

Report of: Financial and Asset Business Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 17th June 2006

Item No:

Title of Report : Jericho Boatyard



Summary and Recommendations



Purpose of report: To advise the Executive Board of the current situation in respect of property



Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Stephen Tall

Scrutiny Responsibility: Finance



Area(s) affected: Jericho

Report Approved by:



Portfolio Holder – Cllr S Tall

Leader of the Council – Cllr J Goddard



Strategic Directors – M Luntley and S Cosgrove

Business Manager Financial and Asset Management – P Gardner



Legal and Democratic Services – J Thomas

Neighbourhood Renewal – S Northey



Policy Framework: None

Recommendation: Members to note the current situation in respect of this site, and to ask Officers to keep a watching brief on the progress of the development, to encourage the provision of replacement boat repair and maintenance facilities, and to ensure that within the proposed redevelopment sufficient space for the Jericho Community Association redevelopment of their adjoining site is made available.



1. On the 21st November 2005 Full Council adopted a Motion which in summary indicated that:-
 - Council had expressed its concern at British Waterways' attempts to evict those currently residing at Jericho Boatyard;
 - British Waterways was asked to cease its attempts to evict boat dwellers who are currently preserving the function of the Jericho Boatyard.
2. The Chief Executive in December 2005 wrote to the site owners indicating that the Council's stance on boat dwellers is one of concern for their future security and for the preservation of canal and waterside facilities to serve users of the canal and river systems.
3. At the full Council meeting on 20th February 2006 Council again debated the future of boat dwellers on the Oxford Canal and the future of the Jericho Boatyard land. Council resolved
"To ask the Portfolio Holder to arrange for a report to be submitted as a matter of urgency to the relevant Council committee meetings containing full details of the costings and requirements for any potential purchase and development of the Jericho Boatyard land, and to advise the British Waterways Board of this decision and that the Council would want to achieve an amicable solution".
4. A further letter was then sent to British Waterways who agreed at that time to delay any action to evict the boaters who were then occupying the site.
5. Officers have since met with the ward councillors, former occupier of the repair facilities (Mr Goodlad), the Community Association, and British Waterways to establish the position with respect to the future of the site.
6. It was clear that British Waterways were intending to dispose of the property as soon as they could in their view, satisfactorily resolve the issues upon which the planning inspector had refused planning consent on appeal namely
 - Provision of suitable alternative facilities for boat repair and maintenance.
 - Sufficient land being excluded from the disposal and being transferred to the appropriate parties to allow the Jericho Community Centre to be redeveloped and extended on the adjoining site.
7. In the meetings with Mr Goodlad he confirmed that he had been granted a lease on one site by British Waterways, and had acquired a second site himself upon which repairs and fit out may be conducted. British Waterways have confirmed that the adjoining site operated by College Cruisers will be contracted to provide chandlery and pump out facilities.

8. The Community Association have confirmed, as of 27th June 2006, that they are in agreement with British Waterways regarding the site area to be allocated for community use as part of the planning requirements on the site and are currently seeking to agree terms for its transfer subject to confirmation with the Planning Authority that this satisfies the planning objective for the site in manner and process. It would appear that significant progress has been made since the appeal to resolve this item but has yet to be fully concluded.
9. During those discussions British Waterways put the site on the open market by way of a formal tender with a closing date of the 23rd April 2006.
10. We are now advised that the sale of the site has now been agreed and that the proposed purchasers are seeking to purchase the whole site and transfer the land for the community centre to the Community Association subject to finalising an agreement on that aspect of the transaction. British Waterways have therefore in the light of a binding offer to purchase the site, evicted the unauthorised occupiers from the site so as to be able to offer the purchasers vacant possession.
11. Members to note the current situation in respect of this site, and to ask Officers to keep a watching brief on the progress of the development, to encourage the provision of replacement boat repair and maintenance facilities, and to ensure that within the proposed redevelopment sufficient space for the Jericho Community Association redevelopment of their adjoining site is made available.

Background papers: None

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