

Gleadless Valley

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Meeting:	Gleadless Valley Regeneration Board
Meeting date:	Via circulation 26 th June 2025
Subject:	Post demolition site options for the John O’Gaunt pub
Author:	Patrick Harrison
Action required:	For information

Report purpose

To inform the board of options to be consulted on as part of the engagement plan for the demolition for the John O’Gaunt pub (JOG).

Executive Summary & Recommendation

On 2nd June, the Board requested that before approving the demolition of the pub, it wanted to see details of a revised engagement approach that includes engagement with the local community on the future use of the space in both the short and longer term. This paper and the accompanying engagement plan set out those details.

The Gleadless Valley Regeneration Team is developing long term plans for the Gaunt shopping area (these will be coming to the Board over the coming months) but it is not recommended that engagement with the community over these plans is confused by linking them to demolition of the JOG. While the engagement messaging will include a confirmation that long term plans are being developed and will include community facilities, it is proposed that the engagement focusses on the short-term options for the JOG site.

Since the Board meeting, the Gleadless Valley Regeneration Team has been developing options for the meanwhile use of the JOG site after demolition.

The projected cost of demolition is £172,346 out of the £268,000 insurance payout. There is potential to use the site as a meanwhile space for community use and utilise the remaining budget to facilitate this.



This work has concentrated on working with several youth focussed organisations in the Gaunt area (GV Youth Hub and Happy Saplings) to develop plans for a young peoples focussed space. The 189 Project (Jock Stephenson) have also been party to these conversations.

Planning have indicated that they would be willing to grant permission for a meanwhile use of the space of between 3-5 years whilst more long-term regeneration plans are realised.

Based on this, we have developed a suggested option which involved developing a community managed space for youth activities that can act as a starting point for the development of a larger adventure playground type facility in GV as part of the longer-term regeneration activities in GV.

We aim to engage the local community with this suggested option as part of the engagement plan for the demolition of the John Gaunt. As part of this, we have also developed a list of other potential projects that could be developed on the site if there is strong opposition on the suggested option. It is important to note that whilst there is a suggested option that has been developed with GV stakeholders and aims to meet a need in the area (young people provision), each option will be presented on its own merits and the views of all will be heard. This approach is covered in the attached engagement plan.

Each option is described below along with an initial appraisal of each option.

The Board is asked to:

1. Approve the demolition of the John O'Gaunt building (subject to formal Sheffield City Council internal approvals).
2. Endorse the list of options for meanwhile use of the space set out in the paper.
3. Endorse the accompanying Engagement Plan, which will ensure resident feedback shapes the demolition programme and subsequent site redevelopment.

Preferred option (Option 1): Development of a community managed youth orientated space

In this option, a meanwhile use would be developed that builds on existing community provision for children and young people already taking place in GV. It would utilise the space created by demolition of the pub and the £95,654 left over from the insurance payout to facilitate the expansion of two community-led young people's focussed organisations in GV.

We would work with the Happy Saplings under 5's playgroup run out of the 189 Project at Gaunt precinct and the GV-wide GV Youth Hub, a recently developed community interest company that runs the Holidays and Food (HAF) provision in GV along with numerous pop-ups play sessions and have been mentored by the Sheffield Play Partnership.

The concept is to build a fenced off, supervised area with indoor space and toilet facilities (Portakabin/shipping containers) which is linked to an outdoor area developed into a forest school/adventure playground type space. The space would be under community management with ownership remaining with Sheffield City Council and would be a locked facility to reduce potential for anti-social behaviour. In the mornings, the Happy Saplings group would utilise the space for expanded under 5's activities, which is lacking in the area, and could act as a creche facility for any community development activities taking place at Gaunt precinct, for example adult learning courses.



In the afternoon, the space would be utilised by the GV youth hub for play/youth club sessions for over 5's (target audience 5-14 years old) and to develop Ofsted-registered wrap around after school play orientated facilities along with HAF provision in the summer holidays. At the weekends, there is potential to link into community events such as market days/fun days which run regularly at Gaunt precinct.

