Business Case for a City Farm and Community Garden in Lincoln

August 2013
Executive Summary

Green Synergy is a Lincoln based charitable company limited by guarantee. It exists to create inspiring and therapeutic environments (encompassing plants and/or animals), in which people can socialise, learn and thrive. To date it has successfully delivered a range of community gardening initiatives in disadvantaged areas across the city.

Since Green Synergy's inception we have aspired to create a city farm and community garden with and for the local community. This business case sets out our delivery capabilities, rationale, plan and site preference for the project.

Overall we believe that a city farm has great potential to provide a valuable and needed resource for the city.
1. **Organisation Summary**

Green Synergy is a Lincoln based charitable company limited by guarantee. It was originally founded as a community group in April 2012, was incorporated on 12th February 2013 and accepted for registration as a charity in July 2013 (charity registration number pending).

1.1 **Mission**

Green Synergy exists to create inspiring and therapeutic environments (encompassing plants and/or animals), in which people can socialise, learn and thrive.

We believe that by reconnecting people with the environment and food production we can create synergic benefits for both society and natural ecosystems and help improve quality of life and sustainability.

1.2 **Vision**

Our vision is a thriving and healthy city with an enhanced quality of life; supported and enabled by networks of community gardens, farms and related environmental initiatives developed both for and with the community.

1.3 **Charitable Objectives**

1) To develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged communities of Lincoln in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society.

2) To promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public in Lincoln by:
   (a) the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources;
   (b) the relief of poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities;
   (c) the promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration.

   Sustainable development means “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

3) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit in Lincoln by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society. For the purpose of this clause ‘socially excluded’ means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship; youth or old age; ill health (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment; poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards; crime (either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).

4) The promotion and protection of good health in Lincoln in particular by the provision of opportunities to engage in therapeutic horticulture and agriculture.
5) To advance the education of the public in Lincoln in horticulture, agriculture and conservation of the environment.

6) To provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals in Lincoln who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life.

1.4 Organisation Structure

Green Synergy is governed by a Board of Trustees that is collectively responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation, ensuring that it remains in line with its core mission and objectives. Its individual members provide specialist skills and expertise and representation of our beneficiaries. The Board oversee the role of the CEO to ensure that the charity is correctly managed. There are currently three appointed officers of the Board: The Chair; Treasurer and Secretary. Membership is currently being increased to keep pace with the scale and scope of organisation. Further members with skills in: HR; senior management; legal; accountancy; technical horticulture and agriculture; and local and beneficiary representation are being recruited. By the end of our second year, we plan for our Board to comprise between seven and ten members.

1.5 Management and Delivery

The day to day responsibility of running the organisation is delegated to the CEO, Mary Whiting. Mary is the original founder of Green Synergy. She has a passion for community development and sustainable food production and developed the organisation around both of these subject areas. She has many years’ experience of managing and delivering community environmental projects in the voluntary sector, as well academic qualifications in community and rural development and direct experience of working on both city farms and community gardens and larger commercial farms.

As Green Synergy grows, further staff will be employed to manage and deliver projects and provide administration support. All staff will be recruited in accordance to our recruitment policy, and will receive full inductions and continued support and training.

(Please see Appendix 1 for further details of Trustee and CEO capabilities)

1.6 Track Record

The inception of Green Synergy was marked by the successful application for a grant to deliver a feasibility study into the potential for community gardening and city farming projects in Abbey Ward, Lincoln. This project was delivered in the summer of 2012 and provided a platform for our subsequent growth and delivery. Copies of the Feasibility Study Report are available on request.
1.7 **Current Projects**

Green Synergy currently delivers three main growing projects within Lincoln:

**Stamp End Community Growing Project**
This is an eighteen month long project funded by The People’s Health Trust. It aims to use the positive medium of community gardening as a focus for bringing local residents together to: share and learn skills; enhance community cohesion, social inclusion and capacity building; encourage and enable healthy eating and lifestyles; provide space and support to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers; and aesthetically enhance the local neighbourhood. Over the project life time we will engage with approximately one hundred beneficiaries from highly disadvantaged neighbourhoods, particularly targeting those who are isolated, socially excluded, vulnerable, suffering mental or physical ill health or are unemployed. The project engages with people by running three regular gardening sessions a week. These include a ladies only group and an open gardening group at the Developmentplus garden; street gardening sessions on Cannon Street and at Stamp End and container gardening sessions at Shuttleworth House. The different and informal settings for these sessions enable us to engage with people who may be unwilling or unable to travel very far from their homes. We also deliver wider community events under this project including hanging basket workshops; community bulb planting days; fetes and coffee mornings.

**Tower Community Garden**
We received a grant from the Cory Environmental Trust to build a garden on Tower Crescent for local residents. We subcontracted Groundwork Lincolnshire to landscape the site and have partnered with Tower Action Group in the development of the garden. Their local community knowledge and networks have been very important in gaining local trust and support and ultimately enabling the project to be sustainably adopted into the community. The project has been developed in response to local needs, particularly in reference to requests (from children, young people and adults alike) for the provision of activities for the younger generation to get involved with.

