



Cambridge City Council

To: Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation
Report by: Head of Streets and Open Spaces
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 14/10/ 2010

Proposals for the improvement and enhancement of Cherry Hinton Hall Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In 2009 a series of workshops were carried out with local residents and a report commissioned to examine usage, needs, and the likely improvements needed at Cherry Hinton Hall.
- 1.2 Officers have worked with a series of key stakeholders to consider the future use of an area previously occupied by the former propagation centre in the centre of the Cherry Hinton Hall. In addition to this, stakeholders were asked to consider the whole park for improvement and enhancement. Both of these approaches have influenced the design of the masterplan which is detailed in Appendix A.
- 1.3 On the 13th May 2010, South Area Committee, considered the draft masterplan and agreed the inclusion of questions in the consultation on the principle of creating a City Farm on the former propagation site. To facilitate these questions a proposal was submitted by City Farm¹ as set out in Appendix B.
- 1.4 A public consultation has been undertaken on the draft masterplan, and a report has been prepared detailing the findings, making recommendations and this is attached as Appendix C.
- 1.5 There is evidence to support the view that the masterplan has found wide acceptance and can be approved on this basis.
- 1.6 The City Farm concept, however, has substantial support and cannot be ignored just because it did not form part of the initial scoping discussions nor feature in the masterplan. There is, though, limited detail on how this may impact on the site and on other Masterplan content, and therefore a feasibility study should be undertaken, to

¹ <http://www.cambridge-city-farm.org.uk/>

determine whether a City Farm is viable within a reasonable footprint in Cherry Hinton Hall, or indeed whether a different location might be preferable.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to: -

- a) Approve the components of the masterplan set out at paragraph 4.5;
- b) To instruct officers to undertake a project appraisal of the masterplan for future consideration by Community Services Scrutiny Committee;
- c) Authorise officers to deliver the ChYpPS² Big Lottery funded elements of the plan around the pond area;
- d) Support the principle of a City Farm and to instruct officers to work with the City Farm Project to prepare a feasibility study; and
- e) To liaise with the Folk Festival project team to integrate the masterplan with operational requirements of the Folk Festival.

3. Background

3.1 The former propagation centre compound in the centre of the Hall grounds has been fallow since its demolition and there have been discussions about future land use.

3.2 A report entitled “Understanding usage, needs, and improvements at Cherry Hinton Hall” – Appendix D was commissioned in January 2009 and had the following key objectives: -

- a) To examine how people utilise the park, and to see which groups of people are well served, and which are less well served, by the park as it currently stands;
- b) To examine which facilities in the park require improvement to meet the needs and expectations of those who use the park for different purposes;
- c) To explore possible future uses of the former propagation centre, and to gauge public and stakeholder interest in a range of alternative possibilities.

² Children and Young Peoples Youth Participation Service

- 3.3 The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall group was established during 2009 and has been a key stakeholder along with several others. They met regularly and worked with the City Council to develop a clear list of priorities for improvements. This included a stakeholder meeting in January 2010 which helped to formulate the overall objectives.
- 3.4 The primary objective is to retain the character of the Park, whilst improving its fabric elements of hard and soft landscape to create the new layouts and replace the essential public buildings
- 3.5 A sketch masterplan was formulated and also included elements of a pre-approved (Community Services Scrutiny 01/07/10) ChYpPS lottery funded project in the area surrounding the pond (creation of a wildflower meadow, seating, interpretation boards, pond dipping platform and Kingfisher reflection area).

4. Consulting on the Masterplan

4.1 Public consultation on the draft masterplan commenced on 24th July 2010 and closed on 6th September 2010. The consultation was publicised prior to the period and following a press release received coverage through local media sources. The Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall delivered 2500 leaflets in the Cherry Hinton area, which also contained details of the consultation and the masterplan itself. Respondents were asked to return using one of the following methods: -

- Online by visiting the Cambridge City Council web pages;
- On site marquee days on 24th July (Cherry Hinton Community Fair – Cherry Hinton Village Centre), 21st August (Pink Festival – Cherry Hinton Hall) and 25th August (ChYpPS Big Wednesday – Cherry Hinton Hall);
- On the new Cherry Hinton Hall notice board (from 16th August - date of board installation);
- By postal return of requested questionnaire; and
- By e:mail.

A total of 288 responses were received.

4.2 Consultation feedback

There is strong support for the objectives of the Masterplan, both overall in relation to the ethos and nature of the park, and at the more detailed level. Over 90% of respondents agree at least in part with what the Masterplan is seeking to achieve, and at least half – usually more – agree fully with the stated objectives.

There is also strong agreement that the Masterplan's ideas are a good way of delivering these objectives. Between 80 and 90% of respondents agree at least partly with the Masterplan's proposals, both at the overall level and at the more detailed level; however, support is less strongly voiced in some areas.

- There is strong support for the masterplan's ideas on the pond area, services and facilities, and on footpaths;
- Full support is less forthcoming on the hall and propagation site, but the masterplan is at least partly supported by an overwhelming majority in all cases;
- The overall objective of retaining the character of the park, whilst improving its fabric, facilities and in particular biodiversity attracts strong support;
- Other ideas are forthcoming, in particular a City Farm project for which there is strong and enthusiastic support both from individuals and organisations. It is at the same time evident that this project would not be supported by the Friends Group membership; and
- Several respondents also mentioned forms of art, or space for art, as desirable.

