that is out of our hands is the way the permissions process which involves Highways and the Stage 2 application for Community Spaces link together. Community Spaces won't accept our application if there are not very firm indicators that all the necessary permissions are pretty much in the bag; this will most certainly take longer than early Sept 2011. Dave is going to report back to Groundwork what CSM and BCA have presented in order to get negotiations for an extension of our submission deadline (early Sept 2011) under way. He is very enthusiastic about the

prospect of having the whole of Hulme Street to play with (we didn't know this when we wrote the Stage 1 application) and will be making a good case for us. However, there will be limitations to how long the extension can be. Dave will report back.

We also discussed a number of assessments that will need to be carried out, especially a biodiversity assessment in order to plan carefully what kinds of species to introduce etc. This will have to involve specialists; please can residents with knowledge, interest and connections in this area come forward and get very much involved. The current tree survey also doesn't seem to address existing trees' life expectancy; this is something we should possibly consider now. There probably needs to be a group of people who take this element of the planning on before we can write this part of the application (Katja is certainly out of my depth here and not leading on this part of the application/planning process).

Dave Hammond's notes:

- Carrying out Edible Corridor project works solely on the grass verges would not make for the best project (especially for planting) as it is under tree canopy and heavily shaded. The best Edible Corridor project would make full use of the land freed up by the road closure.
- The legal requirements for road closure depend on whether this is a formal closure or a removal of vehicular rights. Removing vehicular rights takes less time.
- Planning permission would be required for change of use. This would require plans to be drawn up following consultation, and submitted. It sounds like the turnaround in the planning dept could take longer than the normal 8 week assessment period as they are low on capacity.
- CSM, however, would like to spend their budget this financial year, by April 2012.
- BCAs fees for the work as a whole could include doing the Edible Corridor work, if it was decided by the residents that BCA could do this to best effect. (This would allow up to £6k to be spent on the project, rather than fees and would allow greatest synergy between these projects.)
- Possibility that a unified design process would create the overall physical space (allowing for dependencies re placement of project elements - planters, art works etc - with relation to existing services); specialist contractors could be engaged to 'fill' those spaces, with an emphasis on community engagement
- 'Edible Corridor' might not be the most representative name for the project when it comes to wider consultation.
- Desirability of having ecological / tree survey built into project planning (tree works can be emotive but are any trees affecting nearby buildings? any approaching end of lifespan? any benefit to expanding range of species?)
- Consultation: single exercise would be best, but making it clear that the two projects are related but separate (another advantage of using a single architect for the main works)
- Issues indirectly related to the Edible Corridor work are the possible change in vehicle access to the council building from Hulme St to Jackson Crescent, and potential for a pedestrian crossing from Hulme St to the park.