



**Executive**  
16<sup>th</sup> January 2006

**Report from the Director of  
Environment and Culture**

For Action

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Groundwork Trust 'Western Extension' consultation  
proposal**

Forward Plan Ref: E&C-05/06-032

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 Initial discussions have taken place regarding the need for and desirability of a Groundwork Trust for the London Borough of Brent. The first step in taking this work forward involves a research exercise comprising a desktop feasibility study and stakeholder consultation.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of work undertaken to date and seeks Council support to progress this initiative through a stakeholder consultation exercise.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members of the Executive are recommended to:
- Note the Groundwork research and feasibility study attached as Appendix A.
  - Support the proposed stakeholder consultation exercise to be carried out in early 2006.
  - Agree that officers continue to work with Groundwork and bring a further report to the Executive to outline the findings and any proposed future Trust development in Brent.

### **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 Groundwork UK has an overall objective to work at a local level with partners to improve the quality of the environment, the lives of local people and the success of local businesses in areas in need. Its stated purpose is “to build sustainable communities through joint environmental action.”
- 3.2 A Groundwork Trust is an independent Charitable Trust which must have a defined area of benefit. Currently there are around fifty Trusts across the UK (including six in London) and these are all affiliated to the Groundwork UK national body.
- 3.3 In other areas, the benefits of having a local Groundwork Trust have included:
- an ‘on-the-ground’ delivery organisation for environmental improvements
  - an ‘arms length’ consultation organisation for community projects
  - attracting external funding from sources unavailable to the local authority
  - access to a network with a wide range of skills and expertise
  - ability to further develop and enhance local partnerships
  - established relations with regional and governmental bodies
- 3.4 To establish Groundwork coverage in any new local authority area requires a process of establishing “residual need”. This is because the Trust will attract some element of Central Government support and also has to accord with Groundwork UK’s national and regional priorities whilst meeting the priorities of the locality.
- 3.5 The Council and Groundwork, with partners, need to establish if there is a need for Groundwork in the Borough in terms of:
- Deprivation, environmental, social, and economic conditions
  - The capacity of existing organisations and structures
  - The possibilities and demand for an effective work programme that adds value.
  - Pilot projects which develop and test working relationships
- 3.6 The first phase of the research exercise (referred to as Phase One) includes two key elements:
- the analysis of documented evidence (secondary research) and
  - a wide ranging stakeholder consultation exercise (primary research)
- 3.7 The second phase of the process commences after the completion of the stakeholder research and the analysis has been presented to a Steering Group, which will then decide whether to progress to this stage. The key element in this part of the process is to establish the details of the business and operational planning of the future Trust including governance issues.
- 3.8 The key roles of the Steering Group set up to oversee the research process are:
- Bring to bear a range of local knowledge and stakeholder views.
  - Introduce an element of partnership and openness about the process

- Enable probing and searching of the emerging findings to test out the robustness of the work.

3.9 Generally speaking the Steering Group is not there to decide if it wants Groundwork or not but to ensure that a good research and consultation process is undertaken so that when the Council, its partners, Groundwork and the ODPM make the decisions they have the right information and range of views in front of them. In this regard, should the Executive agree to the recommendations of this report the steering group would have officer representation and a further report on its work would be presented back to the Executive for a decision on whether to proceed with establishing a Trust.

#### Progress to date

3.10 The desktop research and feasibility study has largely been completed. This is attached as Appendix A. This now remains an open research document to which extra data can be added, and to which the analysis of the stakeholder consultation will be added once that element has been carried out. It will form part of the justification in any submission to Groundwork/ODPM as well as information to help partners make their decisions and to inform priorities in any eventual programme.

3.11 It is clear from work done to date that the Borough and, in particular, certain identified priority areas, have the needs in terms of deprivation. The study also seeks to outline the role that Groundwork would have to fit alongside other partners and the niche it could potentially occupy.

3.12 Before committing itself to undertake further elements as outlined below Groundwork are keen to raise awareness of the work completed and seek the Council's support for the progressing with next steps.

