

**Report of the Director of City Development**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

**Subject: Home Farm Temple Newsam**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Temple Newsam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. The 2011/12 budget for the Parks and Countryside service included a saving of £100,000 from reductions in ancillary farming activities.
2. Initial proposals to realise this budget saving were subject to a City Development Scrutiny Board on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011, when a working group was established which submitted a report inviting Executive Board to consider the recommendations of Scrutiny Board following its enquiry.
3. It was resolved at the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 meeting of Executive Board that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board in order to further consider ways in which the operation of Home Farm can be developed in the future.
4. This report outlines a series of changes designed to focus the objectives of Temple Newsam Farm on the conservation of minority rare breeds, providing a valued visitor attraction for the public and improving the biodiversity of the estate by managing farmland within the curtilage of Temple Newsam Estate to high environmental standards.

## **Recommendations**

5. Executive Board is asked to approve the following :-

- Rationalisation of the current farming operations to Temple Newsam Estate only.
- Rationalisation of non-minority rare breed stock and store animals, whilst maintaining minority rare breeds and a marginal stock of visitor friendly breeds.
- Reduction in supplies and services and bespoke agricultural plant and machinery.
- Implement a farm staff restructure.

### **1 Purpose of this report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Executive Board of the principal changes that are proposed by the Parks and Countryside Service to the operation of Home Farm Temple Newsam, in light of the decision taken by full Council to include a saving of £100,000 from reductions in ancillary farming activities.

### **2 Background information**

2.1 The Parks and Countryside service has operational responsibility for the management of agricultural holdings within the Temple Newsam Estate which includes Home Farm and its accompanying visitor centre, along with additional outlying agricultural land.

2.2 The 2011/12 budget for the Parks and Countryside service included a saving of £100,000 from reductions in ancillary farming activities as agreed by full Council in February 2011.

2.3 A consultation document on specific proposals to deliver the budget saving was circulated in February 2011 to numerous stakeholders; including farm staff, Temple Newsam ward councillors, the Friends of Temple Newsam and the Rare Breeds Conservation Society. The White Park Cattle Society and Rare Breeds International made written representations to City Development Scrutiny Board and the proposals were discussed at their meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011, when a working group of Cllr Procter, Cllr Atha and Cllr Elliot was established. This reported back to Scrutiny Board on 17<sup>th</sup> May, accompanied by an officer commentary.

2.4 On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report inviting Executive Board to consider the recommendations of the former Scrutiny Board (City Development) following the conclusion of the Scrutiny Board's inquiry entitled, 'Review of Home Farm, Temple Newsam'.

2.5 It was resolved at the June 2011 meeting of Executive Board that the recommendations of the former Scrutiny Board (City Development) and the response provided by the directorate both be noted, and that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board in order to further consider ways in which the operation of Home Farm can be developed in the future.

### 3 Main issues

- 3.1 Since its inception as a publicly accessible visitor centre in 1979, Home Farm Temple Newsam is now considered to be the largest Rare Breed Survival Trust (RBST) approved farm in Europe. The farm has established a lasting legacy for conservation through the preservation of some of the rarest bloodlines of British farm animals, whilst also becoming a valued visitor attraction for the City of Leeds.
- 3.2 The consultation undertaken throughout this process has helped provide a clear direction on how Home Farm should develop in the future. In responding to the findings of the consultation process and by benchmarking with other RBST approved farm centres, the view of the service is that the farm should operate as a working farm specialising in the conservation and presentation of minority rare breeds. The farm will strive to operate to the highest environmental practices, whilst seeking to create an environment within which the farm can continue to flourish as a valued visitor attraction.
- 3.3 The changes that are proposed will make positive steps towards realising this vision and will provide the foundations for achieving a more sustainable budget position for the Farm. The initial reforms that are proposed can be categorised into 4 key areas which will then subsequently be explored in greater depth.
- Reduce the amount of agricultural land holdings to within the existing curtilage of Temple Newsam estate;
  - A rationalisation of cattle and sheep stock focusing on retaining minority rare breed animals;
  - Reduction in supplies and services and bespoke agricultural plant and machinery;
  - Staff restructure and realignment.
- 3.4 Reduce the amount of agricultural land holdings to within the existing curtilage of Temple Newsam estate.
- 3.4.1 Currently the Parks and Countryside service maintain agricultural land at 4 separate locations;
- Temple Newsam Estate
  - Lotherton Hall
  - Whinmoor Farm
  - Lineham Farm
- 3.4.2 The central operational base for the farm is Temple Newsam. Given the dispersed geographic spread of these sites, the proposal is to withdraw from agricultural activity at peripheral sites and focus on the Temple Newsam Estate. In practical terms this equates to a reduction in farm land holdings of approximately 30%. This will improve the efficiency of the farming operation by reducing both transport related costs and the amount of productive operational time lost from travelling to satellite landholdings.
- 3.4.3 Both Lotherton Hall and Whinmoor are at present subject to individual projects that are seeking approval to alter how these sites presently function. In addition, grass