**Community Growing Support in Lincoln**
We have successfully secured a contract with Lincolnshire County Council to support a further four community growing projects in other disadvantaged areas across Lincoln and to continue developing the Growing Groups Forum. The Project aims to increase public awareness of community growing initiatives across Lincoln; increase participation in community growing; and increase awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of gardening and growing your own food. This project forms part of Lincolnshire’s Food and Health Programme and fulfils a current gap in provision for supported group growing. It will work alongside, and compliment, the work of the Master Gardeners Programme and the Healthy Cooking Programme.

Collaborative and participatory models of community development are used to ensure that our projects meet the needs of the local community. To date our projects have been very successful at engaging with hard to reach and vulnerable communities in the disadvantaged areas in which we work. Our beneficiaries tell us they enjoy coming to our sessions as they provide a safe friendly space in which to enjoy gardens and gardening, make friends and
socialise, learn new skills, build confidence, enhance mental wellbeing and provide stepping stones to new opportunities. Through all of our projects to date we have reached over 500 beneficiaries living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Abbey Ward.

Our projects have demonstrated a high level of needs within the neighbourhoods in which we work. We have engaged with a much higher level of beneficiaries suffering from mental ill health and or addiction issues than was projected. The projects have also highlighted that many of our beneficiaries rarely travel outside of Lincoln.

1.8 Networking and Partnerships

As ‘Synergy’ suggests, we believe strongly in the value of partnership working. The development of our organisation, projects and services to date has involved the creation of numerous partnerships and networks within the local Lincoln community. The development of our community growing projects within Abbey Ward has specifically lead us to create close partnerships with Developmentplus, the Tower Action Group and the Abbey Neighbourhood Team.

We have also created a new networking forum - Lincoln Growing Groups Forum (LGGF), which is a proactive network for allotment and wider growing projects in and around the Lincoln area. Its membership is made up of individuals and organisations who are involved in frontline project delivery. LGGF strives to strengthen and enhance collaboration and cooperation between individual community growing projects in Lincoln. It also looks for opportunities to construct and deliver partnership projects with its members. The group provides a platform for promoting and disseminating information on associated events, courses and projects. Meetings are held quarterly.

A full list of organisations we have worked with to date is provided below.

Voluntary and Community Organisations

- Developmentplus
- Revival
- Abbey Neighbourhood Board
- Abbey Street Team
- Tower Action Group
- Lincolnshire Master Gardener programme (Garden Organic)
- Spring Kitchen
- Nomad
- Transition
- Groundwork Lincolnshire
- Monks Road Neighbourhood Initiative
- 31st Scout Group
- Lincoln Permaculture Group
- Time Bank Allotment

Advisory Bodies

We are either members of or have sought advice from the following
Lincolnshire Cooperative Development Foundation
The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service
Urban Challenge
The Small Charities Coalition
The Charities Commission
Community Accounting Plus

Public Sector Bodies
Monks Abbey School
Abbey Children’s Centre
City of Lincoln of Lincoln Council: (Paul Carrick, Josie Bruce and Noel Tobin, Neighbourhood Working Teams; Kate Bell, Sustainability Officer; Cllr Fay Smith; Cllr Kathleen Brothwell and Cllr Peter West)
Lincolnshire County Council/ Public Health
Riseholme Agricultural College
Lincoln College
Local Community Policing Team, (Belmont Street)
Croft Street Community Centre

1.9 Capacity and Capability
We passionately believe in our mission and charitable objectives and have aspired to create a professionally run, trusted charitable company, capable of delivering multi-faceted externally funded projects.

Our total track record of funded projects to date is outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Received</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Dates &amp; Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Community First Round 1</td>
<td>Feasibility Study of community growing in Abbey Ward</td>
<td>£1,891.00</td>
<td>Apr-Sept 2012. Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Community First Round 2</td>
<td>Delivery of community growing sessions in Abbey Ward</td>
<td>£2,492.00</td>
<td>Oct 12-Feb13. Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Community Project (under-spend from Developmentplus)</td>
<td>Delivery of community growing sessions in Abbey Ward</td>
<td>£1,990.07</td>
<td>Feb 13-April 13. Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincolnshire County Council Community Wildlife Fund</td>
<td>Development of wildflower strips on Stamp End and Bee and Butterfly Borders on Cannon Street</td>
<td>£389.00</td>
<td>Oct 12- Feb 13. Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elspeth Thompson Bursary</td>
<td>Provision of materials and equipment for Abbey Community growing projects,</td>
<td>£2,370.00</td>
<td>April 13-April 14. current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Health Trust</td>
<td>Delivery of regular supported gardening sessions at Cannon Street/ Stamp End; Shuttleworth House and the Developmentplus Garden</td>
<td>£22,292.00</td>
<td>April 13- Oct 14. Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory Environmental Trust</td>
<td>Development of Tower Community Garden</td>
<td>£9,640.00</td>
<td>April 13- April 14. Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£53,814.07</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of these projects has enabled us to learn, grow and demonstrate our capabilities in:

