

# **The Future of Cherry Hinton Hall**

## ***Consultation on the Masterplan***



## **A consultation report for Cambridge City Council**

**By Phil Back Associates Ltd**

**September 2010**

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# Cherry Hinton Hall Masterplan proposals 2010

## Summary and conclusions

1. There is strong support for the objectives of the Masterplan. Three quarters of respondents fully support the overall objective of the masterplan, which has to do with conserving the ethos and character of the park whilst improving its fabric, facilities, and biodiversity. Almost everyone else is in partial agreement with this objective.
2. Full support for the stated objectives of the Masterplan for each area of the park is never less than 50% of the response. There is especially strong support for the Masterplan proposals in relation to the wildlife of the park, the pond area, and improving services and facilities such as toilets, bins and dog bins, all of which attract full support from at least three-quarters of all those responding. Support for the Masterplan's objectives on footpaths and on the landscape of the hall is also strong.
3. There is majority support, but more caution, in relation to the Masterplan's proposals for the hall area and for the former propagation centre. In each case, around half support the Masterplan objectives, and most of the remainder support in part.
4. Support for the Masterplan's proposals to achieve these objectives is also strong. Overall, just under half fully support the Masterplan, and 87% support at least part of the Masterplan.
5. Support for the delivery envisaged by the Masterplan is highest in the pond area, where two thirds of respondents fully support the proposals, and on the footpaths, which are supported by over 60%. Full agreement with the Masterplan is less evident in the hall buildings and the former propagation centre, but even here over 40% fully support, and over 80% at least partly support.
6. Outright disagreement with anything suggested by or contained in the Masterplan is very small. The Masterplan appears to have captured, by and large, what people value about this site and what would be acceptable to them as a way of improving the site without damaging its current ethos and value.

7. The main area of difficulty with the Masterplan as it currently stands, and the one which may be giving rise to qualified acceptance of the Plan on the part of many people, is the proposal for a City Farm on the former propagation site. This idea has strong support both from individuals and organisations, and attracts a good deal of positive comment, stressing the educational and cohesion benefits of such a scheme as well as its attractiveness as an additional feature of the park. Advocates include several faith and charitable groups, and others working with communities of disadvantage.
  
8. Objectors to the City Farm are in a minority, but objection is much stronger than to any aspect of the Masterplan itself. Objectors note the impracticability of the idea, its incompatibility with other uses of the space, and that it detracts from the Masterplan and the underlying ethos of the park that the Plan seeks to embody. Objectors include the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall, a voluntary group set up to promote the care and conservation of the park for local people and visitors alike.
  
9. A second, less strongly voiced but nonetheless present, difficulty with both the Masterplan and the City Farm is the continuity of the Cambridge Folk Festival. Folk festival-goers seek reassurance, rather than making outright objections.
  
10. We conclude that the Masterplan has found wide acceptance and could be adopted on this basis. However, the City Farm idea has strong support and cannot be ignored just because it does not feature in the Masterplan. The Masterplan, nevertheless, has been developed by landscape professionals and its ideas and suggestions are tested against that professional understanding. The City Farm idea has not been tested in that way, but the level of support for it, and the strength of objection, suggest that such a test should be undertaken. We therefore recommend that a feasibility study should be undertaken, to see whether a City Farm is feasible within a reasonable footprint in Cherry Hinton Hall, and to determine what the effect of this on the Masterplan generally, and its underlying principles, would be.

**Phil Back**  
**Wetherby**  
**September 2010**

## **Introduction and methodology**

Cherry Hinton Hall is an important public park in the east of Cambridge, centred on a historic former residence and incorporating the open parkland surrounding it. The park provides an important local facility to residents in the heavily populated Cherry Hinton area of Cambridge, but also attracts a city-wide audience because of its attractiveness as a largely natural open space, and at certain times of year a national audience when it hosts major events such as the renowned Cambridge Folk Festival, and the Pink Festival.

Cambridge City Council, which owns and manages the site, has been working for some time on improving the park, to deal with some longstanding problems, and to bring it to a standard that befits its role in the city's pantheon of parks. An initial consultation took place in 2008 to consider some options for the future of the site, and particularly focussed on an area of derelict land within the park where the City's Propagation Centre formerly operated. This and other feedback was then put to a specialist landscape architect, Robert Miles, who drew up a Masterplan to provide a picture of possible improvements to the park which would address the issues raised in the consultation and remain consistent with the Council's existing open spaces strategy and values.

This Masterplan was then put out for consultation using a short questionnaire, a copy of which is provided as an appendix to this report. The questionnaire was made available in several ways: copies were available from the Council directly; it could be downloaded from the Council website for completion; copies were made available at key events associated with the park, including the Pink Festival, the Folk Festival, and a local gala day; and the questionnaire was also available for completion online. The masterplan was also available for viewing online and at the events. The consultation was widely publicised in the local media, on the Council website, and also in a leaflet produced by the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall and distributed to households throughout the area. It was also promoted by the advocates of the City Farm on their website. The response pattern, and the nature of those responses, suggest that the presence of the City Farm issue within the consultation is a major factor in people's participation.

A total of 290 completed questionnaires were received by the closing date. On examination, two of these were found to be duplicates of other questionnaires, in that they contained the same information with (in one case) the same comments using the same wording, and (in the other) the same handwriting and personal details. In each instance only one questionnaire has been admitted for analysis, leaving 288 eligible responses. These have now been analysed and the detailed results are presented in this report.

## 1 Respondent profile

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were responding as private individuals or on behalf of a group of some description. Of the 288 replies, 247 identified themselves as private individuals, with 30 claiming to reply on behalf of a group or organisation, and 3 in some other capacity (local companies and a volunteer). Many of those claiming to represent the views of a group did so either on behalf of the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall, or on behalf of one of the organisations campaigning for a city farm at this site.

The age of those responding is given here:

Age-group	Proportion of respondents
25 or under	4%
26-44	45%
45-64	37%
65-79	13%
80 or over	2%

The age profile of those taking part in this consultation is heavily weighted towards the middle age ranges, and focuses largely on people of working age. The consultation has been less effective in reaching younger adults or teenagers. Older people are much less likely to take part in consultation and the presence of a low proportion of elderly people is quite normal in a consultation of this type.

The gender split of respondents is provided here:

Gender	Proportion of respondents
Male	38%
Female	62%

Women outnumber men in this consultation by three to two. It is not uncommon for this to happen in consultation, but it does mean we need to explore any gender difference in people's views rather than accepting the majority verdict outright.

This table shows the proportions of respondents with children at home:

Children	Proportion of respondents
Children at home	40%
No children at home	60%

Two in five of those responding have children living at home with them. Again, this is potentially an important dimension to be considered in evaluating the answers people give to the consultation.

We asked people to indicate their ethnic origin; the response is overwhelmingly white (95%), with a very small number of people from other ethnic backgrounds, amounting to 5% of the total.

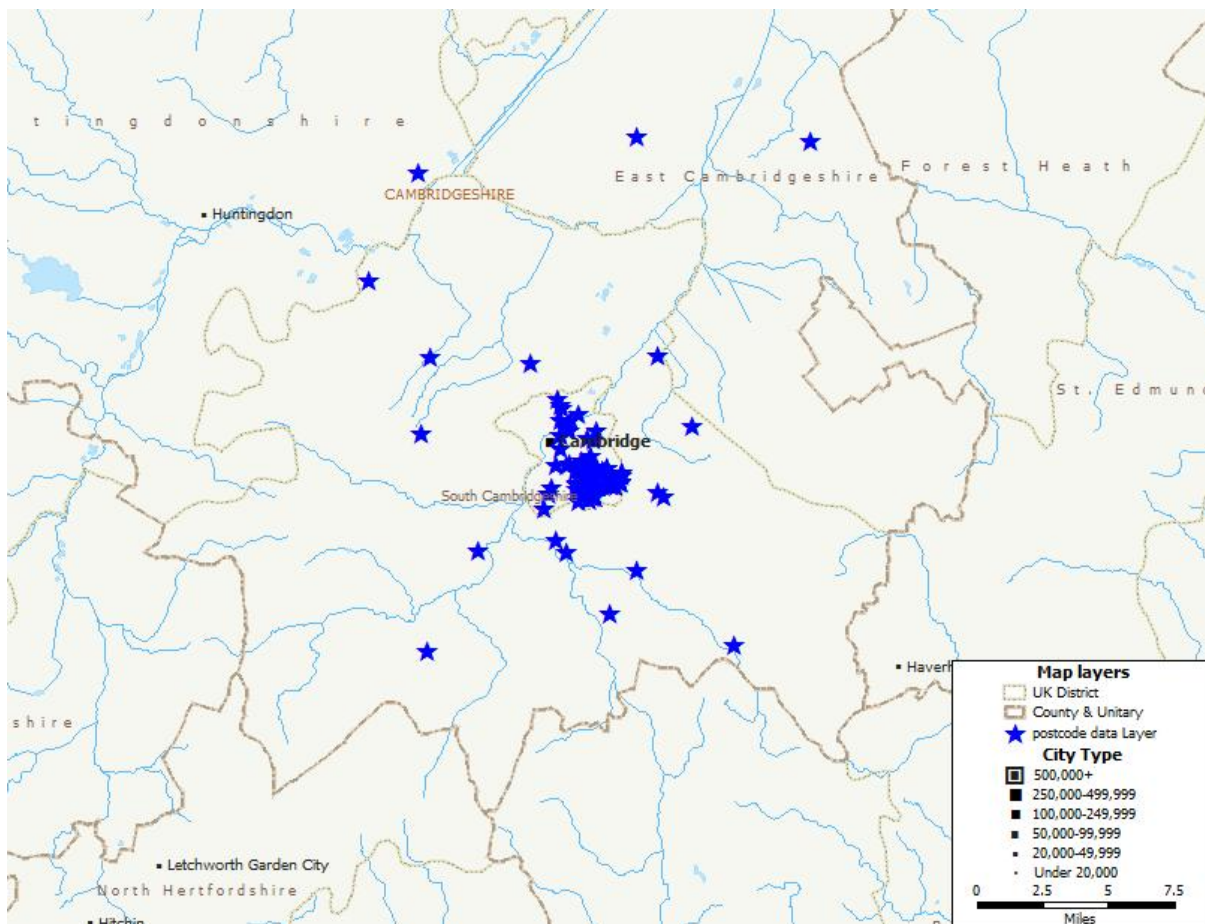
We also asked about people's disabilities:

Disability	Proportion of respondents
No disability	94%
Disability	6%

A small proportion of respondents have a disability that affects their use or enjoyment of open spaces, but the majority of respondents do not.

