

Community Asset Transfer Opportunity – Land known as Bridge Community Farm, Mill Lane, Ellesmere Port, CH66 3NE

Site: Land known as Bridge Farm, Mill Lane, Ellesmere Port CH66 3NE.

Property Idox ref 16/01441/LAND

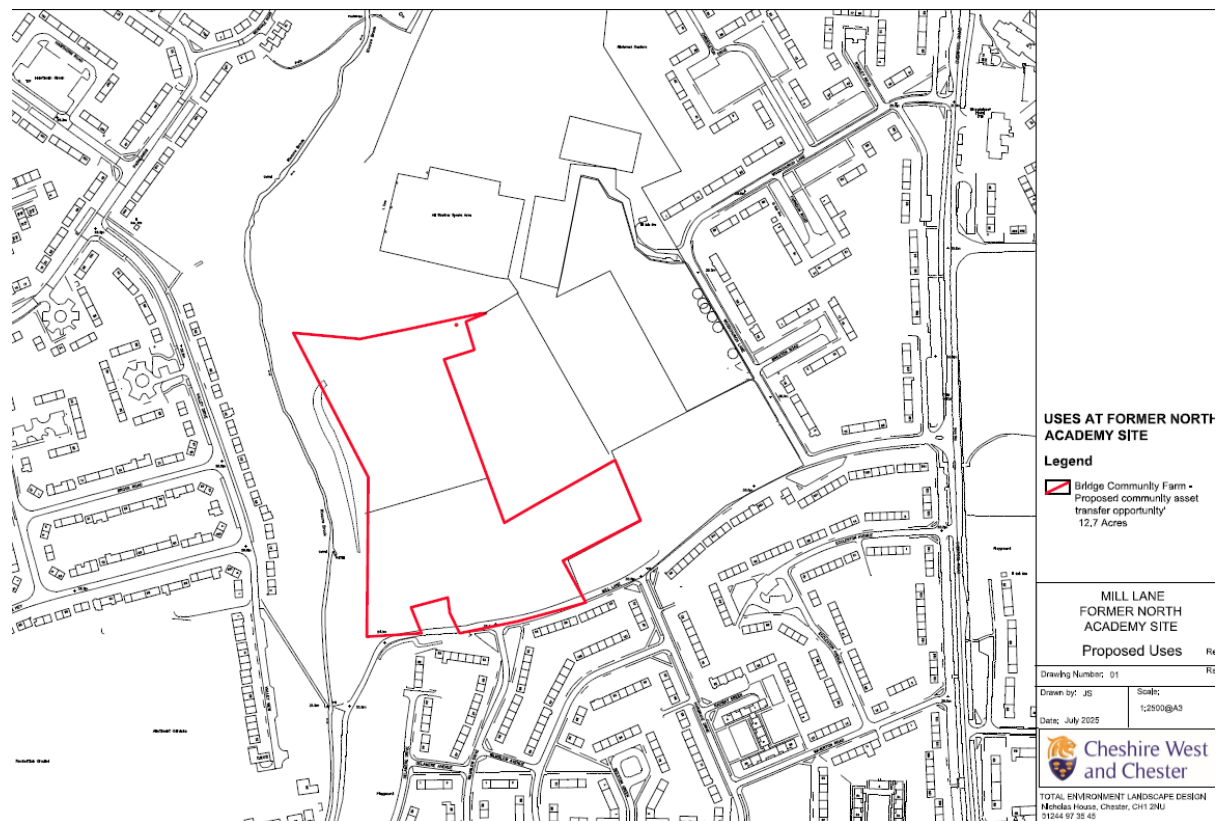
Details:

Cheshire West and Chester Council welcomes Expressions of Interest (EOI) from community, not-for-profit organisations based in Cheshire West, on acquiring a 35-year lease of the land known as Bridge Farm, Mill Lane Ellesmere Port CH66 3NE.



The land is situated in Sutton Villages ward and is shown edged red on the plan below and is approx 5.14 ha (12.70 acres).

A plan of the site is as below:



The land has been used for horticultural purposes and as a community farm that delivers services to people with learning difficulties and autism as well as providing a venue for hire by local community groups and others. The buildings and poly tunnels on site are not included in the lease and are owned by the current operator. They will be removed before a lease is completed, the car park area is expected to remain on the site. The land will be leased in its current condition.

