



To: Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places: Councillor Carina O'Reilly
Report by: Simon Payne, Director of Environment
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 11th July 2014
Wards affected: All

CREATING A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR COLDHAMS COMMON

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

The Executive Councillor for Sports, Arts and Public Places at Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 10th January 2013, committed to engage local users and stakeholders in the formation of a management plan for Coldhams Common.

Officers have used national guidance relating to community engagement on the management of Common land.

An initial consultation has been undertaken to identify and collect the views of all stakeholders and respondents.

A further consultation is now proposed detailing Issues and Options for consideration. It is intended to allow opportunities for greater narrative and expression of interest to reach broad consensus on a range of management options.

The subsequent management plan will be considered for adoption by Community Services Scrutiny Committee in the autumn.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- a) To approve the content and publications of the Issues and Options paper for consultation detailed at Appendix A.
- b) To instruct Officers to draft a Management Plan for Coldhams Common based on the outcomes of consultations; for future consideration by Scrutiny Committee.

3. Background

Cambridge City Council is currently working on the development of a comprehensive management plan for Coldhams Common, to help manage this important site more effectively.

Officers are aware there are some issues that need to be tackled at present, but also wish to proactively plan for the future of the Common, to ensure that the Common continues to be managed effectively.

Officers have consulted extensively with local residents, key stakeholders and interest groups, including, environmental groups, and site users. A recent independent consultation completed in early 2014 had a total of 704 responses, including 21 from representatives of local groups and organisations. A report summarising all responses has been published and is available as a background paper to this report.

The consultation was conducted independently and was intended to:-

- explore perceptions of the Council's role and performance in managing, protecting and enhancing the common;
- identify how people used the site,
- the issues that a management plan would need to address, and
- the challenges facing the common that demand a strategic response from the Council.

The Council has also commissioned a botanical survey of the site by the local Wildlife Trust, this was undertaken in 2013 and included their professional recommendations as to how best manage the various habitats to protect and enhance wildlife and biodiversity. This report is also available as a background paper to this report.

Officers have considered various management options against stake holder views, legislative duties and management recommendations, to produce the Issues and Options paper set out at Appendix A. This document is in two parts, the first sets out the key issues that have emerged from the recent consultation, together with ways in which those issues could be addressed. The second is a draft template for the final management plan that can be populated following the proposed second round of consultation.

The Issues & Options consultation will allow Officers to select from an informed position, the most appropriate option or range of options that could deliver broad consensus amongst all stakeholders and users.

The draft management plan will be considered by a future committee for approval, adoption and implementation.

The approved management plan will include a programme of short, medium and long term actions. The management plan will become an integral part for the Streets & Open Spaces operational plan, that will guide officers and stakeholders in the management and maintenance of the common.

4. Implications

(a) **Financial Implications**

There is no financial implication currently identified. A range of costed options and actions will be detailed in the final management plan.

(b) **Staffing Implications**

There is no staff implication currently identified. The final management plan will consider staff resource needed to develop or deliver a broad range of options and actions.

(c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed on a range of options and actions identified in any proposed final management plan.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

- +L: The proposal has a low positive impact. Improved management of the common will enable species to better adapt and disperse in response to a changing climate. Increased appreciation and use of the space by local people for quiet recreation will reduce the need to travel by car to more distant green spaces for exercise or to experience nature.

(e) **Procurement**

This consultation is being under by Officers from Streets and Open Spaces.

(f) **Consultation and communication**

This report seeks approval to publish a second consultation to select the most appropriate option(s) through analysing the pros and cons and seeking to reach broad consensus.

The consultation will be advertised through press releases, signage on Coldhams Common on all entrances; and sent directly to groups who responded to the first consultation.

An article on the consultation and management plan will go to all City Residents in the summer edition of Cambridge Matters, inviting all City residents to have their say.

The consultation will be made available on line via the City Council website, hard copies will be available upon request.

Comments and responses received will be redacted to remove personal information or information that could identify individuals or groups and published in a summarising report.

Observations or additional options that are proposed will be considered and may or may not be included in the draft management plan.

(g) Community Safety

The proposed Issues and Options paper further explores possible solutions regarding safety. The initial consultation specifically explored people's perceptions of site safety. The majority of site users felt safe using the common during the day but less so after dark.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Managing Coldhams Common. A report for CCC by Phil Back Associates Ltd. March 2014
- Coldhams Common Habitat Survey & Recommendations. A report for CCC by BCN Wildlife Trust. September 2013.
- A Common Purpose. A guide to Community Engagement for those contemplating management on Common Land. Revised edition 2012.

6. Appendices

Appendix A - Issues & Options Consultation on creating a Management Plan for Coldhams Common (2014 – 2020)

Appendix B – Maps to accompany the Issues and Options Consultation

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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