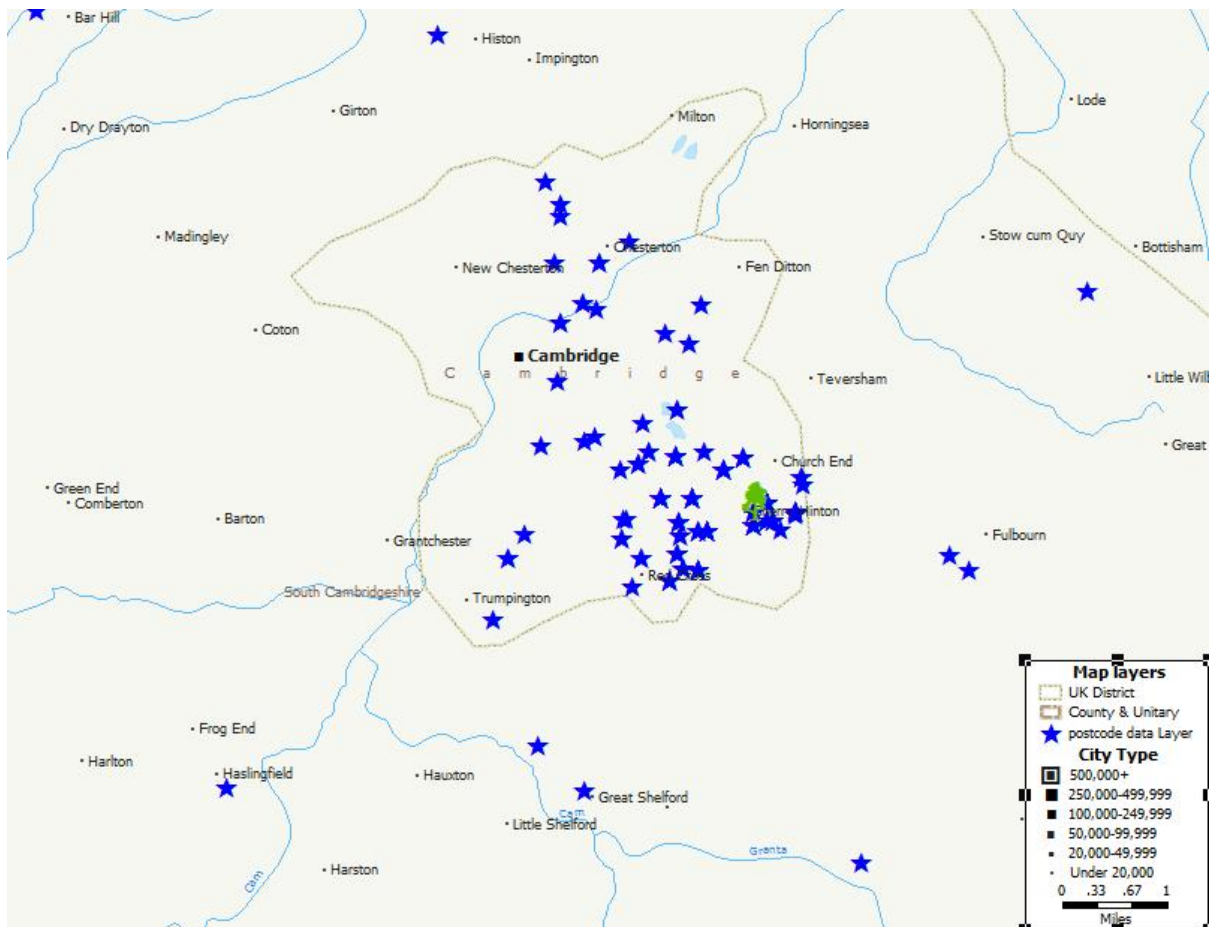
## Geography

Most respondents provided a postcode, and this map shows how these are distributed.



Although there are respondents from far afield, the greatest concentration of postcodes is in Cambridge itself, so most of those responding are reasonably local residents. One respondent lives in Cleethorpes, but claims to visit family in the area on a regular basis.

The next map looks more closely at the distribution of postcodes across the city itself:

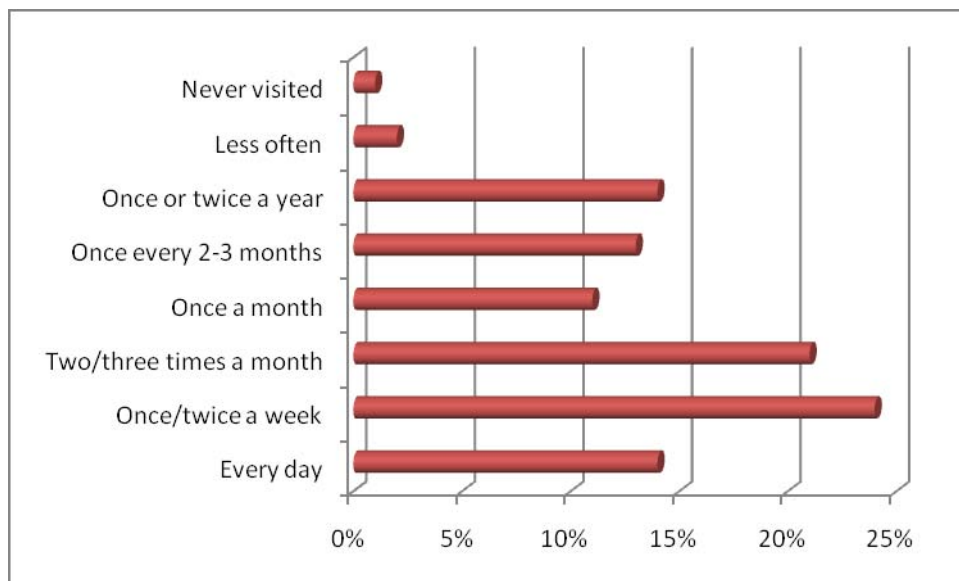


Respondents include a substantial proportion of people who live in the east and south of the city area, and there is a particular concentration around the site of the park (marked with the green tree). There are also a large number of respondents in the south of the city generally, from the Romsey and Queen Edith areas. Nevertheless people from other parts of the city also visit Cherry Hinton Hall, including residents of Trumpington and Arbury as well as those living more locally.

### 3 Visiting

Those who responded as individuals were asked how often they visit the Hall, with these results:

Frequency of visiting Cherry Hinton Hall	Proportion of respondents
Every day	14%
Once/twice a week	24%
Two/three times a month	21%
Once a month	11%
Once every 2-3 months	13%
Once or twice a year	14%
Less often	2%
Never visited	1%



Most respondents have a close relationship with the Hall. One in seven visits every day, so the hall is a highly significant feature of their daily existence, and altogether two in five (38%) visit at least once a week, with three in five (59%) visiting at least once every two weeks.

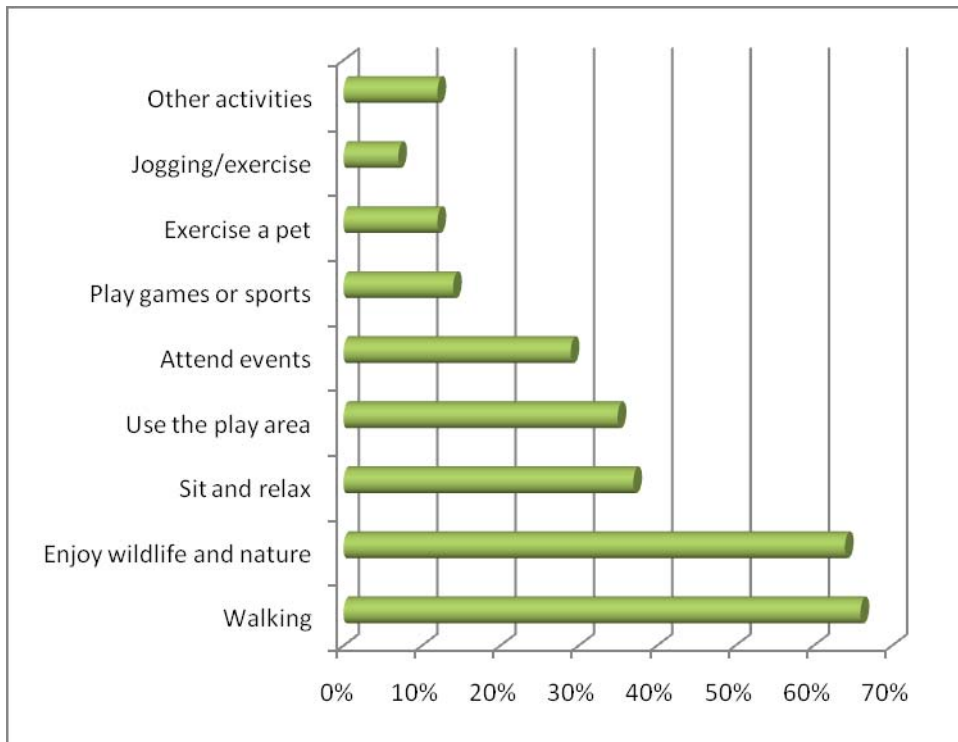
A quarter of respondents are less frequent visitors, using Cherry Hinton Hall between 3 and twelve times a year, and the respondent profile also includes a sixth of respondents (17%) who visit less often than that, including a very small number who have never visited.

It is, of course, perfectly valid for those who visit rarely to comment alongside those for whom this is an everyday park; but it is also instructive to separate the view of frequent and occasional visitors to examine differences in perspective.

The activities people engage in while visiting are listed here:



Activity	Proportion of respondents
Walking	66%
Enjoy wildlife and nature	64%
Sit and relax	37%
Use the play area	35%
Attend events	29%
Play games or sports	14%
Exercise a pet	12%
Jogging/exercise	7%
Other activities	12%



The most popular activity these people engage in is simply going for a walk, and the park is certainly seen as a very attractive and suitable environment for this kind of exercise. A similar proportion, again about two thirds, go the Cherry Hinton to enjoy the wildlife and nature the park offers; a mix of environments in the park means that this can include ducks and wildfowl, birds, small mammals and even an occasional deer or fox, and insect life in a variety of different habitats. Whilst the natural world is often a strong pull towards an open space, it is surprising to find an urban park with such a high level of wildlife and nature interest.

Other activities lag some way behind these two in importance. Over a third of people come to the Hall to sit and relax, and a similar proportion to use the play facilities in the park. Events in the park attract their own audiences and over a quarter of people say they visit the

hall for this kind of activity, notably the Folk Festival and the Pink Festival which coincided with the consultation period.