- using participatory community development approaches to successfully deliver supported gardening to groups in highly disadvantaged communities;
- Building the required management capability and governance (including the adherence to and implementation of policies, procedures and financial reporting) to ensure best practice in the running of our organisation.
- Delivering externally funded projects on time, fulfilling the aims objectives and specified projects targets, and meeting a satisfactory standard for the funders.
- Working in partnership with other organisations; securing contracts; devising management and service level agreements and hiring subcontractors.
2. Local and Strategic Context

2.1 Overview

Lincoln is a small, but growing, city with a diverse, vibrant character. Whilst the overall socio economic status of the city is improving, it continues to face a number of challenges; just over 12% of the city’s area is ranked as being in the most 10% deprived areas nationally (City of Lincoln Council, 2012).

Childhood poverty is of a particular concern, with approximately one quarter of all children classed as living in poverty (IMD, 2010). This, in turn, has strong correlations to other issues affecting the city’s children, including poor educational attainment and childhood obesity. Adults living in the city’s deprived areas are also disproportionately affected by poor physical and mental health, and experience higher than average unemployment rates; unemployment was as high as 8.9% in disadvantaged wards (e.g. Park, Abbey) in February 2013 compared to 3.9% nationally (City of Lincoln Council, 2013).

Neighbourhood plans and the City of Lincoln Council Community Cohesion Strategy (2013) highlight a lack of community cohesion in some of the City’s most disadvantaged areas and among certain groups, namely young people, ethnic minorities and disabled people. Overall, Abbey ward’s score was consistently low across all indicators of community cohesions, including residents feeling a lack of a sense of belonging in their community.

Lincoln has over 600 acres of green space, including a number of valuable wildlife parks, (City of Lincoln Council 2012a) and a number of open, working farms and farm parks within a few miles of the city. However, for vulnerable people and/or those afflicted by poverty, unemployment, poor physical and mental health, and those without their own transport, these resources can be difficult to access.

Lincoln sits in a rural county which still grows more fresh produce than any other in the UK (Lincolnshire Cultural Strategy, 2010). The city itself used to be a place of much horticultural productivity with over 80 allotment sites in the past (Tann, 2008). There are now 18 sites, and although The Strategic Review of Allotment Provision (City of Lincoln Council 2012) found that provision is sufficient, allotment plots are in the wrong place to satisfy actual local demands. In particular, it was noted that there is a need for further provision in deprived areas in the north east (Glebe and Abbey Ward) and south west (Birchwood) of the city where there are much lower levels of car ownership than average, making local allotment provision all the more important. However, the review stated that there is a shortfall in funds to be able to fulfil the required level of provision and desired improvements to allotment service.

In summary, key needs and issues currently facing Lincoln include:

- Lack of connection to environment and food production
- Low attainment in education and employment and high unemployment
- Poor diet, physical health and childhood obesity
- High levels of mental ill health
• Low levels of community cohesion
• Mitigating carbon emissions

2.2 Meeting Local Needs
An increasing body of published research demonstrates the ability of city farms to meet these needs.

Reconnecting people to the environment and food production
In general, both urban and rural communities alike are losing their connection to and knowledge of food production. Through demonstrating, and directly involving, local communities in hands-on food production, city farms provide an important educational resource. This enables people to better understand where their food comes from, allows them to make informed choices about the foods they consume, and provides them with confidence to start growing their own.

City farms and community gardens help enhance the aesthetic and environmental value of the local area in which they are sited. They are often built on under-utilised, waste or derelict sites, where they bring about significant physical transformations and, in so doing, help contribute to the achievement of local biodiversity action plans through the provision of wildlife habitats, for example (Quayle, 2007).

Raising educational and employment aspirations and attainment
City farms offer valuable volunteer and training opportunities both formally and informally. Skills development can be recreational or act as a stepping-stone to higher education and/or employment. The hands-on method of learning attracts individuals disengaged with traditional education systems, builds the capacity of local communities and is accessible to those with mental health issues and learning difficulties. In addition to the alternative outdoor setting, the learning opportunities offered by community farms and gardens differ to those typical of formal education facilities in that they have active links with the community. Skill sharing is an important part of learning at community projects, empowering local people and promoting an enthusiasm for science (Quayle, 2007).

Improving diet and physical health
The act of gardening and farming can improve physical health through exercise and learning how to use or strengthen muscles to improve mobility, whilst hands-on food growing experience promotes the uptake of healthier diets and bridges the gap from field to plate (Quayle, 2007; Hine et al., 2008; Thrive, 2012). In turn, better physical health through exercise can help slow down the deterioration seen when someone has a degenerative illness, or help people recovering from a wide range of conditions including stroke and heart disease (Sempik and Aldridge, 2002; Thrive, 2012).