The planning consent for the current use expires in December 2025 and the successful applicant will need to apply for planning consent for its proposed use.

The site is subject to Policy SOC6 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) and DM36 of Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) which seek to protect open space and sport/recreation facilities. The successful applicant will need to comply with policy or present a strong case to justify an alternative approach.

Expressions of interest are welcomed from sports groups which can comply with policy as well as groups which can support the Council's wider aspirations for the site.

A previous operator secured grant funding to plant an orchard and woodland border shown in the locations on the screen shot below. The Council expects the planting to remain, as any removal or loss of trees is likely to require the repayment of the grant.



The Council's vision is to promote a community-led approach across the borough to support adults with mental health conditions, autism and learning difficulties. This site could deliver that approach and the Council expects the successful applicant to demonstrate delivery of community benefits that could justify any loss of the site as sports playing field including:

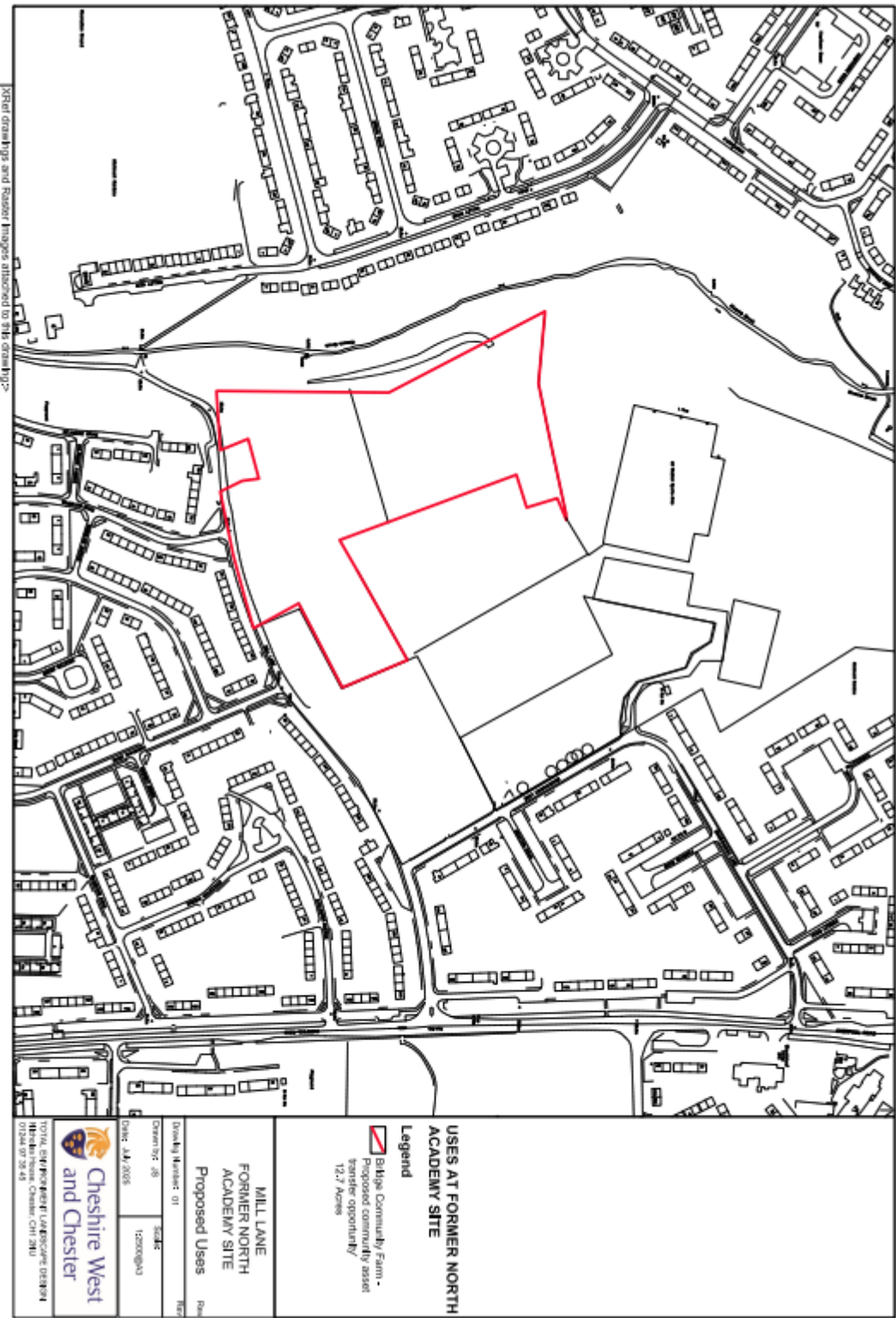
- A community farm for our mental health and learning disability residents to gain experience as volunteers, get ready for work opportunities, grow vegetables, learn new skills and look after small animals (subject to planning consent)
- Inclusive sports and wellbeing activities indoors and outdoors
- Café (for the public) to support playing pitch and informal leisure uses on the site with the potential for opportunities for people to gain work experience to enable them to move into paid work
- Organised group activities such as crafts, gardening/allotments, for people with learning disabilities/ autism/ therapeutic needs
- Spaces to rent for other groups to use