This looks to build on work already been undertaken by organisations in GV and strengthen capacity and collaboration between these organisations.

Prior to this opportunity at the JOG, the GV Youth Hub and Sheffield Play Partnership (SPP) had submitted (May 2025) a proposal for a supervised space within GV and the regeneration team/Local Area Committee were already scoping out sites and looking to support the GV Youth Hub in developing a business plan for such a space; it seems logical to explore the JOG site for this. Alongside the capital works being proposed (inc. grant to set the space up), if this suggested option were to progress, a similar approach of business plan development would be taken with Happy Saplings over the next 6-9 months.

As part of these business plans, further funding would be sought to increase activities on the site along with developing sustainable revenue income streams. This business plan support will include linking them with Business Sheffield, colleagues such as Rob Maylan at Sheffield City Council who has expertise in community funding.

Further, Sheffield Play Partnership (SPP) will support submission of Ofsted registration which will allow longer sessions to take place without parental supervision (Happy Saplings) along with funding for wrap around care to be accessed (GV Youth Hub). SPP have also already stipulated they are willing to provide advice on site development, including health and safety and developing co-designed terms and conditions of use.

Developing these business plans would allow both organisations to build capacity and skills along with moving to predominantly paid rather than a volunteer model whilst keeping the cost of access for the local community free or to a bare minimum (e.g., Pitsmoor adventure playground and Highfield adventure playground are both free to enter).

The purpose of this development is to be intentionally 'low tech' and, given the intended meanwhile use of the space, to incorporate as many parts as possible that are easily moveable to other spaces.

Early scoping work suggests that the main requirements for the site (with ball-park cost estimates) would be:

Item	Initial cost estimate
Planning application	£240
2m high weld mesh fencing around site. The current fencing will be taken down during demolition and a new fencing will be put in place with an extended boundary to create more space inside (existing car parking will be retained). We will work with the demolition contractor to save as much of the current fence as possible to save on costs and	£12,000 - £15,000



wate. Panels from the old fence that cannot be reused could be saved for re-use on another site in future.	
9x3m office block Portakabin which range from	£6,000 -£10,000 + £800 delivery
A toilet block £3-4000	£3,000 - £4000
Reconnection of services (water and electricity) – cost based on initial quotes from utility companies, hopefully will be less or we could consider using rechargeable power packs.	£25,000
Health and Safety assessments carried out by Adventure Play Inspectors Association every 3 months for 3 years (£450 each)	£5,400
Site and dynamic risk assessment training by APIA for 6 members of staff	£1,800
Sinking fund held by SCC for repairs to the infrastructure on the site (e.g., fence panels becoming damaged, repairs to locks etc, Portakabin repair etc.)	£15,000
Sinking fund to cover any management costs and bills that are not covered by rental fees from the community groups	£5,000
Bin collection (1x 240L weekly collection) for 3 years	£3,000
10% contingency on the above	£8,500
TOTAL	£85,740 - £93,500

Based on the initial demolition cost estimate, there should be c£95K left over from the insurance payout which would cover these costs.

Any remaining funds would be awarded to Happy Saplings and the GV Youth Hub via a grant agreement to transform the site into a 'low-tech' child friendly space, examples of which are shown in the figure below. Happy Saplings and GV Youth Hub would be expected (and supported) to raise additional funds from other sources e.g. Lottery and charitable trusts.

Should the remaining funding from the insurance payout not cover the initial costs of the project (for example because the demolition or the project cost more than estimated or because the insurance payout has to cover historic costs such as business rates incurred on the vacant pub), any shortfall would have to be covered from the main Gleadless Valley Regeneration Project budget.





As case studies, similar sites can be found at the [Gwenfro Valley Adventure Playground, Wrexham](#) and [The Addy in Knottingley](#).