Improving mental health and wellbeing
Research has found that the physical wellbeing people experience from being involved with farming and gardening is closely related to, and overlaps with, mental and emotional wellbeing. Research by mental health charity Mind (2007) found that 94% of participants
stated that ‘green exercise’ had benefited their mental health. Reviews of care farms (Hine et al., 2008) and horticulture projects (Thrive, 2008) have shown many mental benefits including: improvements in self-esteem, well-being and mood; an increase in self-confidence, enhanced trust in other people and calmness; reducing feelings of isolation or exclusion; and simply feeling better for being outside, in touch with nature and in the ‘great outdoors’. Although community gardening and farming projects are not necessarily established with the intention of providing a formal therapeutic facility, therapy appears to occur holistically perhaps aided by the informal nature of these projects in comparison to other routes of therapy (Quayle, 2007).

**Increasing community cohesion**
City farms and community gardens play a valuable role in addressing social exclusion issues. They function very well as social hubs, allowing users to meet new people with similar interests or problems (Quale, 2007) and have been found to be particularly successful at engaging with vulnerable, excluded and isolated groups. Evidence from European and UK studies shows that care farming has been instrumental in reintegrating participants back into education, employment and society and therefore contributes to social inclusion (Hine et al., 2008). Community-growing projects have also achieved high levels of success in engaging with disaffected young people, providing an alternative to socialising on the streets (Quayle, 2007) and helping them to re-connect with training, education and employment (Hine et al., 2008). Farming and gardening projects in institutional settings, such as prisons, hospitals and secure mental health units, also lead to positive outcomes in helping to aid patients’ recovery, and easing re-integration into society through fostering cooperation, and providing a sense of focus an achievement (Page, 2008).

**Increased environmental sustainability and mitigation of climate change impact**
City farms help tackle global environmental issues such as climate change, by educating people on as waste recycling (including composting) and local food production (Quayle, 2007). They can directly contribute to a low carbon economy through increasing local food production and consumption. City farms also promote sustainable travel, through having policies and procedures to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling. Being sited within urban areas also ensures that they are actually accessible by these means. Many city farms demonstrate renewable energy production and sustainable building. A Regional example of this is the South Yorkshire Energy Centre, based at Heeley City Farm, Sheffield. The centre is based in an eco-refurbished terraced house and demonstrates renewable energy and sustainable building materials and techniques and provides advice, training and awareness-raising for a wide range of users, from building professionals to individual householders and school parties.
3. Project Rationale

Our vision for a city farm in Lincoln responds to the local needs described above by capitalising on the multiple benefits that such projects are shown to yield.

3.1 Mission

To create and maintain a productive, sustainable city farm and community garden for and with the community of Lincoln, in which people (especially those who are disadvantaged) can come together in a caring, supportive setting to learn, socialise and thrive.

3.2 Aims

The city farm will offer a unique opportunity for Lincoln, by creating a ‘hub’ focussed around food growing, livestock production and environmentally sustainability, this will:

- Enable and enhance sustainable socio-economic and environmental wellbeing and development.
- Enhance community cohesion, mental and physical wellbeing, and life skills,
- Increase people’s knowledge through participation, training and education in food production and consumption.
- Build capacity and improve social inclusion

3.3 Objectives

We will fulfil our aims by:

- Creating a fully operational working smallholding to include a market garden, whereby plants and animals, (and their associated products) are grown and reared for human consumption.
- Using high welfare, best practice systems to demonstrate the care and production of domestic and farm animals
- Using interactive interpretation to show and explain a range of commercial agricultural and horticultural practices from the past and present
- Creating wildlife areas to encourage native species
- Using renewable/ sustainable and low impact technologies wherever possible, to meet the on-farm energy and sanitation requirements
- Opening to the public for visitors to come and passively enjoy and learn
- Delivering an ongoing and varied range of projects (to include training, eco-therapies and structured volunteering) for the benefit of a broad sector of the local community.
• Targeting services to key audiences e.g., educational support services and schools; social services; mental health support services; unemployed people, young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEETS), disadvantaged, isolated, vulnerable and marginalised groups.
• Using a combination of participatory, bottom up and top down approach to governance, engagement and project delivery as a platform for building a value-based work place and community hub which helps to build trust, happiness, confidence and social capital
• Hosting events and workshops to highlight and celebrate cultural and traditional activities which are linked to farming and rural life
• Creating networks and partnerships with other voluntary, public and private sector organisations to: increase the number of people we can reach, expand our sphere of influence, enhance our range of services and, draw upon a wider body of related skills and expertise.
• Creating a lasting, sustainable legacy, through the development of a sound business model and mixed income stream

Overall we aim to create a project which will, like many successful examples of city farms and community gardens, will still be thriving several decades from now.
4. Project Description

It is not possible to provide an accurate project delivery plan, budget and cashflow forecast until we have secured a site. Therefore, what proceeds is a ‘vision statement’ for the initial development of a site of 5-6 acres, from years 0-3. It includes: the core elements we would like to include; the projects and services we could deliver; and key considerations we would need to take into account.