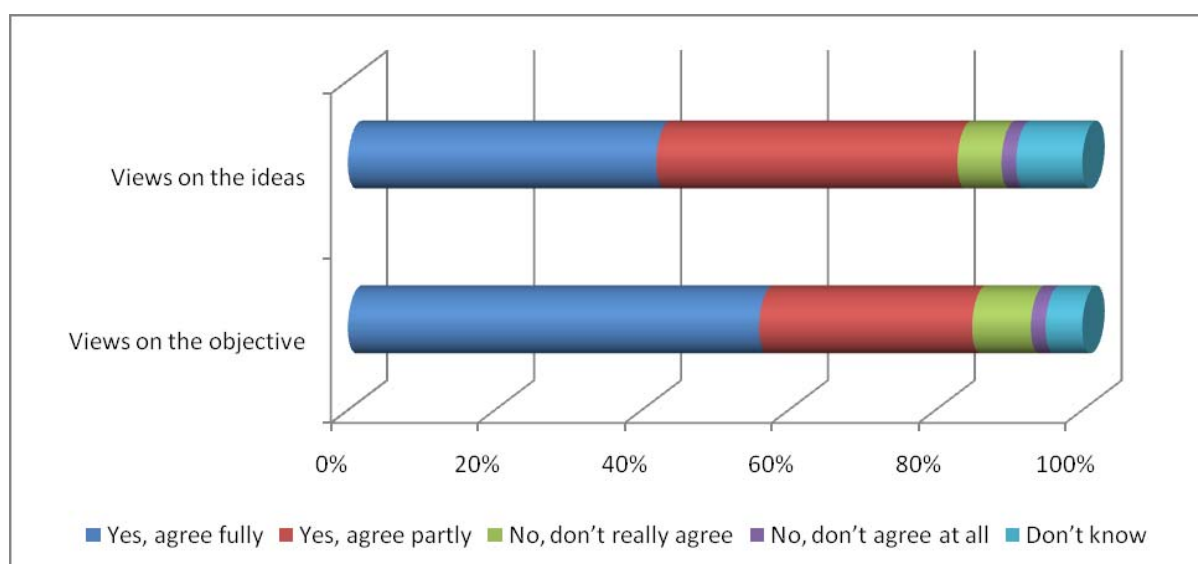
Other activities are less popular with this group. Participation in sports and games is more limited – just one in seven do this – and the landscape of the hall, and its formal sport provision, do not lend themselves to open air sport in the way that some of the city's other parks do. The proportion using the hall for exercising a pet seems low in comparison to other sites, and the small numbers visiting the site for jogging may be a commentary on the lack of a circular route, which means that joggers can really only pass through rather than spending time here.

## 4 The hall buildings

The Masterplan proposals for the hall buildings are based on the idea that the hall should be restored to its former setting as a historic building within parkland. The masterplan therefore focuses on improving the visibility of the building, making it a focal point visually for the site, and also restoring some of the formal Victorian layout at the front of the hall. There are no proposals in the Masterplan that would affect the current use of the hall as an international school.

People were asked two questions here: do they agree with the objective for this area, and secondly do they think the Masterplan proposals are a good way of delivering that objective? Their answers are summarised in this table:

Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the objective	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	56%	42%
Yes, agree partly	29%	41%
No, don't really agree	8%	6%
No, don't agree at all	2%	2%
Don't know	5%	9%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	256	244



The objective of restoring the hall to its historic centrepiece role attracts a good deal of support. Well over half of respondents agree fully with this as an objective, and 85% support this objective at least in part. Only one in ten (10%) disagree with the objective stated here.

Disagreement with the objective is mainly concentrated in the 26-44 age-group, where around 15% of respondents disagree – still a minority view. Those who only agree partly

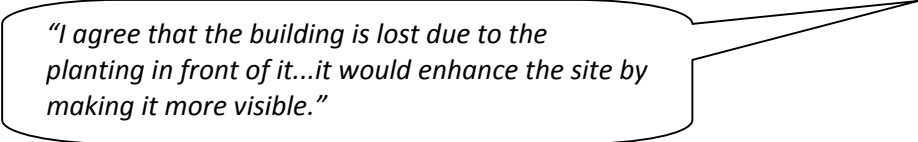
with the objective are also concentrated in the working age groups. There are no significant differences between the views of men and women on this objective. However, those who visit the hall most often are the most positive about the objectives.

There is also strong support for the Masterplan as the way forward, although the views here are a little more cautious. A total of 42% agree fully with the Masterplan, and altogether 83% agree at least in part that the Masterplan proposals for this area are sound. Here just one in twelve (8%) dislike what is proposed in the Masterplan. Again, though, the most frequent visitors are the most enthusiastic supporters of the Masterplan.

Disagreement with the Masterplan ideas is scattered across all age and gender groups, but hesitant agreement is found in both the working age-groups and the 65-79s.

Although there is a consensus of broad support here, it is helpful to look at people's comments, both to see why they like these ideas and where the hesitancy in some support may be rooted.

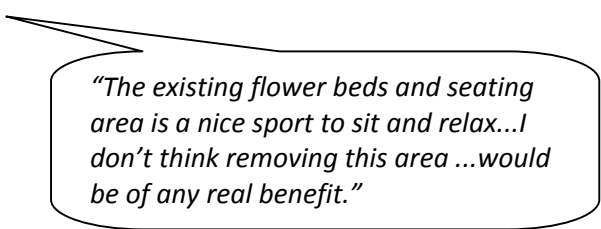
Supporters of the plans draw attention to the need to enhance the setting of the hall by making it more visible. Although the hall is not a listed building, it is historic in nature and supporters see it as a definite asset to the park.



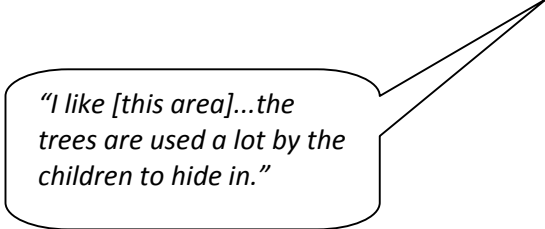
*"I agree that the building is lost due to the planting in front of it...it would enhance the site by making it more visible."*

Those who are more hesitant about their support have four main concerns that the Council needs to consider.

The first is that some people like the present layout at the front of the hall, which consists of flower beds and established evergreens. They enjoy and value this and would be sorry to see it passing. It is also part of the enjoyment of a visit to the hall for some.

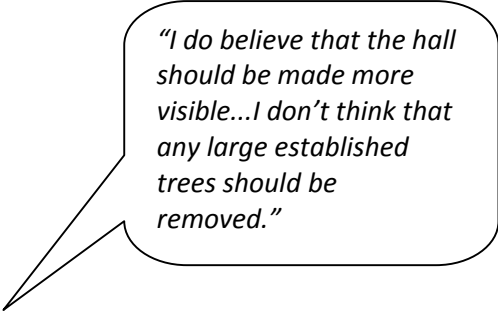


*"The existing flower beds and seating area is a nice spot to sit and relax...I don't think removing this area ...would be of any real benefit."*

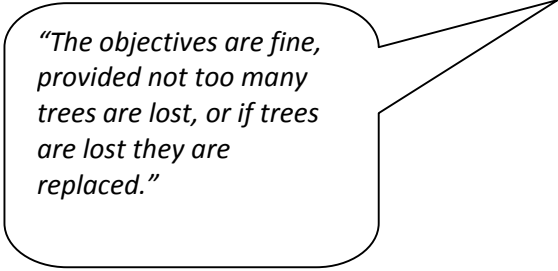


*"I like [this area]...the trees are used a lot by the children to hide in."*

A second reason for more cautious support is a fear that "opening up" the view of the hall could result in the removal of trees. It is not always clear from comments whether people are referring to the evergreens in the vicinity of the hall, or other trees around the site which might obscure the view of the hall, but several people are clearly concerned about this and need some reassurance on the point.

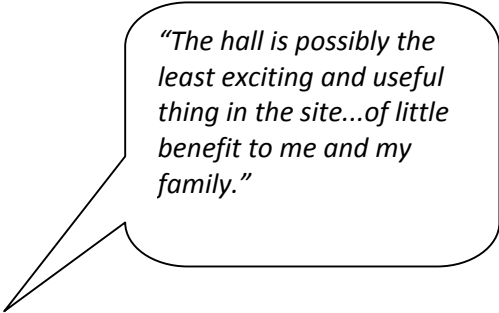


*"I do believe that the hall should be made more visible...I don't think that any large established trees should be removed."*

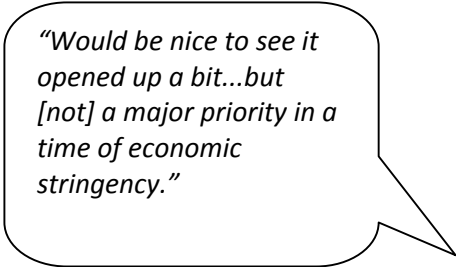


*"The objectives are fine, provided not too many trees are lost, or if trees are lost they are replaced."*

Some of those who are giving cautious support do so because they do not see the hall as a priority. Although the Masterplan offers a coherent "whole site" approach, some people suspect that in reality the funds will not be available to deliver the whole project, and under these circumstances the hall is not the most important area where change is needed.



*"The hall is possibly the least exciting and useful thing in the site...of little benefit to me and my family."*



*"Would be nice to see it opened up a bit...but [not] a major priority in a time of economic stringency."*

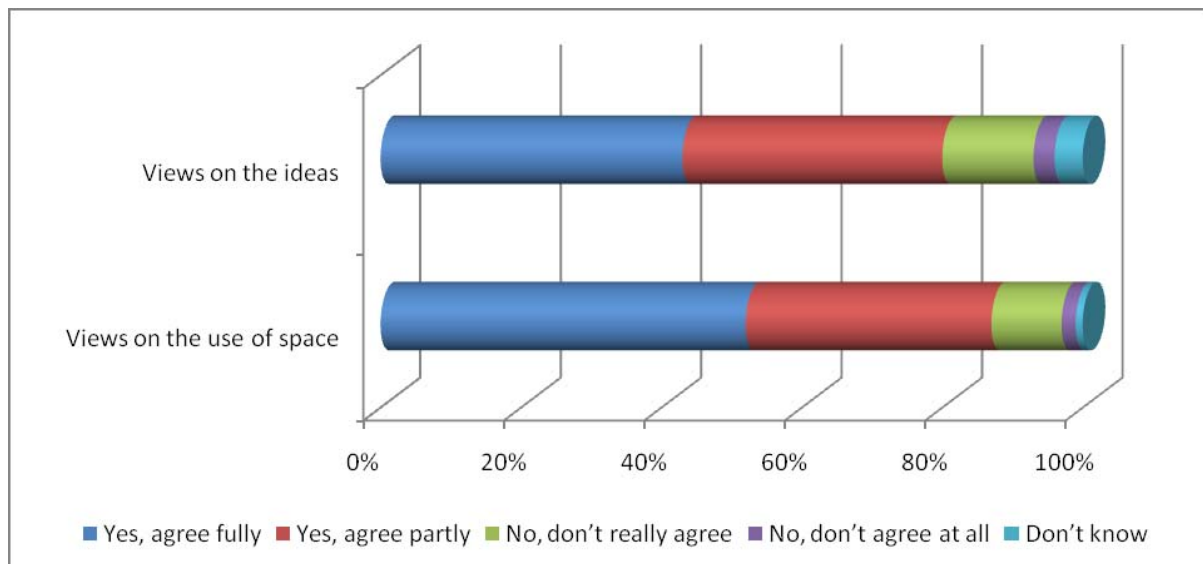
The fourth concern expressed by people concerns the future of the Folk Festival. This seems to be a more general concern about the Masterplan as a whole, rather than the Hall proposals specifically, but some people take this opportunity to express worries that the masterplan will somehow damage, or eliminate, the Folk Festival from the site.