The space would remain in Sheffield City Council ownership with Happy Saplings and GV Youth Hub having agreements to utilise the space for young people's orientated activities between specific hours of the day (e.g., Happy Saplings between the hours of 9am-1pm and GV Youth Hub between the hours of 1pm-6/7pm). There is also potential for the council to utilise the space, for example, the Family Hub and Youth Services.

To cover the cost of the management of the facility, electricity, water and any business rates, a nominal fee would be charged per hour (in line with other community buildings in the area such as the Terry Wright Community Centre or the GV Hub). We could also consider providing a lease on the site to a local organisation to manage which may be more efficient.

In terms of liability and health and safety, there are several adventure playgrounds in London Borough of Hackney that are either run by the local authority or funded via the local authority and run at arm's length. This offers us different models that could be adopted and the SPP are currently facilitating a meeting between Hackney council and Sheffield City Council to discuss these different models.

A code of conduct on using the space would be co-developed with the organisations using the space so there are clear expectations of how the space will be utilised that puts child safeguarding as the top priority.

Positives

- It provides a space exclusively for children that is supervised to reduce ASB in the area and builds community cohesion. Both case studies above demonstrate this with more local examples being [Pitsmoor Adventure Playground](#) and [Highfield Adventure Playground](#).



- It strengthens community development activities at Gaunt and allows for capacity building in local organisations.
- Creating a young people focussed outdoor space with forest school type activities can act as a stepping stone to the further exploration of the naturalistic greenspaces in the area for play and recreation by families (i.e. building confidence in outdoor play).
- It is next to the bus route and has car parking so is reasonably accessible from different areas of GV.
- Such facilities act more than just play spaces, with the supervised nature of the space allowing for informal conversations and support to wider community issues thus become community anchor spaces.
- Due to the supervised nature of these spaces with trained playworkers, play is more inclusive for all.
- There is potential to link this to other community development activities at Gaunt Shops. For example, the food pantry and the potential of a community kitchen would link well with after-school wrap around initiatives and HAF provision.
- Given the University of Sheffield/Sheffield Hallam University (in collaboration with Regather and GV Wildlife Trust) have obtained a 4 year grant that will be focussed on GV and have a base at Gaunt, having both universities in such close proximity to a site offering wrap-around after school activities offers great potential to link into widening participation initiatives run by both academic institutions. This could feed directly into increased attainment (e.g., via the [Chemboost programme](#) ran by chemistry at Sheffield Hallam University to help students in disadvantaged areas).

Negatives

- It is not an open site, unlike a playground, thus not always accessible.
- It is close to housing so may represent a noise issue.
- Being more than just a playground, it needs continued funding for running costs to keep it functioning.
- Having wrap-around after-school activities may create traffic congestion when children are picked up from the site.
- There is potential for ASB behaviour to develop when young people congregate as the site closes.

Risks

- With the space being supervised, albeit by the community, it could be perceived that it is not for the wider community.
- It would require a planning application and planning could object due to the proximity to nearby housing.
- The initial cost estimates for demolition and/or the new facility could be exceeded.
- Whilst the £95K would pay for the capital works and a grant to create a usable space, it would not provide a revenue stream for both organisations and there is a risk that the development could suffer a lack of use.



- If successful, the community could become attached to facility and resistant to redevelopment as part of the wider regeneration programme

Mitigation

- An engagement plan has been put in place to showcase plans to the wider community. Additionally, both organisations are embedded and trusted in the local community.
- In terms of proximity to housing, planning colleagues have stated that as the site was a former pub, noise would be expected from the site. However, mitigation would need to take place along with a noise assessment. Mitigation could include managing the times of use of the site and (for example) sound barrier lining on the inside of the fence.
- Should costs exceed the insurance payout, a small amount of funding from the regeneration programme budget could be made available to cover the difference.
- Along with the capital investment proposed, business plans are being developed with both Happy Saplings and GV Youth Hub (see below) to support their continued growth (e.g., Ofsted registration).
- It will be made clear through the engagement that this presents an opportunity to develop a prototype community space in the short term that, if successful, can be incorporated into the future regeneration of the area (in a different location).
- Potential issues around congestion and ASB could be mitigated by staggering pickup times and organising [walking buses](#) to get children home safely.