4.1 Horticulture

It is envisaged that the horticultural areas will be zoned into a number of different ‘gardens’ including:

Sensory, Pleasure and Therapeutic Garden
An area of approximately ¼ acre will be created into a fully wheel-chair accessible garden. This will encompass beds at various heights, use colour, sound, textures, scent, visual images, structures and taste to enable people of all ages and abilities to enjoy it.

It will be professionally landscaped and the design will be based on ideas put forward by farm stakeholders. Beneficiaries, volunteers and staff will largely undertake the soft landscaping of the site. Wherever possible, plants will be sourced by means of donations from people’s own gardens and other community projects. This beautiful, multi-sensory space will provide a number of functions and services: including:

- A place where visitors and project beneficiaries alike can simply relax and take in its tranquillity.
- Delivery of social and therapeutic horticulture, and other eco-based therapies.
- Provision of a multi-sensory experience for people with learning disabilities, mental health needs including dementia, a physical disability or a sensory disability such as partial sight or deafness.

Patchwork Garden
The inspiration for this garden comes from a successful community initiative in the nearby village of Reepham. The Patchwork Garden will be approximately ¼ acre and will be made up of approximately 20 individual plots. These will be leased to members of the local community for a ‘peppercorn rent’. There will be an emphasis on providing plots to first time growers, younger people, families, and people who would otherwise be unable, or unlikely, to take on an allotment. The plots will help directly re-connect people back to food growing; build participant’s skills and confidence in ‘growing your own’; help to meet the demand for allotment gardens and; act as a stepping stone and positive advert for encouraging people to take on a council allotment. Participants will be encouraged to swap and share produce with each other and donate any surpluses to friends and neighbours.
Main Productive Garden:
This will initially be roughly ½ acre in size and will incorporate main-crop vegetables and soft fruit cages. The productive garden will be used to generate income through the sale of produce on and off the farm and the use of produce in the farm cafe. Where possible we will grow heritage varieties and novel crops. A key aim of this garden will be to increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables available to, and consumed by, local disadvantaged communities. Therefore, in addition to selling produce from the farm we plan to set up a vegetable bag scheme. The bags will be delivered to key drop off points including: local schools, community centres and churches.

Orchard:
This area will cover approximately ¼ of an acre and will include a mix of traditional heritage varieties of apple, pear, plum, gage, quince, meddler, cherry, cob nut and filberts. Where possible, they will be grown on dwarf/semi dwarf rootstock. Fruiting should start within 2-3 years and good cropping levels achieved within 4-6 years. The fruit will be used in a variety of ways including: eating the raw product; processing into juices, pies, jams and preserves; and freezing.

Protected Cropping
Initially three polytunnels will be erected, each about 200m². One will be used for out of season crops and warm climate fruits, salads and vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, melons, cucumbers, aubergines. Another will be used for propagating and growing on ornamental plants including woody and non woody herbaceous perennials, herbs and bedding plants. The plants will be used to re-stock our own gardens, as well as being sold to the general public and local businesses. We will also use them in community gardens and hanging basket workshops around the city. The third tunnel will be designed as an all-weather, accessible garden space that will appeal to all age groups. It will include novel, sustainable ideas such as housing pets in winter and storing harvested water in large tanks, (complete with fish).

Overall, the various components of the gardens will provide hands-on growing and learning experiences for our broad spectrum of beneficiaries. They will be used to elicit the therapeutic value of gardens, help develop confidence and life skills and encourage and enable people to start growing at home. The gardens will demonstrate a range of sustainable, chemical-free gardening methods and techniques, including, for example, companion planting, water conservation, nutrient cycling, crop rotation and cultural and biological control of pests and diseases. The different gardens will also showcase various styles from low maintenance, through to cottage and kitchen gardening, Permaculture and no dig systems, raised beds, container and back yard gardening, vertical growing spaces, green roofs and market gardening. Some of the areas such as the productive garden and orchard will be integrated with the livestock systems. For example the chickens may be used to clear part of the productive gardens at certain times of the year; whilst the pigs may be allowed to clear windfall apples in the autumn.
4.2 Livestock

An important element of the farm will be the ability to provide a window into the world of agriculture. Keeping productive livestock will form a key part of the farm’s educational experience. Livestock husbandry and production requires careful planning to ensure the animals’ health and wellbeing and to make sure there is adherence to required legislation. Necessary considerations include:

- Feed and water requirements
- Housing and stocking densities
- Daily care routine, time and knowledge
- Animal health plans, bio security, specialist advice and veterinary care
- Breed types and suitability
- Opportunity and suitability for beneficiaries to engage with and care for animals (this will involve detailed risk assessments)
- Integration with other systems, e.g. horticulture
- Costs, start up and ongoing, fixed and variable
- Registration and licensing
- Sales and marketing
- Purpose - productivity/ therapeutic value/ profitability

Poultry

Chickens are one of the easier and most suitable types of livestock for small farming systems. Furthermore, their size makes them less intimidating for people unaccustomed to livestock and safer to work with than larger animals. These attributes will provide opportunities for a wide range of our beneficiaries, including younger children and those with special needs or mobility issues, to get involved with the practical care of the birds. We plan to run a high welfare, small scale, commercial, profitable, flock of approximately 300 free-range laying hens. This will require one acre of pasture, for ranging, at any one time. The area used will be rotated to ensure good grass cover. At certain times of the year the range will encompass parts of the productive garden and orchard. Birds will be bought in as point of lay pullets at 16 weeks old and keep them until they are 72-76 weeks old; the cycle will then start again. The birds will be housed in a specialist mobile poultry tunnel.