## 5 The former propagation site

The former propagation site is a largely derelict area where the Council's propagation centre once stood. It could also be understood to include an area which is currently used as a small storage depot for the City Council. This area is not at present accessible to the public, though it is visible to park users. The Masterplan proposes to incorporate this area into the wider park, and makes the space into an events area, accompanied by a wildflower area, an orchard, and a community garden; there is also the possibility of creating a small catering facility, and toilets, in this area.

People were asked firstly whether they agree with this use of the derelict space, and secondly whether they think the Masterplan proposals are a good way of delivering that objective. Their answers are summarised in this table:

Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the use of space	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	52%	43%
Yes, agree partly	35%	37%
No, don't really agree	10%	13%
No, don't agree at all	2%	3%
Don't know	1%	4%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>246</i>	<i>238</i>

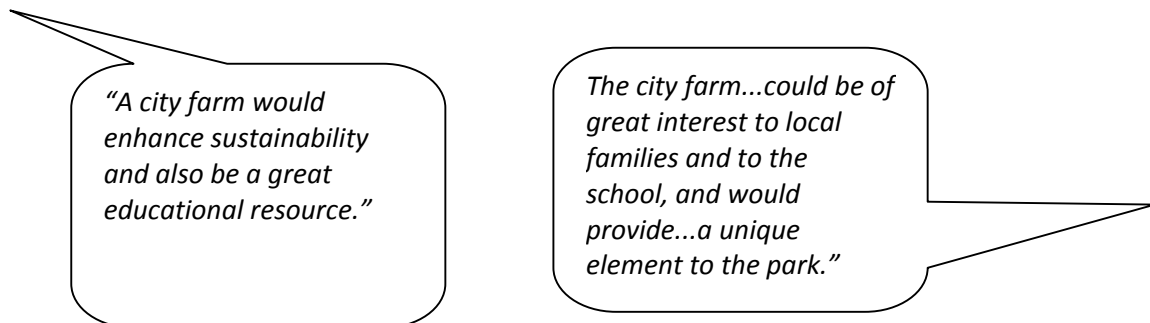


As far as the overall objective is concerned, there is considerable support for the way the derelict space is used in the Masterplan. Over half of those responding support this objective fully, and most of the rest support it at least in part. In contrast, just one in eight people (12%) disagree.

Support arises in all age-groups, with full support accounting for at least half of the responses in all but the 45-64 age-group, and those who disagree very much in a minority across the board. Men are a little more enthusiastic than women about the objectives. However, people with children, while supportive of the Masterplan, are more cautious and divide evenly between those who support fully and those who support partly. The more frequent visitors are also more supportive than those who only visit occasionally; those who are more cautious about this part of the plan, and those who disagree, are mainly occasional or rare visitors to the park.

The comment space helps in understanding these views, and comments in this area of the Masterplan tend to focus on specific aspects of the proposals which people either support or object to.

The main area of comment is around a city farm proposal which emerged after the Masterplan had already been prepared. Quite a number of comments question why this suggestion has been left off the Masterplan (which seems to be entirely because of the timing of the Masterplan preparation), while others conflate the suggestion of a community garden into a possible city farm, probably on a larger scale. There are many other comments about the city farm proposal later in this report (when it is specifically raised in the questionnaire, and is discussed extensively in additional comment) but at this point a large number of those commenting are strongly supportive of the idea, drawing attention to the value of such a use of space as an educational as well as an entertainment resource, and to the added value of a unique attraction not available in other city parks.



Others draw attention to the value of a City Farm as an all-year resource, in contrast to a community garden which might only be attractive in the spring and summer; there is also the repeated observation that the community garden is too small to allow any educational outcome, in contrast to the City Farm proposals which are on a more suitable scale.

*"The community garden idea is too small to be useful...the City farm would make a better use of the space."*

*"I support the expansion of this idea into the bigger concept of a City Farm."*

Support for the City Farm certainly dominates the discussion of this issue, but there are objectors to this idea too, though they are a minority view.

*"I strongly hope that the City Farm will not be put [here]...Cherry Hinton Hall is not a suitable place for this."*

*"I do not want anything that resembles a farm! Leave it flowers and open space."*

The City Farm is not the only issue, though, that people want to comment on. The cafe idea certainly also attracts attention, and people who support it note the possibility of generating revenue from an outlet that could go back into the park, as well as providing an amenity that they would value. There are several people, though, who are more sceptical, and who draw attention to the possibility of increased litter, and the encouragement of vermin.

*"A quality cafe...is currently the real missing point...something that major parks...offer."*

*"A cafe or tea room...something that is missing in the park and the area."*

The viability of a cafe is an issue, though, and might limit opening to summer only – unless, as someone points out, the City Farm draws a year-round audience who also need to be catered for. Its location is also questioned, not least the potential for disturbing the wildfowl at this side of the park.

The orchard and the wildflower area also have both supporters and detractors. The orchard, while welcomed in some quarters, raises questions about illicit harvesting; a wildflower meadow, again welcomed by some, is seen as unnecessary by others given the proximity of genuinely wild natural areas nearby in the Gogs.



Aside from the suggested contents of this area, questions are raised about the financial viability and sustainability of the proposals, and the need to be sure that the Council's resources are being deployed sensibly, and that the revenue cost of maintenance to the standard necessary can be sustained into the foreseeable future. Security is also a concern for some, who draw attention to the vandalism and other security issues that have been a problem at this and other sites in the past; one commentator suggests that the City Farm might help here by providing a measure of informal oversight that is currently missing.

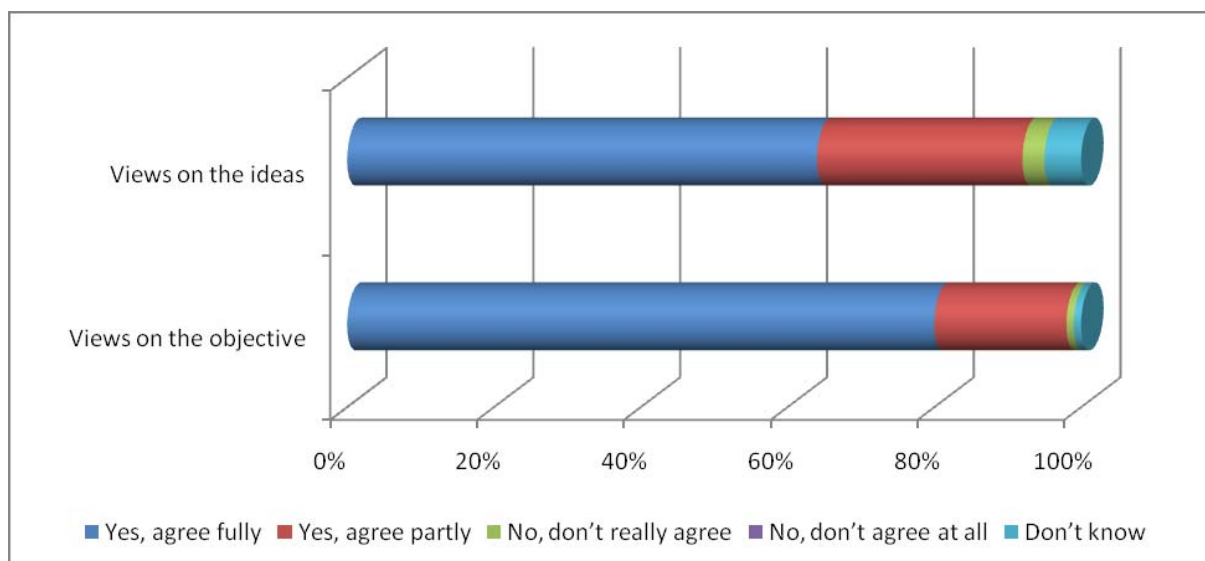
Finally, there are questions raised under this heading about whether some of these plans (and perhaps particularly the City Farm idea) are compatible with the preservation of the Folk Festival and its spatial requirements.

## 6 The pond area

The Masterplan for the pond area starts by recognising the current poor condition of this part of the park. It includes proposals to clear away the litter and debris in this area, improve the quality of the water, and improve the adjoining seating area with new surfacing, bins and seating. It also aims to accrete a place for sitting, relaxing, and play, including paddling.

The questionnaire explores agreement or otherwise with this objective, and with the Masterplan ideas, and the results of this are shown below:

Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the objective	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	80%	64%
Yes, agree partly	18%	28%
No, don't really agree	1%	3%
No, don't agree at all	0%	0%
Don't know	1%	5%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>251</i>	<i>241</i>

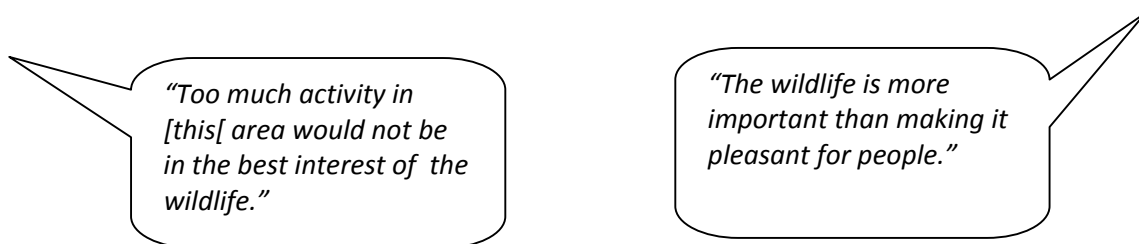


There is almost universal approval of the overall Masterplan in this area. Four out of five people agree with the objective here, and almost everyone else agrees to some extent; virtually nobody opposes the plan in this section of the park.

Agreement ranges across all age-groups, and both genders, and is equally shared by those with children at home and those with none. To the extent that there is caution about the Masterplan, though, it is focussed among the most frequent visitors to the park; but even there those who are only partly supportive are very much in a minority.

