

Colne Valley Trust – Moving the Concept Forward

1. Introduction

This paper is intended as a way to capture some thoughts that have been expressed so far and as a way to stimulate debate and move forward the development of the Trust. The suggestions that are included are by no means fixed and are intended to provide a starting point for discussion. It's also not a plan I'm seeking to impose on the group (my role is to support the group) but rather some suggestions on next steps, so feel free to agree or disagree with what is set out.

I refer throughout to the Colne Valley Trust, this is for simplicity and to avoid getting caught up in debates at this stage about whether it is a Development Trust, Community Land Trust or other form – that debate will come soon enough!

The interest locally in establishing some form of trust has come about through three key factors it seems, these are

- Interest from Kirklees Council in supporting the development of a Community Land Trust to deliver affordable housing
- Debates within the Town Team about future direction and the desire to have some form of asset base to enable future sustainability.
- The opportunity presented by the Marsden Goods Yard

These local factors are complemented by a number of external, wider policy factors. These include the emphasis on 'Localism' and the 'Big Society' by the new coalition government, the emerging public sector cuts and the potential for a dramatically different landscape in terms of public service delivery as well as ongoing interest nationally and locally in asset transfer.

2. Current thoughts

In broad terms it has been suggested that the Trust is a vehicle for delivering the vision of the Renaissance Steering Group:

Our vision is of a cohesive and diverse community living and working together for a sustainable future, creating a Colne Valley that we can all be proud of, and that is a great place for our children, and their children in turn, to grow up in.

The list below is of things that have been mentioned in the discussions to date around the Trust, this is by no means a comprehensive list of all possibilities and I may have missed some things out:

- Delivery of affordable housing
- Provision of workshop space – possibly for craft or green technology businesses
- Visitors Centre
- Land for local food growing
- Delivery of services – café, grounds maintenance, etc..
- Scope to take on existing facilities and services – e.g. swimming pool, civic hall, etc..

I'm not suggesting that the Trust should consider doing all of these things – realistically it will have to prioritise its efforts.

An underlying principle of many of the suggestions that have come forward is about environmental sustainability and low-carbon approaches. A key factor also is the desire for a Trust to be of a size and scope that ensures it is sustainable, for example if it is purely about provision of housing that will not be of interest to many members. There is a desire to have a 'critical mass' of both assets and services to generate enough revenue (and surplus) for long-term sustainability.

3. Next Steps

There are a range of areas that some action is required in to take this process forward. This first phase is intended to take what is currently a broad set of ideas into something more concrete. Four broad areas for action are identified below and more detail is provided in the following tables.

- Development of the Group
- Public and Stakeholder Engagement
- Asset Opportunities
- Funding Opportunities

The actions required in these areas may overlap in some instances. The key area currently I would suggest is the 'Development of the Group' actions. I suggest this is taken forward at the next meeting of the group where the issues identified are addressed through a facilitated process involving Paul Bridges of the DTA.

Some of the actions around asset opportunities and stakeholder engagement will run in parallel to this but that is primarily to take advantage of opportunities and potential opportunities that exist.

I have indicated potential responsibility for these actions in the table. This is done to ensure that best use is made of current resources available to the group.

With regard to timescales this will partly depend on the capacity of the group to take this forward and so have not been included at this stage. This is something however that will need to be covered in the near future.

Development of the Group		
Issue	Action	Responsibility
National CLT Conference	Members of the Group to attend conference on 29 th June 2010 to identify learning from other areas.	AP/LM
Establish Planning Group	Establish a Trust Planning Group, need to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement of Ward members - What roles are needed (Chair, etc..) - how roles will be allocated - and then allocate roles - When and how often to meet 	CVT/DTA/AP
Terms of Reference	Establish Terms of Reference for Group and the core purpose.	CVT/DTA/AP
Trust Activities	Identify what Trust will do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what assets could it hold - what services could it provide - what will be done with any profits? 	CVT/AP/DTA
Legal Form	What legal form should it take?	CVT/DTA
Planning	Prepare Action Plan for next stages.	AP/CVT

Public and Stakeholder Engagement		
Issue	Action	Responsibility

Public and Stakeholder Engagement		
Issue	Action	Responsibility
Strategic buy-in	KMC to recognise as priority.	RP/AP
	Ensure links to LCR Investment Plan.	
Kirklees Community Building	Liaise with Gary Gordon, Community Building Development Manager, KMC	RP/AP
Kirklees Community Association	Understand role of KCA and CLT development in Kirklees.	AP
Area Committee	Establish links with Area Committee and get endorsement for approach and principle of asset transfer.	RP/CVT
Public Engagement	Develop plan for wider public engagement and communication. This will ensure there is awareness of proposals at appropriate stages and opportunities for involvement in the Group are publicized.	CVT/LM

Asset Opportunities		
Issue	Action	Responsibility
Asset Transfer Policy	Clarify the KMC Asset Transfer Policy and criteria/process that needs to be followed.	RP/AP
Marsden Goods Yard	Meet with Cllrs to discuss Goods Yard.	RP/DW/AP
	Identify other interests – KMC Leisure – and views on uses of site.	DW/RP/AP

Asset Opportunities		
Other Opportunities	Explore other opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early Garage, Manchester Road - Old Police Station, Slaithwaite - Howgate Site, Slaithwaite 	AP/CVT
	Identify other opportunities through local knowledge/contacts.	CVT
	Discuss with KMC other asset opportunities in the Colne Valley	RP/CVT
Options Appraisal	Options Appraisal on site opportunities to identify preferred option.	AP/CVT

Funding Opportunities		
Opportunity	Action	Responsibility
Community Builders	Explore possibility of application	DTA/LM
Tudor Trust	Apply for Scoping and Feasibility Funding	AP/LM
Explore Other Options	Identify areas where funding may be required (short, medium & long term) and possible funding sources.	AP/LM

At the end of this initial phase we should be in a position whereby there is:

- Clear purpose for the group
- Confirmed membership and allocation of roles
- Clear idea of legal form/structure for the group – although this should only follow once a clear idea of the purpose and function of the Trust is established
- A site/asset opportunity
- Service and revenue opportunities identified
- Identification of and securing of resources or sources of funding for feasibility study and development of business case.
- Action Plan for next stage

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