There is strict and comprehensive legislation for poultry keeping and egg production. We will ensure that our system meets all of the necessary requirements.

Pigs

We envisage keeping a small number of the rare Lincolnshire Curly Coated Pig. This breed actually died out in the UK in the 1970’s and has recently been re-instated using a gene pool from Eastern Europe. The Curly Coated Pig provides a fantastic link to Lincolnshire pig rearing heritage, as well as being a friendly interesting animal that is well suited to a small outdoor production system. We will start by buying in weaners and then, depending on our capacity and resources, begin to keep our own breeding sows and a boar. The herd will be registered with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. Offspring will largely be reared for meat, which will be used in our cafe, sold in meat packs and sold to local Delis and restaurants.
Some quality progeny may also be sold on to other keepers. We will base this system on one acre of land, in rotation.

Goats
Angora goats are farmed commercially for their soft, glossy ‘mohair’ fleece. This is sheared twice a year, and is loved by hand-weavers for spinning. Like many breeds of goats- and unlike most sheep- Angorans are friendly, inquisitive animals, with a gentle nature. This also makes them perfect for use in animal-assisted therapies, whereby they can be regularly groomed and walked. Goats are natural browsers rather than grazers; this trait can be exploited for carefully timed and managed trimming of the farm’s hedges. Stocking will also be based on approximately 1 acre of land in rotation.

Small animals/ pets
We will have a small animal area (up to ¼ acre), which will allow smaller children, and people with more sever physical and or mental disabilities to have a hands-on animal experience.

This area will include a range of animals including:

- A neutered pair of giant rabbits: Giant rabbits generally tend to be more laid back and less excitable than smaller rabbits. They are good natured and affectionate, making them perfect for using as therapy animals. They are also big enough to keep in a fenced area that people can enter and engage with them without risk of them being trodden on.

- Approximately 10 Lincolnshire Buff chickens. This rare, local breed of chicken first appeared in Lincolnshire in the 1850’s and was nearly extinct in the 1920’s. The breed has since undergone a re-development programme and has now stabilised. Lincolnshire Buffs have an appealing look and a calm temperament, making them perfect for the small animal area, whilst also enabling us to help preserve this locally historic breed.

- A small number of guinea-pigs. These are more suited than rabbits to being handled and will be used in animal-assisted therapy sessions. We will also run courses on best practice pet care for children, where they will learn to look after pets such as guinea pigs and rabbits.

During spring we may also adopt a few orphan lambs for bottle feeding. In future, the range of animals could be added to with quails and ducks for example. We will also look at the potential to run a small pet boarding service.
4.3 Conservation and Recreation

The Green
An area, approximately ¼ of an acre will be reserved as a clear lawn space. This may be managed by our goats, in between uses. The Green will be a multi-functional space where:

- Visitors can sit and relax and eat;
- Children can play safely;
- Events and activities can take place (such as fundraising fetes, open days, harvest festivals and exercise classes);
- We can host talks for school groups.

Wildlife areas:
Whilst the whole farm will have a positive impact on local wildlife, approximately ½ an acre will be specifically dedicated to native flora and fauna. Rather than create one single wildlife space, a number of areas will be constructed around the site, these could include: a (safely fenced) wildlife pond with dipping platform; wildflower strips and mini meadow area; native hedge-lined wildlife walk encircling the perimeter of the farm and; natural wooded areas. The wildlife areas will be used to further enhance the biodiversity value of the site and will also have a valuable role in education. They could also be strategically positioned to help provide physical screening from neighing properties.

4.4 Projects, Activities and Services
Projects will be tailored to the needs of people with: mental ill health; physical disabilities; special needs; addiction issues; people from ethnic minority communities; people who are socially excluded; young people not in education employment or training; elderly people; families and children.