There is a specific need for activities and training to enable people to gain skills to enable them to move into paid employment. Applicants will need to evidence experience in successfully delivering these services to residents with autism, learning difficulties and mental health issues. The Council will work with the

successful applicant to develop a range of such services that meet the needs of Ellesmere Port residents.

Last Date for Expression of Interest (EOI): Midnight Sunday 24 August 2025

Location Map



Viewing:

Open viewing sessions will be held on 21 July between 11 am and 2 pm and on 25 July between 11 am and 2 pm.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) can be withdrawn at any time.

Community Asset Transfer – Invitation to Submit Expressions of Interest

Introduction

The Council recognises the vital role that community assets play at the heart of their local communities and the invaluable role they have in achieving the Council's corporate outcomes set out in the [Home | CWC Borough Plan](#). We want to work with the successful applicant to make this happen.

Cheshire West and Chester Council welcomes Expressions of Interest from community, not-for-profit organisations based locally on acquiring via a long term lease the property known as Bridge Farm, Mill Lane, Ellesmere Port.

Cheshire West and Chester Council recognise the significant community interest in this site and as such is requesting a level of details in EOI's for Bridge Farm which will be measured by an assessment criterion before inviting any group to the next stage of business case. We would like your organisation to cover **succinctly** the following areas within the form:

- Lead organisation who will hold a lease and take a collaborative approach to community development of the site with other clubs and groups.
- Proposed use of the asset.

How do you intend to use the asset?

- Recognition of the need to deliver services for adults with learning difficulties, autism and mental health issues.
- Potential opportunities to meet the requirements of Policy SOC6
- Evidence of knowledge, understanding and experience of successful delivery of services to adults with learning difficulties, autism and mental health issues.
- Details of proposed use highlighting any changes to the current use proposed.
- Evidence of experience of maintaining similar sites with an outline business plan including resources required with evidence of business sustainability.
- Evidence of specific technical qualifications/considerations.
- Knowledge, understanding and expertise. What the group(s) have done historically to provide confidence that they can deliver uses to comply with Policy SOC6 and services to support autism and learning-disabled adults. (i.e. appropriate professional qualifications).

Detail of the potential benefits to the community of the proposal including:

- Aspiration and ambition for service delivery.
- How has wider community engagement influenced your EOI?

Process

All Expressions of Interest received will be considered by the Council's Community Asset Transfer Panel.

Eligible applicants will then be invited to submit a detailed Business Case against which an informed decision for transfer will be made. The Business Case is the formal application stage of the process and can only be made by a constituted community group or organisation which delivers a service direct to the community. The Business Case is expected to outline community demand for the service, the governance and capacity of the applicant organisation, the financial viability of the proposal and the extent to which it contributes to delivering the Council's aims and objectives.

The final stage in the process will be the completion and transfer of the asset between the Council and the successful applicant based on the provision of a sustainable business model. The specific terms of the transfer agreement will depend upon the nature of the successful business case and will be negotiated with the successful applicant(s) on completion of this process. Organisations may be invited to work together to deliver services from the asset and we therefore encourage and welcome partnership or consortium-based proposals.

Full Details of the process can be found here: [Community Assets | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Next Steps

The deadline for submitting your Expression of Interest is **Midnight Sunday, 24 August 2025**.

The electronic [Expression of Interest form](#) can be accessed online.

Need Help?

If you have any queries about this document or the Community Asset Transfer process, please contact your local Communities Team:

Here's who to contact:

Chester and Ellesmere Port Communities Team