



## Cambridge City Council

To: Executive Councillor for Arts Sports & Public Places  
Report by: Streets and Open Spaces  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011

### **Cherry Hinton Hall Improvements Key Decision**

#### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 Community Service Scrutiny Committee recommended on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010 that Officers commissioned an independent report on the site feasibility of a City Farm at Cherry Hinton Hall.
- 1.2 The finalised report at Appendix A - 'A City Farm for Cambridge' (The Report) has researched and provided a comprehensive overview of the consultation completed to date and through a series of new individual stakeholder meetings specifically relating to the City Farm proposal, provided details of the differing, and opposing views on the proposition at Cherry Hinton Hall.
- 1.3 'A City Farm for Cambridge' concludes with recommendations on whether or not Cherry Hinton Hall is a feasible site for a City Farm as well as providing indicative suggestions as to other possible sites within, and close to Cambridge City, outlining the possible factors and criteria which should be considered in assessing these.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:
  - a) Instruct Officers to proceed with project appraisals and funding applications in respect of the hard, soft landscape and public buildings of the central area of Cherry Hinton Hall Park as outlined in the original Masterplan.

- b) Instruct Officers to work with the Folk Festival Management where possible to mitigate the impact of these proposals on the festival layout. This not to compromise any strategically placed landscape features outlined in the original Masterplan which will enable the Council to preserve and enhance the grounds, ensuring the primary function of a public park continues for current and future generations.
- c) Provide support to the City Farm group in researching the possibility of locating a City Farm at an alternative site within the city.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The proposal to develop a City Farm for Cambridge first came to formal consideration by the City Council in the course of considering the Masterplan for Cherry Hinton Hall, which was taken to Community Services Scrutiny Committee in 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010. The Council had been made aware of this proposal, and of the apparent desirability of locating the farm at Cherry Hinton Hall, whilst it was preparing a citywide consultation on the Masterplan earlier in the year, and opportunity was taken to add an additional question to the Masterplan consultation to seek public opinion on a City Farm at this location.
- 3.2 Residents (and other interested parties) gave the overall Masterplan, and its constituent elements, strong support in the public consultation in 2010. The Masterplan also attracted the committed support of the Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall, a group of local people established to ensure that the park's ethos and qualities are protected and enhanced. As to the City Farm idea, the response showed that the proposal had significant support, but also that there was substantial opposition to a Cherry Hinton Hall location.
- 3.3 At the Community Service Scrutiny Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010 The Executive Councillor considered a report and approved the officer recommendations: -
  - (i) Approve the components of the masterplan
  - (ii) To instruct officers to undertake a project appraisal of the masterplan for future consideration by Community Services Scrutiny Committee;

- (iii) Authorise officers to deliver the ChYpPS Big Lottery funded elements of the plan around the pond area;
- (iv) Support the principle of a City Farm and to instruct officers to work with the City Farm Project to prepare a feasibility study; and
- (v) To liaise with the Folk Festival project team to integrate the masterplan with operational requirements of the Folk Festival.

#### **4.0 Feasibility methodology, key objectives and outcomes.**

4.1 A City Farm for Cambridge – A Site feasibility report for Cambridge City Council report (The report) details research and examines the ways in which different City Farms operate across the country and discusses the advantages and disadvantages a City Farm can offer. The report research included a series of one to one meetings with different interest groups and community representatives with a strategic interest in the proposal, including a representative of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens.

4.2 The feasibility study and subsequent report was commissioned to research and answer three key questions, these are summarised below along with the outcomes recommended:-

- Is a City Farm feasible in the space available at Cherry Hinton?;
- Consider factors such as the space itself, the impact on the Masterplan, the proposed location in relation to other activities in the park, and
- the impact on neighbouring uses, with particular reference to the Folk Festival.

4.3 The report considered and made recommendations on issues that arose in considering the development of a City Farm, and (following on from that) what criteria could be used to assess the suitability of sites for a City Farm in Cambridge? What other sites might be available if Cherry Hinton Hall were deemed unsuitable?

4.3.1 The report concluded that there are potentially several other sites, which could be researched and may be suitable to have a city farm on. Many of these sites are not owned by Cambridge City Council and in the first instance the City Farm would need to approach the owner with a proposal.

4.4 The Masterplan consultation reveals differing, and opposing, views on this proposal, The report addressed how well founded these different views were, and how far should these influence the Council's decision on this proposal?

4.4.1 It was concluded that some of the views are well founded; others are not. The assessment of feasibility addresses this and the soundness of the various observations made were appraised in the process of selecting criteria.

4.5 In conclusion the report recommended that a City Farm was not feasible at Cherry Hinton Hall for the following reasons:-

- Incompatibility with the continuation of the Folk Festival annually at the Hall;
- Although the City Farm concept was supported well during the Masterplan consultation in 2010 there was equally strong support to develop the masterplan which had already been presented. This has created a divergence of opinion, weakening the likelihood of gaining wider community support needed for success; and
- The risk and implications to the Council should the City Farm venture not be successful.

## **5. Implications**

### **5.1 Cherry Hinton Folk Festival**

The Cherry Hinton Folk Festival is a major national festival, which is hosted in the hall grounds at the end of July each year. The 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 site.

Cambridge City Council is committed to retaining the Folk Festival at Cherry Hinton Hall and this decision means that any proposal has to be made to work as far as permissible whilst not compromising or having significant long term detriment of the primary use of the Hall grounds as a public park.

## **5.2 Financial Implications**

The masterplan has been provisionally costed using real measurements/quantities and using current day prices.

5.3 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 currently eight pre-approved projects.

## **5.4 Staffing Implications**

Potential officer time implications dependant approval of recommendation on the input assisting City Farm in developing alternative sites.

## **5.5 Equal Opportunities Implications**

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

## **5.6 Community Safety Implications**

None

## **5. Background papers**

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

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

## **6. Appendices**

Appendix A – A City Farm for Cambridge – A Site feasibility report for Cambridge City Council by Phil Back Associates Ltd, April 2011

## **7. Inspection of papers**

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

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