The farm will continually run an ongoing range of educational, volunteering, therapeutic, social and cultural opportunities. Whilst it is not possible to provide a detailed delivery plan of projects, services and activities at this stage, we have provided an outline of those we would like to include:

- Seasonal cultural and heritage events for example: Apple Days; Harvest Festivals; May Day and Mother’s Day Celebrations; Easter and Christmas Events.
- Physical wellbeing and activity programmes; eco-therapy programmes;
- OCN/NVQ accredited training programmes in horticulture; agriculture; conservation and cooking;
- Hands on active volunteer programmes; after school clubs and curriculum based activities for schools
- Workshops in: pet care, cooking, growing your own, keeping chickens and Christmas wreath making for example.
- Groups and sessions such as: ‘farm fit’ activity sessions; Tai Chi; dance; local interest groups; community groups.
The sample timetable below gives a taste of the kind of activities and sessions we may run over the course of a week. The timetable does not specifically show individual volunteer activity; we anticipate that we will have an average of 10 independent volunteers per day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.00am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tai Chi on the Green</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30am</td>
<td>Staff and regular Vols arrive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Feed and water routine</td>
<td>Skills for Life Skills for Work Group</td>
<td>NEET Activity and Training Group</td>
<td>Mental Wellbeing Group</td>
<td>Farm Learners Accredited Training Session</td>
<td>Kids Farm Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.30am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00am</td>
<td>Tea Break/ activity change over</td>
<td>Special Needs Therapeutic Activity Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farm Produce Delivery Round</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Partners, Beneficiaries and Wider Stakeholders

The possibilities for partnership working are seemingly endless. We have already created links with many public, private and voluntary sector organisations, as described in Section 1. We will continue to build on these links, and create new ones with:

- Public sector bodies including: The Lincolnshire Health Trainers; The County Hospital; Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; HM Prison Lincoln and Probation Services; Social Services; Local GP’s; City of Lincoln Council; Lincolnshire County Council and Public Health; Lincolnshire Healthy Schools; individual local primary and secondary schools and academies; special schools; pupil referral units; children’s centres; Lincoln College; Riseholme Agricultural College and the University of Lincoln.
- Voluntary and community organisations including: local support groups; mental and physical health and wellbeing charities; women’s refuges and homeless shelters; environmental and conservation groups; wildlife and animal charities; gardening and allotment groups; organic and sustainable living organisations.
- Private sector organisations: local builders, landscapers and construction businesses; commercial horticultural enterprises; farms and agricultural support services; vets and many other local businesses.

4.6 Staffing

The overall development and management of the farm will be the responsibility of Green Synergy’s CEO. She will be supported by a team of staff who will execute the project delivery and daily running duties. It is envisaged that we will initially start with a livestock projects coordinator and assistant; a horticulture projects coordinator and assistant; and two core administrators. Core services such as education and training, volunteering and therapeutic provision will be integrated into the roles of the core project staff and CEO. We will ensure that members of staff are appropriately skilled and trained to fulfil these roles, and will offer continued professional development opportunities. Volunteers will also be integral to the running of the farm. They too will be properly supported and trained in their roles. As the farm continues to develop we will require additional staff for running the cafe and shop. We may also take on additional management staff as the overall duties of the CEO continue to grow in-line with the growth of Green Synergy as a whole.

The farm will be closely linked to our community outreach work and we envisage that staff from both the farm and the community projects will work collaboratively to ensure that each project helps and supports the other.

4.7 Financial Considerations

Although it is not possible to provide actual budgets and cash flow forecasts at this stage, we have of course already given considerable thought to the cost and financial viability of the farm. We estimate that to set up the initial infrastructure of the farm using professional contractors (including connecting to water and electricity services, clearing and landscaping the site and construction of buildings) could cost around £500,000 and that our annual salary costs for years 1-3 could be in the region of £150,000. External funding, both
monetary and in-kind, will be vital to the early development of the farm. We have already identified a range of appropriate sources of funding including: corporate sponsorship, grants, crowd-sourcing and fundraising events (a more detailed list of potential sources is available on request). Wherever possible we will also aim to reduce start up costs through sourcing in-kind contributions from interested local businesses. We have already found this to be a very successful source of help with our other projects, where for example, we have been pledged support to the equivalent sum of approximately £15,000 by Kier Construction Group.

Beyond the first three years we will aim to become increasingly self sustaining. Many city farms (including Stonebridge City Farm in Nottingham) are at least 50% funded by their own income generating projects, with some generating a much higher percentage of their own income.

We envisage that important income generating streams for our farm will include:

- The shop which will sell our own produce (both raw and processed), animal feeds, local crafts and souvenirs;
- The cafe which will have menus based around our seasonally grown produce;
- Sale of produce to delis, restaurants and other local shops;
- Commissioned services;
- Workshops;
- Events and fundraising activities;
- Donations.

If it were not possible to gain the required level of funding in the initial period to develop all of the projects and services listed above, we could alternatively phase these in over a greater number of years. Indeed many city farms have evolved quite organically over a number of years.