farm land at Lineham Farm that sits outside of the curtilage of land that is already managed by the trust could feasibly be managed by an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party operator or by the Lineham Farm. Both officers and trustees of Lineham Farm have been consulted with on these proposals and they have expressed a desire to play a more proactive role in the management of these additional land holdings. Should Executive Board support proposals to focus agricultural activity on Temple Newsam Estate, representatives of Lineham Farm will be consulted on any proposals to determine the future management of these peripheral grass fields.

3.5 With regards to the management of remaining agricultural land holdings within Temple Newsam. There is a potential to significantly enhance biodiversity on the estate by employing a more environmentally focused approach to agricultural land management which will offer visitors and local residents alike a much enhanced visitor experience. The benefits of adopting this policy are ;

- Enhanced wildlife conservation;
- Maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character;
- Natural resource protection;
- Protection of the historic environment; and
- Promotion of public access and understanding of the countryside.

3.5.1 In practical terms, the application of these environmental farming practices would support proposals to plant and restore hedgerows and woodlands, promote biodiversity across the estate, operate a less intensive land management regime with more diverse grasslands, which could include wild flowers, with a much reduced emphasis on the use of nitrates. Furthermore, rare breeds and managing land using minority rare breeds creates natural environments within which these animals are able flourish in their natural habitats.

3.5.2 Adopting environmental management techniques can attract additional external funding. For example schemes such as Natural England's higher level stewardship programme are voluntary agreements from which farmers and land managers receive annual payments on top of their basic payments in return for managing their land in an environmentally sensitive way. A successful application to join such a scheme could potentially realise additional revenue streams, which could offset a proportion of any loss in subsidy from single farm payments by reducing agricultural landholdings.

3.6 A rationalisation of cattle and sheep stock focusing on retaining minority rare breed animals.

3.6.1 The management of sheep and cattle is both expensive and labour intensive. Notwithstanding that, what is clear from the consultation process undertaken is that part of the appeal of Home Farm Temple Newsam as a visitor attraction is that it functions as a working farm with livestock. Furthermore, the service recognises that Home Farm has established a legacy in rare breed conservation, and the role that Leeds has played in this field should be promoted and form part of the educational offer for those visiting the farm.

3.6.2 However, it should be noted that the decision to focus on Temple Newsam Estate and to forgo agricultural holdings at Lineham Farm, Whinmoor and Lotherton Hall will inevitably lead to a scaling back of livestock holdings due to the reduction in land available to sustain the herd. This presents as an opportunity to review the mix

of breeds held at the farm with greater emphasis given to those breeds that are at present held on the RBST watchlist.

- 3.6.3 Each year the RBST publishes a list designed to monitor the numbers and vulnerability of native breeds of farm animals. At the time this issue was first discussed at scrutiny, 53% of the cattle and 22% of sheep farmed at Temple Newsam were no longer listed at the RBST watch list as being critical, endangered, vulnerable, at risk or in the minority.
- 3.6.4 On that basis, proposals have been put forward that focus on rationalising non-minority rare breed stock and store animals, whilst maintaining minority rare breeds and a marginal stock of visitor friendly breeds. The table below summarises the initial proposals for reduction in livestock;

<b>Cattle and Sheep Holdings</b>	<b>Existing</b>		<b>Proposed</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Breeds</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Breeds</b>
<b>Cattle</b>	206	8	104	5
<b>Sheep/Goats</b>	166	8	106	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>10</b>