#### Next Steps

3.13 The next key element is the stakeholder research. This is a consultation exercise, carried out by Groundwork, which would seek to elicit views from potential stakeholders in the Borough and those who may have a relevant interest in environmental regeneration. With the help of the Council a list would be drawn up, key partners and forums identified and drawn from public and voluntary sectors to start with (the private sector is usually contacted once the initial indications are known). In addition a widespread "broadcast" consultation through networks and mailing lists would allow those interested in taking part to do so. The research would be carried out by email, telephone, via online surveys, and through person to person interviews. In some cases a roundtable situation is also beneficial.

3.14 Typically, the stakeholder consultation list would include around 40 people and would be based on key council Members and officers, voluntary, private and other statutory contacts of which 20-25 may be interviewed.

3.15 It is important to realise that this is not a 'polling' situation, rather it is the test of a hypothesis or research question: "is there a case for a Groundwork to

operate in Brent taking into account needs and the extent of other existing or planned capacity”.

- 3.16 All this information and research will indicate if there is a case for Groundwork and, if so, identifies the sort of work that is needed, where and by whom. It also identifies areas or themes where Groundwork may not be needed (or needs to specialise in certain niches). Groundwork always works in partnership with the local Council and this research also helps the Council to decide on funding for Groundwork.
- 3.17 It is of note that Groundwork West London has already been active in Brent, it is currently running a host of events in Roe Green Park the main focus is the Kingsbury Lido, which will create an innovative recreational space for all local residents to enjoy. Groundwork is also working on sub-regional and ‘pilot’ initiatives as outlined in the attached study. Should the stakeholder consultation work further prove the ‘need’ for Groundwork one of the governance issues to be examined would therefore be the desirability of a single Trust to cover the western sub-region, including Brent.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 4.2 Groundwork (London Office) has funded the research work to-date and would similarly commission the stakeholder consultation phase referred to above.
- 4.3 Any final decision to proceed with establishing a Trust in Brent would however entail a core funding commitment from the Council as well as project and programme funding from a wide range of sources, potentially including the Council again. At this stage it is not possible to be specific as to how much this figure might be, however core funding from local authorities in other Trust areas in London is in the order of £50,000 to £75,000 per year.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
- 5.2 As stated earlier, any future Trust would be an independent body, however local authority representation on a Board would be essential.

#### **6.0 Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 At this stage it is not possible to make an accurate assessment of the diversity implications of such a proposal. This will be considered as the detail of this initial phase is developed and would be reported as part of the final report to the Executive.
- 6.2 Groundwork UK’s overarching principles however refer to building sustainable

communities and tackling disadvantage, with many of their local initiatives focusing on young people and deprived communities.

## **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

- 7.1 Aside from the staff time required to liaise with Groundwork and discuss the Trust development proposals, as outlined above, there are no staffing or accommodation issues arising from this report.

### **Background Papers**

#### **Groundwork UK:**

<http://www.groundwork.org.uk>

### **Contact Officers**

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers, or for more detail on the above initiatives should contact Keith Tallentire, Projects and Policy Unit, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Brent House, 349-357 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 6BZ.

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### **Richard Saunders**

**Director of Environment and Culture**

## **Appendix A**

### **Outline of Research Process – Groundwork in Brent**

A Groundwork Trust is an independent Charitable Trust which must have a defined area of benefit. To establish Groundwork coverage in any new local authority area requires a process of establishing “residual need”. This is because the Trust will attract some element of Central Government support and also has to accord with Groundwork UK’s national and regional priorities whilst meeting the priorities of the locality.

#### **What is the current process aiming to achieve?**

The Council and Groundwork, with partners, need to establish if there is a need for Groundwork in the Borough in terms of:

1. Deprivation, environmental, social, and economic conditions
2. The capacity of existing organisations and structures
3. The possibilities and demand for an effective work programme that adds value.
4. Pilot projects which develop and test working relationships

The first phase of the research exercise (referred to as Phase One) includes two key elements:

- i) the analysis of documented evidence (secondary research) and
- ii) a wide ranging stakeholder consultation exercise (primary research)

The second phase of the process commences after the completion of the Stakeholder research and the analysis has been presented to the Steering Group, which will then decide whether to progress to this stage. The key element in this part of the process is to establish the details of the business and operational planning of the future Trust including governance issues. This is discussed further later on in the paper.

A Steering Group is set up to oversee the research process.

#### **The key roles for the Steering Group**

- a) Brings to bear a range of local knowledge and stakeholder views.
- b) Introduces an element of partnership and openness about the process
- c) Enables probing and searching of the emerging findings to test out the robustness of the work.