Alternative options

While the team's efforts have been concentrated on working with local community groups to develop the option set out in detail above, it is possible that there will be those in the local community who do not support this option. We have therefore explored other options to include within the planned community engagement process.

Option 2: Demolish JOG and leave as a grassed area

Summary

Option 1 is to leave the area as amenity grass with the remaining £95K from the insurance payout saved for other projects within the regeneration programme.

Positives

- This option would leave a pleasant short mown grassed area for informal community use or events taking place at Gaunt, for example, the monthly markets or family fun days.
- c£95 would be left over from the insurance money to be spent on an unspecified project in future.

Negatives

- There is no shortage of short mown amenity grass in GV, therefore, it would not offer much tangible added community benefit beyond the demolition of an unsightly structure.
- There is a local desire for provision for young people in the area which this option would not deliver.



Risks

- Given the JOG was once an important community asset, there is a risk that if the £95K left over from the insurance payout was not spent in that area, the community surrounding the site would feel that they have lost out.
- As was raised by the Board on the 2nd of June, leaving it as a grassed site may be perceived that there is no plan for the site which would reflect badly on the wider regeneration programme itself (i.e., removal of a (albeit derelict) community asset without any additional provision).

Option 3: Develop an open access play area

Increased play facilities for young people have consistently been highlighted throughout the regeneration process by the community; thus, it is feasible to consider the development of a play area on the site. A play area with play equipment targeting a range of ages (e.g. 2-14) could be developed.

Positives

- It would provide a children-focussed recreational space which has been identified as a clear need throughout GV and in the Gaunt are in particular.
- It could increase footfall in the Gaunt area and create a more family feel to the area.
- It would be free to use at all times of the day.

Negatives

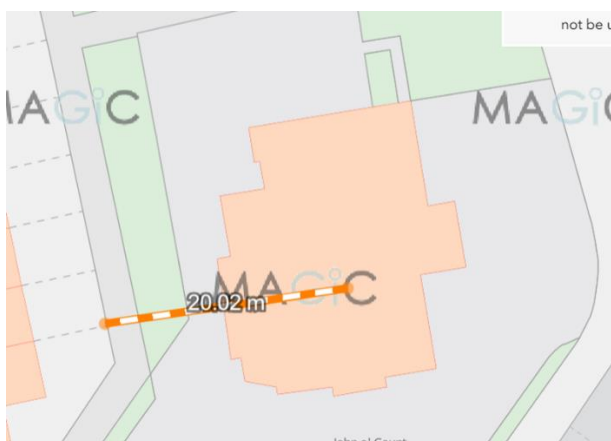
- The site boundary is only around 13 metres from nearby houses and less than 7 metres from their back gardens.



- Whilst there is nothing in planning that stipulates a set distance a play zone is from housing there are industry standards (see below), based on the size and type of the activity zone. Given these, it would be possible to develop a 10x10m or 20x20m playground as this could sit 5 or 20m from the housing boundary.

Equipped/designated play areas	LAP	0.01ha	10 x 10 metres (minimum activity zone of 100sqm)	5m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings
	LEAP	0.04ha	20 x 20 metres (minimum activity zone of 400sqm)	20m minimum separation between activity zone and the habitable room façade of dwellings
	NEAP	0.1ha	31.6 x 31.6 metres (minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm comprising an area for play equipment and structures & a hard surfaced area of at least 465sqm (the minimum needed to play five-a-side football))	30m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	MUGA	0.1ha	40 x 20 metres	30m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings





