

Report to:	TOURISM ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Mr John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser (Scrutiny)
Date of Meeting:	09 September 2020

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ADOPT AN ALLEY SCHEME

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update on the work undertaken by scrutiny members on the review of the Adopt an Alley Scheme currently in development.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the update;

2.2 To note that the finalised guidance and details of the Adopt an Alley Scheme's launch event will be circulated to all Councillors; and

2.3 To identify any further monitoring work to be undertaken on the proposed scheme.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure the Committee has an overview of ongoing work and to identify any areas for further scrutiny or monitoring.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 On 11 February 2020, Members of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee held a meeting to consider the proposed Adopt an Alley program.
- 6.2 The plan had been to support residents and community groups to adopt local alley ways and create community owned spaces in Blackpool. Ms Chloe Shore, Community Engagement and Partnership Manager, presented Members with the draft guidance document which had been developed following the success of a community project in an alley at Strawberry Gardens near to Belle Vue Place, Blackpool. The project had involved cleaning and restoring the alley so that it could be used and enjoyed by members of the local community. In order to facilitate other communities undertaking similar projects, the guidance outlined the support available from the Council for groups to adopt and improve their local alleys.
- 6.3 Support that could be offered by the Council included; determining the ownership of land, assistance in determining community priorities, signposting to relevant services and organising the collection of refuse from community litter picks. The aim of the guidance was to empower communities to take responsibility for spaces so that they could be used to the benefit of residents.
- 6.4 The Council would also seek to direct community groups interested in adopting alleys to the Open Spaces Network (OSN). This was a partnership operated by the Council's Parks Service which could assist in providing governance advice and links to potential funding streams.
- 6.5 The project at Strawberry Gardens had been started by an individual interested in improving their local area who had built up a community group of local like-minded residents to undertake the project.
- 6.6 In order to promote the program to local communities Ms Chore would be sending information to meetings such as Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings to highlight the program to residents. Work also had been undertaken to engage third sector organisation in helping promote the program and discussion had also taken place with the Houndshill Shopping Centre who had expressed an interest in an alley project that engaged local business and hoteliers.
- 6.7 Engagement with the various Friends Of Parks groups had also taken place through the OSN and a launch event, support by them and organised with the Revolution Youth Group. It was planned that this event would take place in April 2020.
- 6.8 The review panel noted that in some cases enthusiasm for community project could be dependent on a single individual who took a lead of behalf of others, noting that community groups often ceased to function upon the loss of such an individual.

- 6.9 The Council was aware that circumstances such as these could exist and that was why groups were encouraged to join the OSN. This was because the network required its members to institute governance arrangements and sign a code of conduct that aimed to ensure groups were sustainable in the long-term.
- 6.10 Members raised the issue of previous similar schemes to improve community spaces, such as a program to develop community play areas in alleys, recognising that these had not been successful. Ms Shore responded that she was aware of previous schemes to improve alley ways and had sought input from the Parks Service and Street Cleansing to ensure that this program was successful.
- 6.11 The guidance would link in with the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and upcoming Air Quality Strategy as part of the overall Council priorities to improve Blackpool's green environment.
- 6.12 A copy of the finalised Adopt an Alley guidance and information regarding the launch event would be shared with all Councillors to help them promote the program to residents.
- 6.13 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Legal considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Human resources considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Equalities considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Financial considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Risk management considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Ethical considerations:

13.1 None.

14.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

14.1 None.

15.0 Background papers:

15.1 None.