The Masterplan proposals receive more qualified support, but support nevertheless with two who agree fully for every person who does not, and very few who disagree at all with what is suggested. Older and more frequent visitors are those most likely to raise questions about the ideas but are always in a small minority nonetheless.

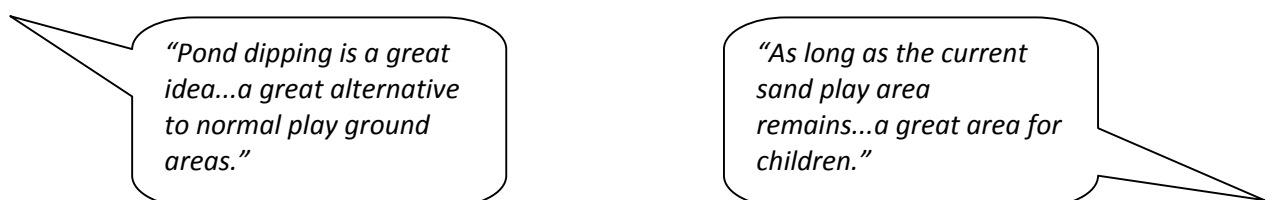
Comments on the pond area are generally very supportive of the Masterplan proposals and tend to reinforce them, rather than being critical. A strong theme in the comments is that this area is essentially an area for wildlife, and wildlife's needs should be the prime consideration in this area, or at least as important as the need to provide human recreation. Wildlife encounter is, of course, one of the main activities people engage in as visitors to the park, and it is not surprising that people stress the significance of this.



The Masterplan is not necessarily seen as threatening the primacy of wildlife, but sufficient attention is drawn to this dimension to alert the Council to the need to take a sensitive approach here. Several specific issues are raised too, particularly the presence of rats which pollute the water, and which threaten nesting birds and their eggs, an apparent reduction in biodiversity in this part of the park in recent times, and the detrimental effects to both ducks and water of continual feeding with bread (though at least one person notes the impossibility of containing this problem in practice).

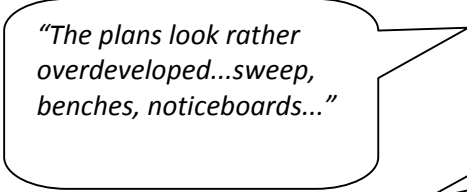
Several people note the relatively recent arrival of play equipment in this part of the park, and most feel this is an inappropriate development in a natural space, and disturbs the established occupants of this part of the park. Many who comment on this deprecate its presence, wanting it removed, or resited to the play area, but others welcome the sand play opportunity and say their children really enjoy this new space.

There is also a view that children's play in this area should be limited to less formal provision such as clambering over fallen trees, pond-dipping, playing pooh-sticks and other similar activities more compatible with a wild presence.

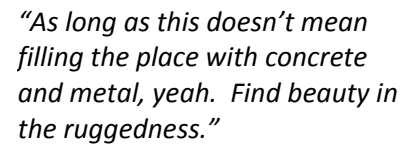


The natural theme also carries through into a discussion about the balance between development of this area and leaving it as natural space. Several people comment that,

whilst there may be a need to clear and clean in this area, it should not be “tamed” or “sanitised” as this would be to the detriment both of its wild inhabitants and the enjoyment of visitors. This leads to several pleas not to overdevelop the pond area and its surrounds.



*“The plans look rather overdeveloped...sweep, benches, noticeboards...”*



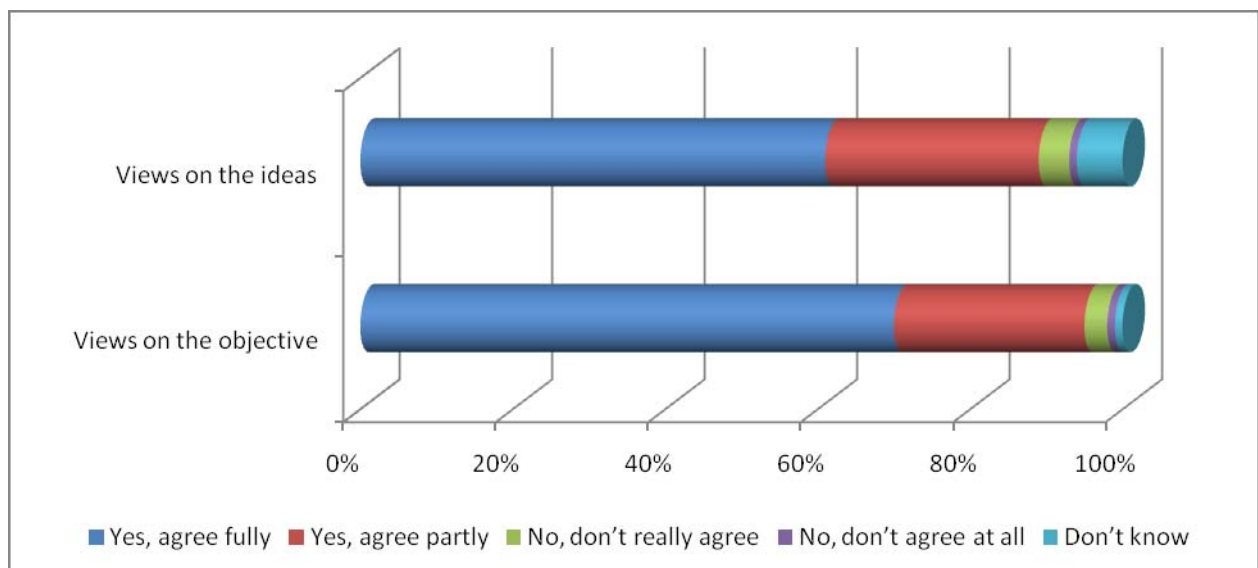
*“As long as this doesn’t mean filling the place with concrete and metal, yeah. Find beauty in the ruggedness.”*

## 7 The footpaths

The Masterplan reconfigures the footpath layout in the park, aiming to link places together more effectively, resite paths to follow more natural routes, resurface some paths, and create a circular route within the park boundary.

Our questions here focus on these objectives, and whether the Masterplan's solutions are welcomed, and people's answers are shown here:

Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the objective	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	70%	61%
Yes, agree partly	25%	28%
No, don't really agree	3%	4%
No, don't agree at all	1%	1%
Don't know	1%	6%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>248</i>	<i>241</i>



There is overwhelming support for the Masterplan's objective here; over two thirds of people support the Masterplan's goal fully, and almost everyone else has some sympathy with the aim. Hardly anyone disagrees with what the Masterplan seeks to achieve here. To the extent that there is any doubt, it tends to be among those who visit less often; objectors, though, are more likely to be frequent visitors.

Agreement with the ideas put forward to achieve these aims is almost as strong as support for the ideas themselves, suggesting that the Masterplan has largely got this issue right. Here, such disagreement as there is tends to be in inverse proportion to the frequency of visiting.

Comments on this question are almost uniformly supportive, with some additional observations. There is wide support for the idea of improving surfaces, as the current surfaces can become muddy in adverse weather and this especially affects children and pets using the paths, and is particularly difficult for those using wheelchairs or pushing buggies. However, some qualify this by asking that new surfaces should be consistent with a natural setting, rather than with urban footpaths, while others reserve judgment until they know what surfaces are proposed. There are also comments requesting that some paths, such as those in woodland areas, be left as they are to be more in keeping with their surroundings.

*"It would be good to see more wheelchair-friendly paths..."*

*"unsurfaced paths as well as the paved ones...you feel as though you are on more of a nature walk."*

The circular route idea finds some support, though not universally. It may be noted, though, that few joggers seem to use the park at present.

*"Circles are good...people like resolution."*

*"I see no need to create a complete circular walk."*

The other issue raised by several contributors under this topic is the need for, and the problems that arise from, sharing pathways between cyclists and pedestrians, including those walking pets. These uses are not irreconcilable, but do sometimes cause problems, which might be mitigated by making surfaces less muddy and splashy. Some cyclists fear that may be in some way excluded or discouraged from using the paths if the Masterplan is implemented.

*"Please ensure cycles are still allowed to share the paths...many people...ride through the park on their way to work or home."*

*"It's also important to remember that the park is used as a through route."*

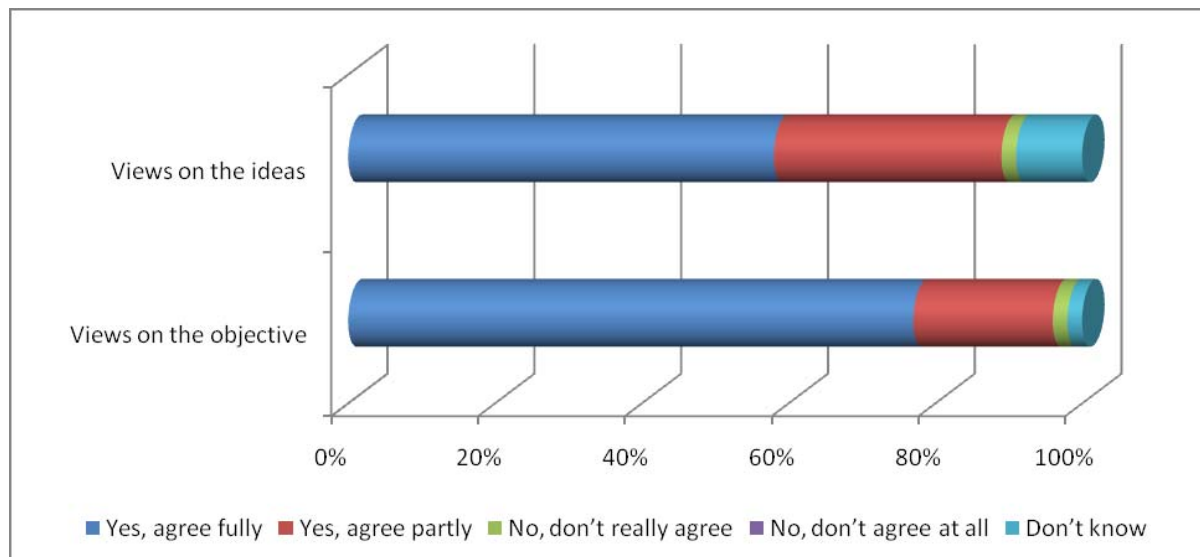


## 8 Services and facilities

Previous consultation on the park has indicated, among other things, a need for improved support for visitors. The toilets have been especially criticised for poor condition, to the point that people of both genders find natural alternatives rather than use them, while seats, bins and other park infrastructure is tired or poorly located. The Masterplan aims to make services like these work better for visitors, by renewing or relocating them.