Generally speaking the Steering Group is not there to decide if it wants Groundwork or not but to ensure that a good research and consultation process is undertaken so that when the Council, its partners, Groundwork and the ODPM make the decisions they have the right information and range of views in front of them.

## **Progress to date**

Of the three key elements progress has been made on first element which comprises the desktop research study set out in the paper being circulated. This now remains an open research document to which extra data can be added, and to which the analysis of the stakeholder consultation will be added once that element has been carried out. It will form part of the justification in any submission to Groundwork/ODPM as well as information to help partners make their decisions and to inform priorities in any eventual programme.

It is clear from work done to date that the Borough and, in particular, certain identified priority areas, have the needs in terms of deprivation. The paper also seeks to outline the role that Groundwork would have to fit alongside other partners and the niche it could potentially occupy.

## **Next Steps**

The next key element is the **stakeholder research**. This is a consultation exercise which would seek to elicit views from potential stakeholders in the Borough and those who may have a relevant interest in environmental regeneration. With the help of the Council a list would be drawn up, key partners and forums identified and drawn from public and voluntary sectors to start with (the private sector is usually contacted once the initial indications are known). In addition a widespread "broadcast" consultation through networks and mailing lists would allow those interested in taking part to do so. The research would be carried out by email, telephone, via online surveys etc. though we are keen to see people in person, to interview them. The interviews are based on a basic template but tailored to each person's roles and responsibilities. In some cases a roundtable situation is preferred.

Typically, the stakeholder consultation list would include around 40 people and would be based on key council Members and officers, voluntary, private and other statutory contacts of which 20-25 may be interviewed.

It is important to realise that this is not a polling situation where we count up the arguments for and against, rather it is the test of a hypothesis or research question: "is there a case for a Groundwork to operate in Haringey taking into account needs and the extent of other existing or planned capacity".

## **What could be the outcomes?**

The research will indicate if there is a case for Groundwork and, if so, identifies the sort of work that is needed, where and by who. It also identifies areas or themes where Groundwork may not be needed (or needs to specialise in certain niches). Groundwork always works in partnership with the local council and this research also helps the Council to decide on funding for Groundwork.

## **How are the work-plans and working relationships developed?**

Should the research show a need for Groundwork this can be translated into a proposal document which shows how Groundwork could be provided, its governance, work areas, partners funders etc over the first 6 years. This would include a core funding commitment from the Council as well as project and programme funding from a wide range of sources.

## **Outline of the work programme involved in the second phase of the process.**

Nearing the completion of the stakeholder consultation, work would proceed to develop shadow business planning to test if a Groundwork Trust could, in fact be viable, taking into account the desire to add value to and not take away from existing organisations' efforts. Once all the stakeholder work is complete, the Steering Group usually receives a shadow business plan which together with the analysis of the consultation exercise should enable a recommendation and proposal with any conditions etc to be agreed.

At this stage a checklist of issues of governance, involvement of the private sector etc needs to be gone through and decisions made in the light of the proposed work programme and the emerging strategies in the LB Brent, the West London Sub-region and for Groundwork across London.

It is then for the Council (and any partners who also wish to sign up to Groundwork) to seek approvals so that the bid may be submitted to Groundwork UK and, if their approval is given, then on to the ODPM. It is not possible to state when the Groundwork UK or the ODPM will give approval as they may require further work of more explanation/testing of options but experience suggests that Groundwork in Brent could be established as early as before the start of the next financial year.

Sometimes it is better to take longer in establishing the permanent arrangements and be more inclusive e.g. by going through neighbourhood and LSP theme groups too. Groundwork would become a permanent feature on the Brent landscape and its success or failure would depend as much on how it was setup and operated as to the types of work that it did. To make these judgements the Steering Group would need to see the outcome of the research and consultation and also receive feedback from Groundwork UK.

Pilot projects can take place without waiting for approval, within certain constraints some of these are already being undertaken by Groundwork West London.

Finally, it must be said that a possible outcome of the process is that Groundwork is not needed in Brent. The key thing is that we test the question and that we do so in a transparent and informed way. None of the time spent is wasted as all stakeholders will be much better informed as to the needs, capacity and inter-relationships in the Borough and, of course, better understanding of Groundwork.