- Given that playgrounds are known sites for young people to congregate in the evening and ASB is a known issue within the area (GV average across 7 LSOAs is 26.7 incidents /1000 residents compared to Sheffield average of 18), there is a risk that normal behaviour of young people congregating could tip into ASB-type behaviour and be detrimental to residents in proximity during the evening, especially as this would be an unsupervised space.
- There are significant cost constraints with a budget of £95K. For comparison, a recent stage 1 cost estimate for a baby and toddler orientated playground is estimated to be £135,000 with initial feasibility fees of £8,200. In terms of equipment this consisted of: (i) a 4-bay swing, (ii) small child's roundabout, (iii) a springie, (iv) a seasaw (v) an inclusive trampoline and (iv) a small playhouse with landscaping and impact surfacing making to match.
- The density of play equipment is determined by the fall space around it, so larger pieces of equipment require larger fall spaces. The budget constraints and the limited size of the site (approximately 40x20m) would likely result in a small playground predominantly aimed at younger children.
- It is in proximity to a busy road, being approximately 23m from the centre of the site to the road edge; therefore, barrier fencing would be needed (4ft) for safety which would be a significant cost (the play area described above already had fencing in place). Given the industry standard of 20m for a play zone from housing boundaries, it would lead to any playground being closer to the road boundary.





- Due to the complexity of playground design, the Council's internal design team (Capital Delivery Service) would need to be involved. This would lead to feasibility/concept design costs and a significant increase in the length of time it would take to get something on the site due to the necessity to move through the RIBA design stages. For example, the playground mentioned earlier is programmed to take 18 months from concept design to build, meaning it would be 2027 before a playground would be on the site as a minimum. Given that this is likely to be a meanwhile space whilst regeneration plans are drawn up and funding sought for the local centres, it is unlikely that the community would have much benefit if it were only realistically going to be in place by mid to late 2027 which seems a waste of public money.

Risks

- Given the proximity of housing and the chance of ASB activities taking place in an evening on unsupervised play equipment, it may face significant local opposition.
- Given the standard advice on playground installation from housing boundaries coupled with the small budget, it would be difficult to develop a play area in the space left that would meet community needs thus maybe perceived as a waste of money.
- Further, Planning colleagues have indicated that they will only grant temporary planning permission (3-5 years). There is a risk of it being seen to waste public money if it takes a minimum of 18 months to get a playground on the site only for it to be taken out within a couple of years.
- Creating a play space may create issues for development of the area moving forward. If a publicly accessible playground is installed within a green and open space, it would be up to the council to demonstrate that the facility is no longer needed for it to be removed. This may impact on the longer-term regeneration plans for the site.

Option 4: A community garden/space for nature

There is an established community garden across the road at the Methodist Church which is maintained as part of the social prescribing People Keeping Well initiative by the Heeley Trust. There is



potential to extend this across the road and create a community garden on the space with seating for people to relax in.

Positives

- It would create a more welcoming feel at an important gateway site and build on the successful community garden at the Methodist Church.
- It could supply community grown produce to the food pantry (189 project) and link to Regather's project at Gaunt thus strengthening what is happening in the area.
- It would create a space for the community to come together.
- It would add to the biodiversity of the area.
- It could provide an area for local groups such as the Happy Saplings to develop outdoor activities.

Negatives

- There is only a small team of (dedicated) volunteers and 1 member of paid staff who manage the garden at the Methodist Church currently, extending this over to the other side of the road would create capacity issues for both spaces unless more volunteers could be encouraged to get involved.
- From a planning perspective, developing the site for biodiversity on a temporary basis would mean the biodiversity value of the site would need to be factored into any future planning application, and 10% net gain on that delivered as part of the permanent consent.

Risk

- ASB issues if seating is included
- That a community garden is established but over the medium to long term volunteer numbers do not increase enough to maintain the site and it becomes overgrown and untidy.

Mitigation

- Funding could be used to increase management of the site either via the current provider (Heeley Trust) or other stakeholders in the area (e.g. Regather or Heeley City Farm)
- Annual crops could be grown to mitigate the BNG potential of the site.