People's agreement with this aim, and with the Masterplan's suggested solutions, are shown here:

Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the objective	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	77%	58%
Yes, agree partly	19%	31%
No, don't really agree	2%	2%
No, don't agree at all	0%	0%
Don't know	2%	9%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>233</i>

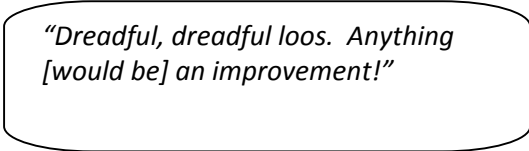


Support for this objective is overwhelming, indicating wide agreement with the earlier consultation's conclusions that this is an aspect of the park that needs serious attention. Nearly four out of five respondents say they agree fully with the aim here, and almost all of the rest offer at least partial support; there are very few people who would disagree with what the Council wants to achieve here. Those who are more cautious tend to be those who make less use of the park, but otherwise agreement is strong across the entire range of respondents.

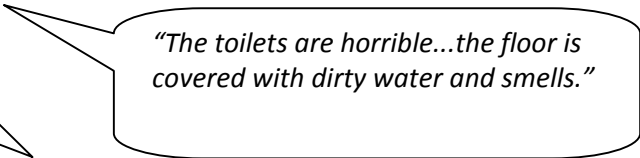


Nearly three in five people also agree fully that the Masterplan's approach to this issue will deliver what is needed, and again most of the remaining respondents at least agree in part. People of working age tend to a little more scepticism, but remain in a minority of nearly two to one in comparison to those supporting fully. Again, those who visit less frequently are those with greater doubt.

Comments on this aspect of the Masterplan are generally supportive and agree that the existing services and infrastructure are inadequate and need addressing. This is especially the case with the toilets:



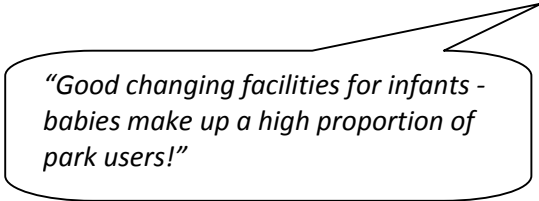
*"Dreadful, dreadful loos. Anything [would be] an improvement!"*



*"The toilets are horrible...the floor is covered with dirty water and smells."*

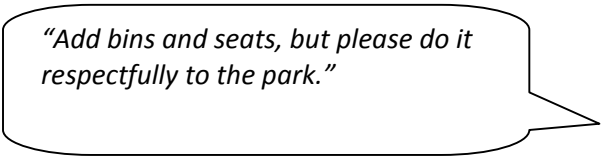
Widespread agreement on the principle, though, conceals some difference of opinion on the location of toilets. Some people want them to be sited close to the play area; others near the pond area – in both cases because of the need to get children to these facilities with the minimum delay. This is also why some people want two sets of toilets, as is offered in the Masterplan as a possible option, though others think this is excessive for a park of the size of Cherry Hinton Hall, and see the present location as a suitable compromise.

There are also repeated requests that any new toilets should include provision for baby-changing, and be accessible to buggies, so that children do not have to be left outside.

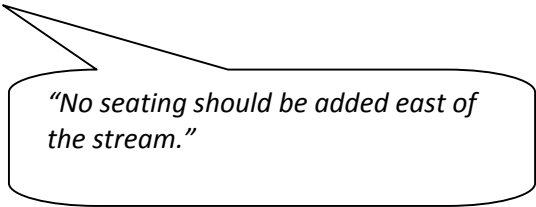


*"Good changing facilities for infants - babies make up a high proportion of park users!"*

There is also widespread comment in support of new seating, though this should be additional to, rather than supplanting, what is already provided, and should be in keeping with the natural surroundings. They could also be placed remotely from paths as well as beside them.



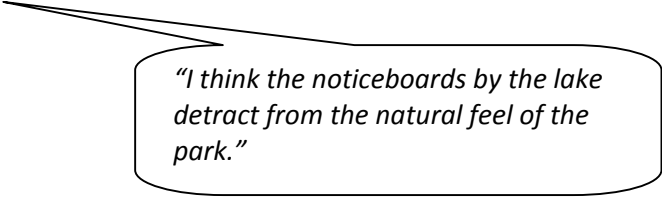
*"Add bins and seats, but please do it respectfully to the park."*



*"No seating should be added east of the stream."*

Other comments look for additional signage, but these seem to be attempts to use signage to address behavioural problems such as irresponsible dog management, flower-picking and

so on. Signage is not noted for its effectiveness in this role, and a flurry of extra signage would seem likely to raise questions about urbanising a natural space.



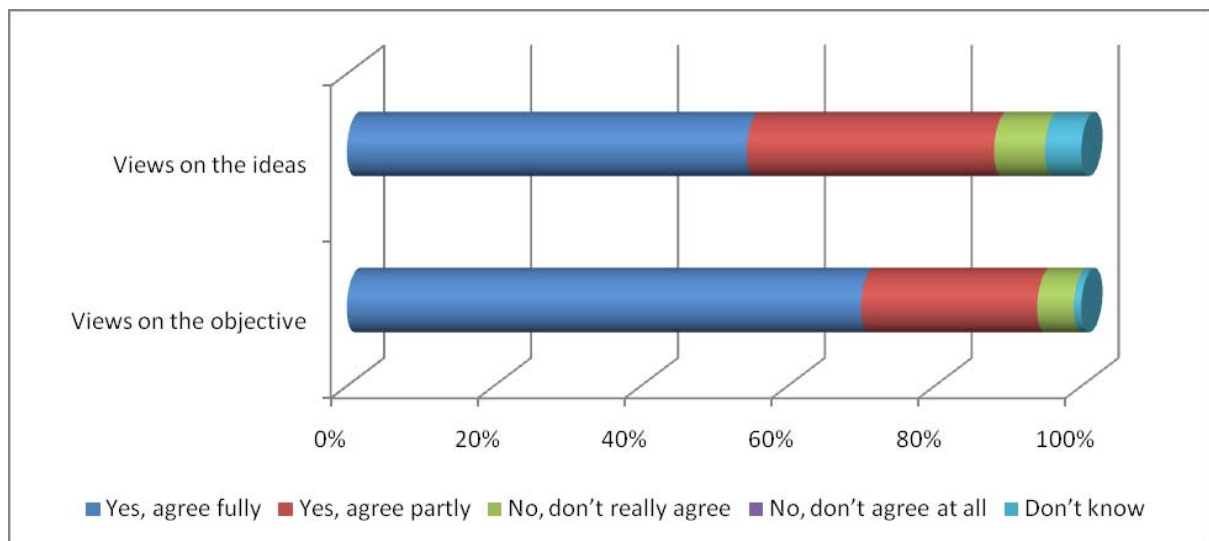
*"I think the noticeboards by the lake detract from the natural feel of the park."*

## 9 The landscape

The Masterplan starts from the premise that the Hall is a beautiful open space with some areas that are not as attractive as they could be. Areas singled out for attention by the Masterplan include thinning out in the woodland area by the pond, and creating new and more natural planting in keeping with the informal setting and feel of the park.

People's views on this aim, and how well the Masterplan proposals address it, are shown here:

Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the objective	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	70%	55%
Yes, agree partly	24%	34%
No, don't really agree	5%	7%
No, don't agree at all	0%	0%
Don't know	1%	5%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	246	233



Enthusiasm for the objective is high, with over two thirds of people fully supporting the aim, and almost everyone else in at least partial support. Very few people disagree with this objective, not even the person who notes that:

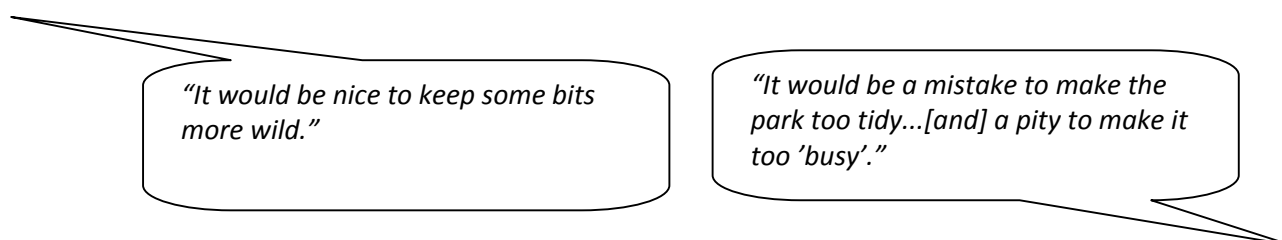
*"I like some "not attractive as they could be" areas!"*

Support for the Masterplan ideas is more qualified, but well over half of those responding support the Masterplan fully, with most of the rest cautious rather than objecting. Only a small proportion of respondents disagree with the Masterplan's interpretation for the landscape.

In both instances, those limiting their support are mainly people of working age.

Comments on these plans range across a number of issues, some of which have already been encountered in other contexts.

A major concern expressed by people, and which limits their capacity to support the Masterplan fully, is that the park should not be over-sanitised or over-tidied. These people take the view – expressed strongly in earlier consultation – that the park functions best as a natural space, or at least a space of contrasting landscape, and would therefore lose something precious if it were to become too managed a space.



Closely linked to this is the observation already noted that the park is a space shared by humans and wild creatures, and that it is therefore necessary for us to manage the space to allow continued enjoyment by wild creatures as well as humans. To some extent this is a reflection of people's concern to respect wildlife; but it is also an important part of the park's aesthetic that it has areas that are not managed.

The wildflower ideas attract more support under this heading, and there are some who particularly like the idea of using the space near the south-eastern gate for this purpose; there are still, though opponents of this idea who think other sites are either better, or already available. There are also concerns to protect existing trees from damage or, worse still, removal.

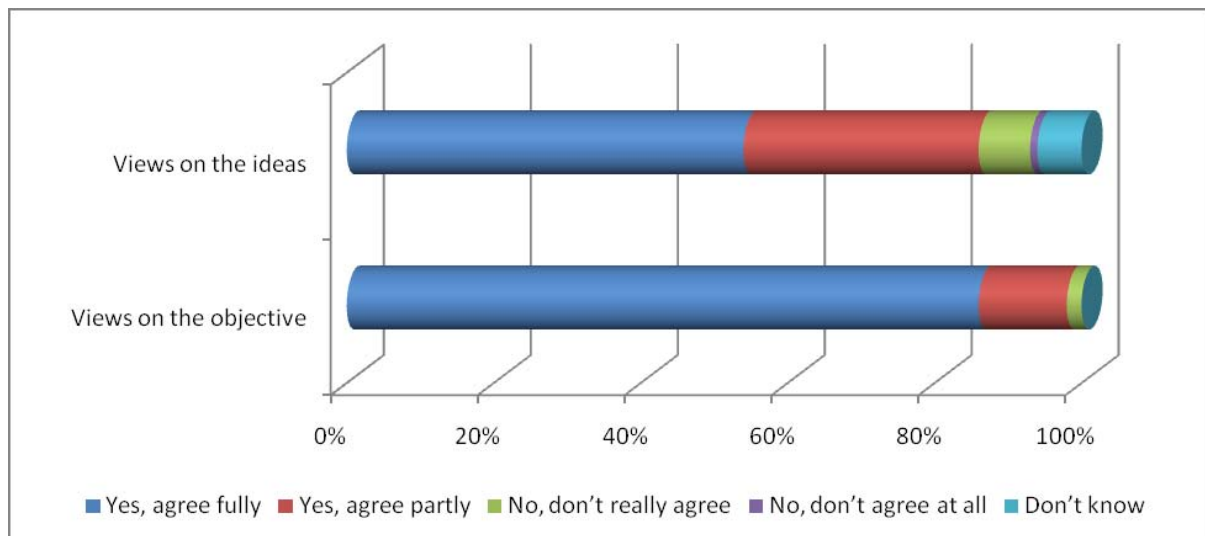
Many comments under this heading simply reinforce the approval already indicated, that the Masterplan is on the right track with its ideas here.