- 3.6.5 The outcome of this process will be that 85% of all sheep and 83% of all cattle remaining on the farm will be minority rare and native breeds as judged by the RBST watch list.
- 3.6.6 The proposals discussed above are in keeping with the recommendations made by the RBST as part of the consultation process, and leave future options open to review stocks contained in each breed, in line with the RBST approved minimum breeding group sizes for both cattle and sheep.
- 3.7 Reduction in supplies and services and bespoke agricultural plant and machinery.
- 3.7.1 As recognised by full Council, the difficult financial position of the Council means that cost saving measures should be proactively pursued at Home Farm. The more fundamental changes proposed above, provide the flexibility to reduce supplies and services budgets, and reduce the current stock of plant and equipment held on the farm account.
- 3.7.2 In keeping with the proposed rationalisation of both livestock and land holdings, a corresponding reduction in the actual spend on transport related costs and supplies and services spending will be implemented over the course of a full financial year.

### 3.8 Staff restructure and realignment

- 3.8.1 As emphasised in the Scrutiny Inquiry Report, staffing costs account for approximately 60% of the total expenditure for Home Farm Temple Newsam. It is therefore proposed that this specific area of the Parks and Countryside Service be restructured to realise a budget saving. The objective of this process will be to put in place a structure that provides sufficient specialist staff to manage the revised farm holding efficiently and effectively, but it will also serve to increase flexibility, through the introduction of new working practices including 5 over 7 working, that better

reflects the specific demands associated with operating in an agricultural environment.

- 3.8.2 The net effect of this process will be a reduction in total actual expenditure on staff related costs of 33%. Over half of the total savings initially proposed will be realised from a reduction in management and support staff.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 An extensive consultation process has been undertaken which has included meetings with existing staff, ward members, local residents groups, the friends of Temple Newsam estate, key stakeholders including the RBST and other groups who may have a vested interest in this process.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 Due regard to equality has been given when considering proposals included in this report. No significant equality issues were identified. An Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form has been completed and is referenced as background paper.

### **4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 This report does not impact on any council policies or city priorities.

### **4.4 Resources and Value for Money**

- 4.5 As was reported to scrutiny, in the 2009/10 financial year the net cost of farming activities to the Council was £347k. Implementing the proposals outlined in this report will result in the attainment of a £100k budget saving on ancillary farming activities as agreed by full council.

### **4.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.7 The decision to introduce a £100k budget saving on ancillary farming activities was approved by full Council in February 2011. Initial proposals outlining how the operation of Home Farm Temple Newsam could be reviewed in light of the need to realise any potential budget savings was subject to written representations to City Development Scrutiny Board and the proposals were discussed at their meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011, when a working group was established. This reported back to Scrutiny Board on 17<sup>th</sup> May, accompanied by an officer commentary. This report outlines in further detail the ways in which the service intends to alter the operation of Home Farm Temple Newsam to realise the budget savings as instructed by full council.

### **4.8 Risk Management**

- 4.8.1 The Scrutiny Inquiry Report published as part of the review of Home Farm Temple Newsam identified examples of where the current farm operation was inefficient. In areas such as staffing, the inquiry report emphasised the incompatibility with commercial farming enterprises. The predominant risk of not introducing the changes outlined in this report, are that it will not be possible to implement the

decision of full Council to save £100,000 from reductions in ancillary farming activities.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The measures proposed are designed to focus the farm on its founding principles of rare breed conservation whilst providing a valued visitor attraction. Due to its location on the urban rural fringe, Temple Newsam estate offers the residents of Leeds a unique landscape interface between town and country. By managing the farm less intensively and placing a greater emphasis on environmental farming practices there is the potential to significantly enhance biodiversity on the estate which will offer visitors and local residents alike a much enhanced visitor experience.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Executive Board is asked to approve the following :-

- Rationalisation of the current farming operations to Temple Newsam Estate only.
- Rationalisation of non minority rare breed stock and store animals, whilst maintaining minority rare breeds and a marginal stock of visitor friendly breeds.
- Reduction in supplies and services and bespoke agricultural plant and machinery.
- The Implementation of a farm staff restructure based on the principles outlined in 3.8.1.

## **7 Background documents**

7.1 Farming Operations Consultation Document

7.2 Review of Home Farm, Temple Newsam Scrutiny Inquiry Report

7.3 Response to the Review of Home Farm Temple Newsam Scrutiny Inquiry

7.4 Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form