

Cabinet

30 August 2016

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration – Councillor J O'Boyle

Ward(s) affected:

St Michaels

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of Place

Title: Charterhouse Heritage Park and Trail

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The draft Local Plan was approved by Cabinet on January 12th 2016. The plan is expected to be adopted in Spring 2017. An aspiration within that plan is for a 70 acre Heritage Park based on Charterhouse and London Road Cemetery, together with associated links, which are included in the emerging Local Plan (policy HE3).

These proposals have been developed further by the Historic Coventry Trust and their masterplan is included as Appendix A to this report. Fundamental to this vision is showcasing the city's heritage (the 14th century Charterhouse and Joseph Paxton's London Road Cemetery are both grade 1 listed) and providing high quality walking and cycling links to the University, City Centre, adjoining neighbourhoods and beyond. However, much of the land involved is not within the ownership of Coventry City Council or the Historic Coventry Trust.

The proposed walking and cycling links are shown in Appendix A. The route alongside the River Sherbourne will form part of the city's primary cycle network. An important element of the plan is that these routes are set in green corridors.

The Heritage Park could create a unique heritage and recreational asset, adjacent to the city centre, which will be transformational in terms of the perception of the city as a place in which to live, learn, work and visit.

The proposals address a number of the Council's corporate priorities within the themes of 'globally connected' and 'locally committed', they also support Coventry's 'City of Culture' bid.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Reiterate its support for the concept of the Coventry Heritage Park and associated links as set out in the Council's emerging Local Plan as approved by Cabinet on January 12th 2016.
- 2) Endorse the development of a Supplementary Planning Document to support and detail the delivery of the Heritage Park and associated links once the Local Plan is adopted.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix A – Plan showing the vision for the Heritage Park and associated trails.

Background Papers

None

Other useful background papers:

Cabinet Report 12th January 2016: [New Coventry Local Plan - Publication Draft \(2011-2031\) and the Updated Local Development Scheme \(2016\)](#)

Report available from: : www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Charterhouse Heritage Park and Trail

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Coventry is very fortunate in having a number of important historical sites and buildings. However many of these are little known and are vastly underexploited. In recognition of this, the emerging Local Plan contains a policy (HE3) which sets out the concept of a 70 acre Heritage Park based on the 14th century Charterhouse and Joseph Paxton's London Road Cemetery, together with associated walking and cycling links.

1.2 Policy HE3 states:

Proposals for a City Heritage Park in the grounds of the Charterhouse and London Road cemetery will be supported along with measures to improve linkages to the area along the River Sherbourne (between Charterhouse and Far Gosford Street), the former Coventry loop railway line and across the London Road. Proposals that are detrimental to the establishment of the heritage park and the improvement of linkages will be resisted.

1.3 Section 13 of the Local Plan sets out a variety of means by which the City Council can help make the Plan's policies a reality. This includes working with external partners and landowners and the use of Council land holdings.

1.4 The draft Local Plan, including policy HE3, was approved by Cabinet on January 12th 2016 and this plan has now reached the 'examination in public' stage. The examination in public has already commenced with 2 weeks of hearings taking place in July. The hearings will recommence in October following the summer break. It is expected that the plan will be adopted in Spring 2017 and it is only then that the vision can become a material consideration in planning terms.

1.5 The Historic Coventry Trust has developed a vision for the Heritage Park concept and this is included in Appendix A. The principal element is the 70 acre park and regeneration of the Charterhouse and London Road Cemetery. The location of this park, close to the city centre and inner city neighbourhoods, will bring great recreational opportunities to many people and potential economic benefits to the city.

1.6 Critical to the success of this vision will be the creation of high quality and attractive walking and cycling links to connect the Park with the University and the City Centre which could be via the River Sherbourne and to Far Gosford Street and Gosford Green via the former Coventry Loop Railway Line. This will package together a number of historical assets that, in addition to Charterhouse and the Cemetery, will include the grade 1 listed Whitefriars monastery, the grade 2 listed Stephenson Sowe Viaduct and Gosford Green - the scene of the 'duel that never was' which saw Richard II become king of England.

1.7 The Heritage Park and Trail vision addresses a number of corporate priorities:

Globally Connected:

- Supporting businesses to grow - the promotion of the tourism and leisure sector and the provision of smaller scale office accommodation
- Improving access to skilled workers – provision of sustainable transport links
- Retaining skilled graduates in the area – the creation of an attractive campus and areas around the University will help to promote the city as a place in which graduates will want to remain

Locally Committed:

- Creating an attractive, cleaner and greener city – providing access to more greenery and open space managed to a high standard