## 10 Wildlife

The Masterplan's stated objective for wildlife is that Cherry Hinton Hall should remain a haven for "appropriate" wildlife, including birds, wildfowl, small mammals and insects. This is at least partly to provide an opportunity for adults and children to encounter creatures in a natural setting.

Agreement with this objective, and the Masterplan proposals, is indicated here:

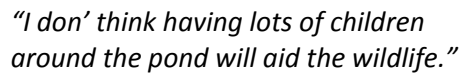
Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the objective	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	86%	54%
Yes, agree partly	12%	32%
No, don't really agree	2%	7%
No, don't agree at all	0%	1%
Don't know	0%	6%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>233</i>



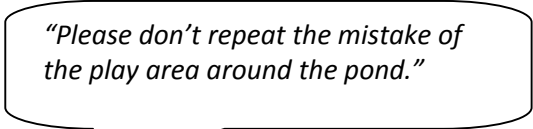
Agreement with the objective is very strong, with six out of seven respondents supporting the objective fully, and almost everyone else supporting partly. The overwhelming importance of the wildlife dimension of Cherry Hinton Hall is significant not only in the context of the Masterplan but also for any other proposals which might emerge; whatever is done with this space, people will be very intolerant of a development that impacts adversely on the wildlife of the park.

As to the way the Masterplan addresses this issue, there is still strong support, with over half the respondents fully in agreement with the Masterplan, but a third of people only agree partly. The comments on this issue help to clarify where people's doubts arise.

One of the major issues is the balance between the park as a natural space in which wildlife lives, and the park as a place of entertainment for people. Where and how this balance can be struck is not necessarily a point on which people agree, but several concerns are raised about this, based in part on past experience of the authority's approach. The play area in the vicinity of the pond is a prime culprit in this respect and is seen to have created disturbance to indigent wildlife.

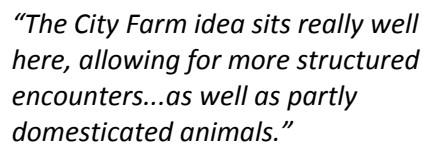


*"I don't think having lots of children around the pond will aid the wildlife."*



*"Please don't repeat the mistake of the play area around the pond."*

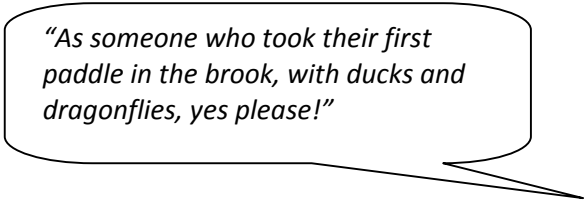
City Farm advocates see an affinity between their objectives and those of the Masterplan for wildlife, partly because it too offers encounters with animals.



*"The City Farm idea sits really well here, allowing for more structured encounters...as well as partly domesticated animals."*

There are also concerns that the work of implementing the Masterplan will disturb the wildlife unless it is managed carefully; one or two people also draw attention to undesirable wildlife in the form of rats. The comments made about wildlife identify a wide range of species and if these are correct, (and whilst respecting the signage comments noted earlier) it would seem desirable to have some information at the entrance to alert visitors to the biodiversity of this park.

There is a lot of support in these comments, again emphasising how important this is to people, and suggesting the Masterplan handles this reasonably well.



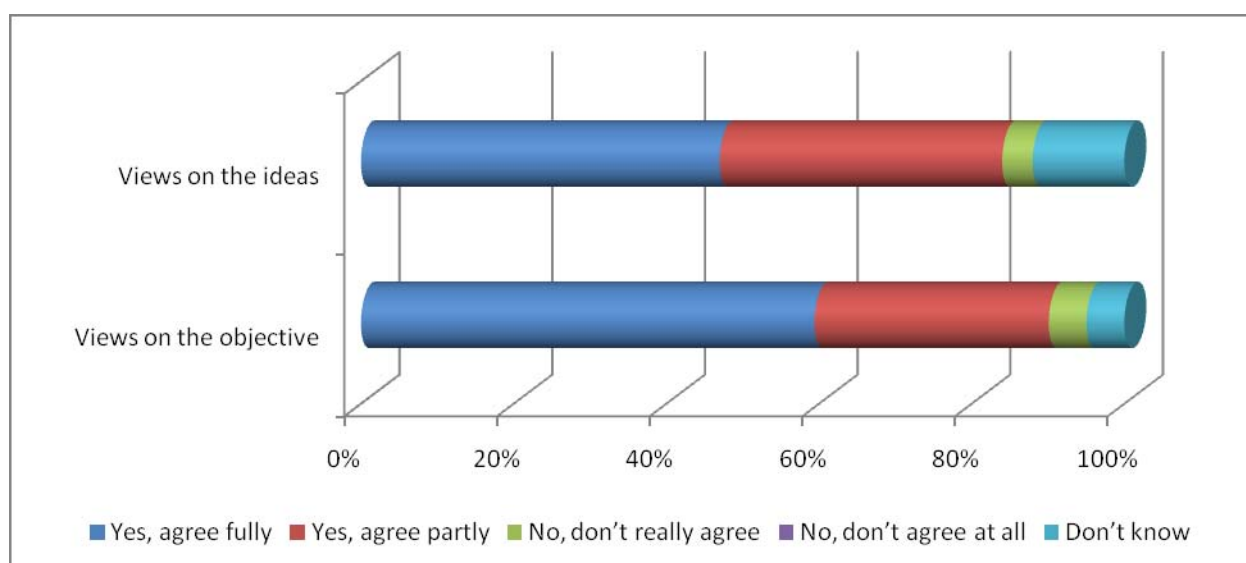
*"As someone who took their first paddle in the brook, with ducks and dragonflies, yes please!"*

## 11 Sport and Play

The Masterplan also examines the sport and play facilities on the western side of the park, keeping these much as they are but raising the possibility of improved changing, toilets and catering.

People's views on this objective, and the way the Masterplan addresses it, are given below:

Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the objective	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	60%	47%
Yes, agree partly	31%	37%
No, don't really agree	5%	4%
No, don't agree at all	0%	0%
Don't know	5%	12%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	243	227



There is support for the Masterplan's aim here, with three in five respondents fully supporting this goal, and most others supporting at least partly. Just 5% of respondents disagree with the objective; these are more likely to be regular or occasional visitors, with rare visitors more likely to disagree. Older people have more reservations about the Masterplan goal here, but even so most support it fully. People with children – who might be thought to have the biggest stake in this area of the park – are strongly supportive of the Masterplan, with over 70% fully supportive.

As to the delivery, about half of respondents fully support the Masterplan proposals, and most of the rest partly support. Disagreement is almost non-existent, but there are a substantial proportion of don't knows on these issues, one in eight of the total. People with

children at home are much more supportive of the Masterplan on delivery as well, and 55% support it fully, in comparison with 40% of those with no children; there are few don't knows among those with children at home.

Comments endorse the idea of keeping an area for sport and play, but also keeping it contained. The opportunity is also taken to remind us that several people are disappointed that equipped play has been allowed to stray from its allotted place, as they see it.

*"I agree that these facilities should be kept to the area that they are in now..large, yet discreet...I like it."*

*"This makes sense..I'm not sure why play facilities were put on the bird island...I'm amazed it was allowed."*

Whilst the Masterplan approach is broadly welcomed, there is little apparent interest in expanding sport and play provision at least in terms of space.

*"It is important that children have somewhere...it is good to see that the plans have not allowed [this] to intrude on other areas of the park."*

What sits within the space, though, is a different matter and several people would like to see a wider, or better, range of play opportunities for children of different ages within the existing boundaries of the play area.

*"The playground desperately needs new equipment the slide...still has not been replaced...the playground does not seem complete without [it]."*

*"I'd like to see some more varied play equipment."*

Other comments concern the suggestions of a cafe (mixed views, but several would welcome this) changing facilities (would be welcomed by parents of toddlers) and the desirability of relocating the new play equipment by the pond into the space allotted in the plan for children's play – a move which would attract a good deal of support. There are also comments, though, that ask that the number of structures in the park be kept to a minimum, to avoid it becoming over-developed. There is also a suggestion that a trim track would complement the circular path route.

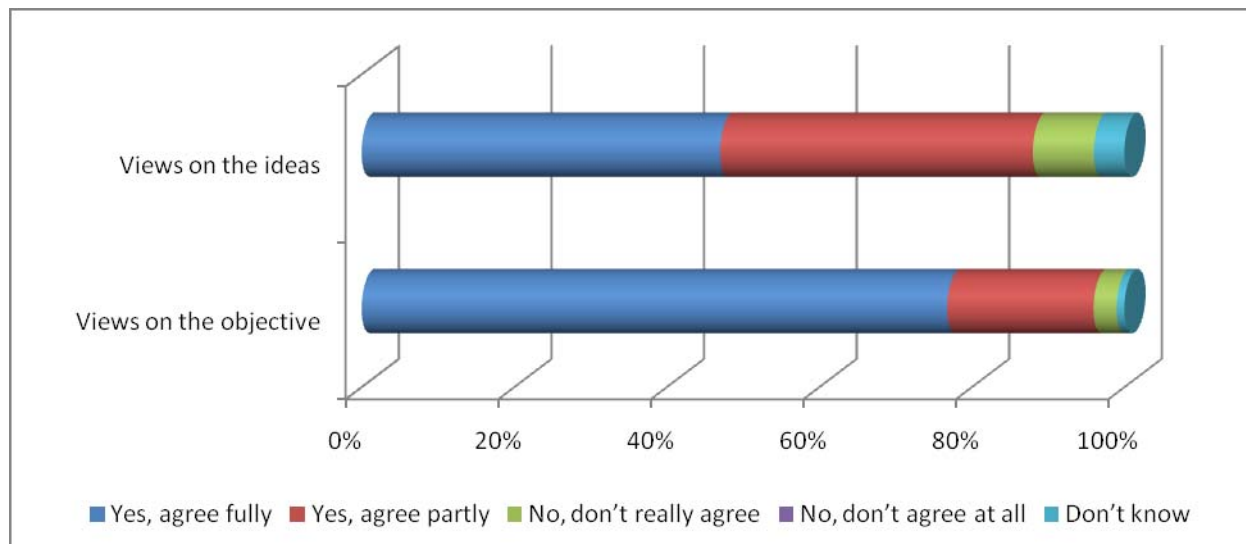


## 12 Overall

The overall aim of the Masterplan was determined by the first phase of consultation; the retention of the character of the park, while improving its fabric, facilities and biodiversity. The Masterplan was also drawn up to keep, and even enhance, what people said they value most about the park, while tackling those things that were identified as less attractive.