4.3 Impact of the masterplan on Cambridge Folk Festival

The current layout of the festival is such that both main and behind the scenes infrastructure as well as camping and other concession stands occupy the whole Park.

Since the demolition of the propagation units in 2007 the festival has re-configured some of its layout to make use of the current vacant space where the glasshouses used to stand. Whilst it is desirable for the Folk Festival to continue the new configuration, one of the main aims of the masterplan is to consider this area and bring this part of the park back into public use.

Arts and Recreation are responsible for the organisation of the Festival and is a key stakeholder in the process. Concerns have been raised about the masterplan proposals and potential impact on the Event. The main areas of concern relate to the proposals on the former propagation site and are as follows: -

- The proposed events space, orchard, wildflower areas, community garden area, adjoining trees, building and yard, will have an impact on ability to be able to deliver the Festival, due to restricted access and area available within the former propagation area and the loss of concrete roadway will result in increased annual costs for roadway.

- The proposed trees planting along boundaries and within main field will restrict the placement of certain infrastructure. Trees to be planted further into the field will impact on views of stage and placement of production facilities. Overall impact will be a restriction in Festival capacity.

The Folk Festival project team have raised other concerns, but these can be overcome with slight modifications and do not impact on the ability to deliver the masterplan.

4.4 Proposal by City Farm

The inclusion of the City Farm proposals was added to the consultation, after drafting of the masterplan, and in response to a question raised at South Area Committee on the 13th May 2010. The Masterplan does not therefore include any indication of the size or scale of the proposed City farm, and it does not make clear to respondents how it would impact on the available space.

Consultation on the masterplan has shown that whilst there is strong evidence to support the principles for the City Farm, Officers have reservations that the scale and nature of what is proposed have not been made fully clear at this point, and that a better understanding of what a City farm may demand in terms of space, environmental impact, and sustainability is needed.

It is therefore suggested that further feasibility work is carried out to consider the suitability of Cherry Hinton Hall and that of other sites, to accommodate a City Farm, and that Community Services Scrutiny Committee considers this at a later date.

4.5 Proposed masterplan components.

It is recommended that a project appraisal be completed to include: -

- a) The removal of existing planting to the front of the Hall to open up views of the building. A historical arrangement will be restored with a gravel forecourt and parterre rose garden;
- b) Restoration of lake area to promote the biodiversity of both the water and surrounding fauna;
- c) Incorporation of pond dipping platform, seating, barbecue area and kingfisher reflection area which has pre-approved funding via the Children's and Youth Participation Service;
- d) Re-alignment of existing pathways and incorporation of new paths to the perimeter to create a circular route;
- e) To open out the central area incorporating into public space including a café facility, performance space and soft landscape;

- f) The relocation of the current toilet provision to a more appropriate and accessible position; and
- g) To further consider the current building in the centre compound and create a new community facility with the construction more in keeping with the Hall building itself.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 The masterplan has been provisionally costed using real measurements/ quantities and using current market prices. The masterplan costing are in two stages, full estimated costings are provided as Appendix E.

- Stage One – Seeks to address overall objective of retaining the character of the park, whilst improving its fabric elements of hard and soft landscape to create the new layouts and replace the essential public buildings
- Stage Two – Addresses the current City Council service area/yard with the suggestion of a new community building. The existing building is currently leased to the Dog Warden Service and Cambridge Employment foundation Service. This element deemed desirable rather than essential and has therefore been costed as a separate item.

5.1.2 It is envisaged that funding for the masterplan will come from a number sources including The Heritage Lottery (parks for people), WREN (landfill tax), Big Lottery (pre-approved sum available), Urban forestry, internal repairs and renewal and Section 106 for which there are pre-approved projects for the hall, which sit comfortably with some of the landscape elements of the masterplan. These are additional tree planting / spring bulbs, lake/Pond restoration, manage/enhance existing woodland/pond/watercourses.

Subject to a fully costed project appraisal the pre-approved section 106 ideas outlined above can also be delivered. The internal repairs and renewal budget will enable street furniture across the site to be installed.

It is anticipated that when further funding is secured via grant applications other elements such as pathway re-configuration, reinstatement of Victorian landscape garden frontage/wall and public amenity buildings (Café and toilets) can be delivered. There will also be the potential to consider further the larger scale buildings in the

service yard area which are currently a desirable second phase to the project.

5.2 Staffing Implications

None currently identified

5.3 Equal Opportunities Implications

An equal opportunities impact assessment will be completed for the project.

5.5 Community Safety Implications

None

6. Background papers

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

- Cherry Hinton Hall Masterplan Consultation by Phil Back Associates, September 2010
- Understanding Needs and Usage by Phil Back Associates, January 2009
- The draft masterplan

7. Appendices

Appendix A - Masterplan

Appendix B - Cambridge City Farm and Community Garden proposal

Appendix C – Future of Cherry Hinton Hall – Consultation on the Masterplan September 2010

Appendix D - Key Outcomes from report “Understanding needs & usage” January 2009

Appendix E - Provisional estimates for Masterplan work

8. Inspection of papers

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

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