- Improving the health and well-being of local residents – the provision of quality open space and safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes will encourage greater physical activity in an area where there are serious health inequalities and will promote the city's status as a 'Marmot City'
 - Reducing health inequalities – as above
- 1.8 The River Sherbourne route could also provide a key element of the proposed city cycle network. This route will ultimately link to Whitley (JLR) terminating at Baginton (Lunt Fort); it could also connect to the proposed Sowe Valley cycleway (the northern part of which has already been built). The Sherbourne Cycleway could also form part of a larger waterside cycling circuit comprising the Sherbourne, Sowe and Coventry Canal linking many parts of the city where it is necessary to address health inequalities and further the city's Marmot objectives.
- 1.9 It is envisaged that the Heritage Park Trails could link to the city centre via the University and will build on recent investment by the City Council in major public realm improvements to create quality links between many of the city's attractions. In addition to the historical sites already mentioned, these proposals will also improve connections to Whitefriars, another important Grade 1 listed asset. The provision of a major park on the doorstep of the University will help to further improve its attractiveness and therefore appeal to prospective students. The University are supportive of the concept.
- 1.10 Bringing the city's unique cultural and heritage assets together in this way will make a positive contribution to Coventry's bid to be UK City of Culture 2021.
- 1.11 The majority of the land for the country park is within Council ownership. However, much of the land required for the Sherbourne walkway and associated development between Gosford Street and Charterhouse is in private ownership as is all of the loop line.
- 1.12 Whilst the adoption of the Local Plan will ensure Policy HE3 is a material consideration, it is essential that given the importance of the Heritage Park and Trail in helping to achieve key corporate priorities that the Council sets out clear guidelines and principles for prospective developers. It is therefore proposed that Supplementary Planning Guidance should be developed for the Heritage Park and Trail. It is only through this process that the loop line concept can be defended within the planning process and this can only be done once the planning inspector has published her conclusions and recommendations for the Local Plan. On current timescales it is expected that this guidance (in the form of a 'Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD)) could be in place late next year.
- 1.13 An important element of the vision is ensuring its sustainability going forward. It is proposed that the Charterhouse Trust would maintain the Heritage Park and that the cycle paths themselves would be adopted by the City Council (which is in line with new sections of cycle path elsewhere in the city). Arrangements for managing the landscaped areas adjacent to the cycle routes will need to be considered as part of the development of the SPD.
- 1.14 In the meantime it is important to note that until the Local Plan and SPD are adopted, any applications for land covered by the vision will need to be considered on their merits in accordance with existing planning policy. However, it may be possible to negotiate with prospective developers to develop sites in a manner consistent with the concept as recently happened on part of the Loop Line. However, it will not be possible for planning decisions before this date to rely on this as a material consideration as they would run the considerable risk of costs being awarded against the Authority.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The Council's support for the Heritage Park and associated walk/cycle links is evidenced by the inclusion of policy HE3 and supporting statements in the emerging Local Plan. However, this will only become a material consideration in planning terms once the Local Plan is adopted; this is expected to be in Spring 2017.
- 2.2 Policy HE3 sets out the concept, but contains no guidance to prospective developers. To ensure the success of this vision it is essential that a set of development guidelines and design principles are set out. These would include items like the widths of cycleways, landscaped corridors and so forth. It is therefore recommended that a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is developed once HE3 is adopted policy. The earliest the SPD could be adopted is likely to be late 2017 as this requires considerable consultation with landowners and the public.
- 2.3 The alternative would be to simply rely on Policy HE3, but in the interest of bringing this vision to reality in a way that maximizes the benefits to the city, it is important the Council sets out the vision and the parameters required to achieve it.
- 2.4 The city's improving economy is resulting in greater interest in development across the city. Therefore it is important that the Council reiterates its support for policy HE3 and endorses the development of the SPD. This will assist officers in working with prospective developers to ensure the Heritage Park and Trail vision can be delivered.

3) Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The proposals were developed by Historic Coventry Trust in partnership with the Charterhouse residents group. Consultations have taken place with a number of organisations including the friends of London Road Cemetery, New Stoke Residents, Chamber of Commerce, Coventry Society, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Historic England and the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 3.2 The proposed Supplementary Planning Document will also be subject to consultation in accordance with the statutory process.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Work on the Charterhouse and grounds is already underway following successful grant applications. The timing of the other elements of the Heritage Trail will depend on the approval of the Local Plan and development of an SPD, the availability of grants and other funding sources.

5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources

5.1 Financial implications

The report does not contain any direct financial implications for the City Council. Funding sources are being explored as set out in the report. Any proposals with financial consequences for the City Council would be set out in a future report to Cabinet.

5.2 Legal implications

Supplementary Planning Documents build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on the policies contained within the Local Plan. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for producing SPD's.

SPD's should be prepared only when necessary and should be made in accordance with paragraph 153 of the National Planning Framework Policy. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that SPD's should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.

The SPD, if developed, would be a material consideration when considering future applications on the proposed Heritage Park site. It is hoped that this will ensure that developers submit applications in line with the SPD and policy HE3 when making planning applications on the proposed Heritage Park site.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The Heritage Park and associated links will contribute to a number of key objectives/priorities (see para 1.7 for more detail).

By linking some of the city's key heritage assets, the project will positively contribute to Coventry's bid to be UK City of Culture 2021.

The Sherbourne path will provide an important element of the city's proposed cycle network and will provide an opportunity for recreation in an inner city area and will also provide an opportunity for access to work for people without a car. This will help address public health targets in an area where there are indicators of poor health.

The project will also help boost leisure tourism and therefore will give a boost to the local economy.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There are no specific risks associated with the recommendations of this report. Depending on how the overall project is taken forward there could be risks for the Council, but these will be considered in a future report.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

The walking/cycling loop will be accessible to all including wheelchair users. The loop and park will also provide recreational opportunities in an inner city area where there are high indices of deprivation and public health concerns.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

The promotion and encouragement of walking and cycling has a positive impact on the environment by encouraging more sustainable modes of travel and reducing single occupancy car use.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Appendix A