Having seen the detail of the Masterplan in each of eight different areas and issues, people were asked to comment on the overall objective, and the way the Masterplan tries to deliver this.

Response	Proportion of respondents	
	Views on the objective	Views on the ideas
Yes, agree fully	76%	47%
Yes, agree partly	19%	41%
No, don't really agree	3%	8%
No, don't agree at all	0%	0%
Don't know	1%	4%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>246</i>	<i>230</i>



There is a strong agreement with the Masterplan objective (which was itself derived from consultation, emerging very strongly from the focus groups); three quarters of respondents agree fully with this aim. Such uncertainty as there is arises among those aged 26-64, and among those with children at home.

There is also agreement that the Masterplan delivers this, but it is more qualified, with about half of all respondents agreeing fully with the Masterplan approach, and a similar, slightly

smaller proportion agreeing in part. The more qualified view comes particularly from those with children, and from adults under 45 years of age.

The overall comments do spend much of their time summarising or reinforcing comments made earlier under more specific headings. We therefore find comments again stressing the significance of wildlife, the need to remove the new play area, the problems of security, the need to keep new structures to a minimum, and so on. There are also comments stressing how a City farm will complement the Masterplan and help to achieve the stated objective.

There are some “new “ comments, nevertheless. One notes that the Masterplan offers very little that is new to younger park users, which they deprecate. Another suggests that the plan offers nothing for older people.

*“Virtually none of the ‘new money’...benefits anyone under the age of 16, or families...this is shocking.”*

*“Space for older people to exercise would redress an imbalance in age focus.”*

There are concerns about how the implementation might affect the Folk Festival, and it is clear that festival aficionados will need some reassurance on this important aspect. There are also more general concerns about the Council’s capacity to deliver the plan, or to afford to keep the site up to the standards the Plan is anticipating, especially at a time of financial stringency.

There are also some overall comments, some of which are negative but most of which are positive, encouraging, and supportive of the work done thus far.

*“This is a well balanced, and well thought out plan, with some minor tweaks only required.”*

*“The plan is a nonsense.”*

*“Too urban contrived...”*

*“The plan as a whole is a wonderful project...local people should be involved as much as possible and encouraged to participate.”*

*“Just get on with it!”*

*“Well done to everyone involved in this project.”*

*“...and the ideas are very good indeed...I think that the hall will benefit greatly.”*

## 13 Other ideas

The Masterplan was drawn up using the results of earlier consultation with both local residents and local stakeholders; this included some discussion of ideas and uses for different areas of the park, and some of these found their way into the Masterplan after endorsement in that consultation. The City Farm proposal had not emerged at that time, so it was never considered as part of the creation of the Masterplan; its inclusion as a possibility in this consultation is the first time it has been appraised in this way.

However, we did not want this to be simply a discussion of one proposal, whatever its merits might be, and therefore invited people to indicate other ideas, prompting their discussion by mentioning the city farm and also an art space, and a project to help unemployed young people – two other ideas that had been suggested at different times.

Whilst many people took the opportunity to discuss other ideas in this space, the main focus of discussion was on the city farm. We have examined the comments people made and divided them according to whether they favour the city farm idea (this includes those who favour, but with reservations) or oppose it (including those who think it is a good idea, but not for this location.)

A total of 187 respondents mention the City Farm in their answer to this question, and of these 131 (70%) are in favour of siting a City Farm at Cherry Hinton Hall, while 56 (30%) are against. Support for the City Farm is thus at a similar level to support for some of the other elements in the Masterplan. Unlike other elements of the Masterplan, however, the minority view is one of opposition, rather than caution.

Those who favour the City Farm tend to be younger than the opponents. Over 80% of 26-44s responding to this consultation favour the farm, but just over a quarter of over 65s do so; older people are much more likely to oppose the idea. There is no significant difference between the genders on this idea, but people with children are much more positive about the farm idea than those with no children, and so too are people with disabilities. City Farm supporters include many who use the park frequently, but the most frequent park users are less supportive of the idea overall.

Interestingly, farm opponents are stronger supporters of the Masterplan; those who favour the farm are more cautious in their support of the objectives the Masterplan is seeking to achieve. This suggests a slightly different overall vision for the park on the part of farm supporters.

The farm proposal receives some backing, too, from local groups and organisations. In addition to the group promoting the idea in the first place, the proposal is backed by some other local organisations including local faith groups and groups working with children and young people. However, the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall are firmly opposed to the idea.

Some advocates of the City Farm are clearly talking about a community garden rather than a livestock facility, and some are also clearly thinking on a different scale to others. Nevertheless, there is plenty of common ground in the argument used to support these ideas.

The advocates of a city farm draw attention to several perceived benefits. The most commonly mentioned is the **educational value** of such a facility, particularly to children and young people but also to adults. A City Farm would provide an opportunity for people to learn about animal husbandry and care, food production, agriculture, and even rural life in general.

*"An extremely valuable educational resource for both children and adults...nothing like it exists at present."*

*"A project that would involve all ages...ideally located close to a large number of...schools."*

These general educational benefits are expanded on by others to embrace some specific issues surrounding the production of food and the maintenance of a sustainable agricultural environment.

*"City Farm...needs to be considered...looking at alternative ways of providing food, and teaching people about where their food comes from."*

*"City Farms...have a lot to teach about biodiversity, sustainability, and working the land ethically."*

Alongside these educational benefits are substantial **entertainment benefits**; the City farm would not only educate, but would be an attraction in its own right which would serve to increase the attraction of the park to local people, enable the park to offer a wider experience to the visitor, and draw a wider audience.

*"It would provide a facility not found elsewhere in the city."*

*"It would be another attraction and reason for people to visit the park."*

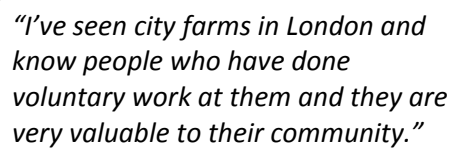
This aspect of the proposal is very often linked to **children** visiting the park, and many parents comment on how much their children would like it, and potentially learn

*"Children can become involved with farm life, not just on occasional visits to places like Wimpole."*

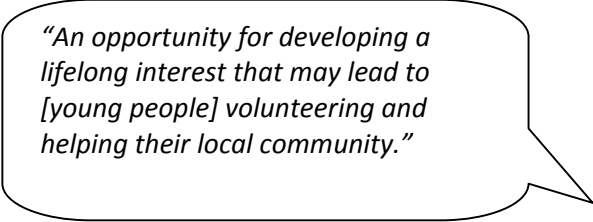
*"As a parent with small children I think it would be fantastic...easily accessible by bike and bus...it would be really well attended."*

from it.

A third dimension of the City Farm proposal is its potential to aid and support **community cohesion**. Different proponents of the scheme address this in different ways; the City Farm could help to provide constructive activity for local young people who might otherwise be drawn into anti-social activity; it could provide an outlet for local unemployed people, especially young people; it could bring people from different ages and backgrounds together with a shared objective and responsibilities. It would also be a cheaper option, and therefore more accessible, than Wimpole or other similar ventures further afield.



*"I've seen city farms in London and know people who have done voluntary work at them and they are very valuable to their community."*



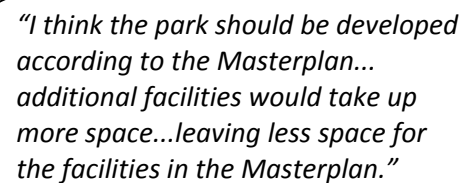
*"An opportunity for developing a lifelong interest that may lead to [young people] volunteering and helping their local community."*

Some extend this idea of cohesion further and argue the **therapeutic benefits** of working with animals, for instance in the context of improved mental health.

Those who oppose the farm do so on several different grounds. There are several who **like the Masterplan** as suggested, and who see a City Farm as obstructing the ideas in the Masterplan or compromising the overall objective of the Plan.



*"[the] Plan is good...no sheep or farm please!"*



*"I think the park should be developed according to the Masterplan... additional facilities would take up more space...leaving less space for the facilities in the Masterplan."*

The spatial issue is one echoed by others, who see difficulty in accommodating a City Farm within the Hall without damaging the ethos of the park or the other aspects that make it attractive. Some also draw attention to the fact that the Masterplan does not indicate what the **space requirement** of the farm would be, nor of how it might interact with other uses of the neighbouring space.

*"I have seen little detail about how the two concepts [farm and park] are to be fully integrated."*

*"Without knowing what it will look like, how can anyone have an opinion?"*

Other comments are directed at the **perceived impracticalities** of a City Farm, or at least a City Farm in this location. People here are concerned about the compatibility of a farm, with its associated impact, with the other uses of the site on an everyday basis and at festival times. Some dismiss the idea; others accept many of the arguments in favour, but make suggestions of other sites that would be more suited to such a use.

*"An extremely impracticable idea...do not ignore the...experiences of such farms that have suffered closure because of foot and mouth, [etc.]"*

*"Farm is a barmy idea – smell, noise, traffic would all conflict with basic ethos of the space."*

Some opponents disagree with the cohesion argument; they see a farm as essentially aimed at children and young people, and offering them very little, at some cost to a space they cherish. Others also disagree with the educational argument, suggesting that a City farm will not be a real farming environment and will not provide the insight being claimed for it.

The City Farm debate really dominates this question to the exclusion of other ideas, but some are suggested. The art space has both supporters and detractors, but really attracts little interest either way. There are a handful of comments suggesting stronger integration of the hall building, by making the inside of the building a resource within the park – a museum gets some support, but so do other uses. The cafe is also a welcome suggestion and one reason why some people like the City Farm is that they see potential for this to make a cafe viable.

The main area for additional comment, though comes from Folk Festival-goers, who are very concerned and anxious about how the Masterplan generally, and the City farm specifically, might affect their festival.