### 4.8 Timescales

The development of the farm’s core infrastructure and the main horticulture and livestock elements will be completed within three years. Beyond this time, the farm will continue to evolve and develop for many years to come. Key milestones for years the first three years are outlined below:

**Pre-start phase: September-December 2013**

- Secure lease on appropriate site
- Carry out further feasibility studies and consultation
- Formally identify beneficiary groups and partners
- Conduct site survey
- Design site infrastructure
- Refine business case into an accurately costed business plan
- Begin fund raising campaign
Development Phase: January 2013-December 2014
- Secure required funding
- Commission development team (architects, builders, Landscape designers)
- Start site development
- Run ‘get involved days’ for the general public, groups, businesses to help with elements of the build
- Collect donations of plants, and materials

Open Farm: January 2015

City Farm Year 1: January 2015- January 2016
- Continue with the soft landscaping elements of the farm including: planting up the gardens; planting trees and hedges; creating wildlife areas
- Start project delivery
- Start to phase in livestock systems

City Farm Year 2: January 2016-January 2017
- Continue with development of wildlife areas
- Continue to phase in livestock systems
- Start farm shop and cafe

4.9 Infrastructure and Planning
Space is a crucial factor: careful thought will be given to the layout and design of the farm to ensure that the site is used to its full potential, without exceeding its carrying capacity. The farm will encompass many different elements, projects and services. Wherever possible these will be integrated and inter-connected, ensuring that each fulfils multiple functions and helps support other elements of the farm. This model, based on Permaculture principles will help ensure a viable and sustainable business model.

Prior to developing any project or service we will first consider the:
- Size and scale
- Funding, In-kind contributions, support, expertise
- Environmental Sustainability
- Cost effectiveness and long term financial sustainability
- Value to beneficiaries: judged on therapeutic and educational value and ability to provide appropriate, enjoyable and worthwhile volunteering opportunities.
- Relevance to core mission and ability to fulfil aims and objectives

The farm will require buildings for animal housing, offices, toilets, meetings, activities, education and training and, ideally, a shop and cafe. We would like to construct these buildings using sustainable designs and materials. In the future we would like to be able to hire out rooms for community events and activities. The various elements of the farm will need to be linked through a network of paths. These will need to be hardwearing and fully wheelchair accessible. The site will need to have adequate security measures in place, including alarms and exterior fencing.
Waste and Recycling
Wherever possible the farm will aim to minimise its waste, harvest rain water and, fulfil its own energy requirements through renewable means. Overall we will aim to demonstrate carbon reduction techniques that are relevant and replicable to householders.

Our green waste and animal manures will be composted on site and used to fertilise the gardens. Compost and manure surplus to our requirements will be sold to nearby allotment holders and households. Providing the site meets the Environment Agency’s requirements, we should be able to compost up to 60 tonnes of waste under the provision of a waste licence exemption certificate. We may also be required to apply for PAS 100 certification prior to selling compost.

An environmental procurement policy will be implemented to help us fulfil our aspirations to be sustainable. We also ensure that we recycle our glass, plastic, metals and paper.

Water and Sanitation
Our requirement for non-potable water will, as far as possible, be fulfilled from rain water harvested from roofs. We would also investigate opportunities for installing grey water recycling systems, to help meet the demand for water required for flushing toilets and watering plants. In addition to flushing toilets we would also like to construct a number of composting toilets. Water conservation and efficiency will also be integral to all of our operations; this will include employing water conservation techniques in the gardens and polytunnels.

We have consulted with Anglian Water regarding connecting to the water mains and sewers. However, they are unable to provide specific information regarding feasibility and cost of connection without submitting a formal application for a specific site. Charges start at £380 for connection to a mains within two metres and rise to £1343 for a distance of 15 metres. There is also an infrastructure charge and subsequent charges if the traffic has to be disrupted.

Connection to the sewers is normally carried out by contractors and can cost around £800, depending on connection distance.

Energy Use
As far as possible we will aim to meet our electricity through renewable means including solar and wind energy for example (subject to planning consent). The roof structures offer opportunities for the placement of photovoltaic cells.

Buildings will be built with as low a U value as possible and, increasingly into the future we would also like to meet our heating requirements through non fossil-fuel means.

We have spoken with an electrician and Western Power regarding grid connection. We have been advised that we would need three phase supply and that connection charges would be in the region of £5,000. Looking into the future, we may be able to offset some of these costs by selling renewable energy back to the grid.
Land
Ideally we would need a flat, well drained site.
To be able to develop the site further we would require
- A minimum twenty five year lease (to enable us to satisfy funders requirements)
- Planning permission to erect buildings (for an office, classroom, toilets, animal housing, shop and cafe)
- Permission to trade from the land (ideally, the lease would be similar to a farm business tenancy)

Licenses, Permits and exemptions
We will need to apply for an agricultural holding (CPH) number with the Rural Payments Agency. We will then need to register with the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratory Agency (AHVLA) to be issued with unique flock/ herd numbers, and to ensure that we adhere to legislation for keeping, moving and selling livestock, pets and animal and dairy produce.

Planning
We have spoken with the City of Lincoln Council’s planning department regarding our aspiration to set up a city farm. Planning responded by saying that ‘the city farm project is one that planning would seek to encourage and would be a positive opportunity for the City.’ Once we have secured a site then we will need to submit detailed plans in order for them to consider parking, access and impact on surrounding residential properties would all be key considerations through the planning process.

Total Visitor Numbers
Established city farms have total visitor footfalls upwards of 30,000 per year. Farms of comparable size to the one we have outlined tend to average around 50,000 total visitors a year (Stonebridge City Farm in Nottingham has approximately 54,000 visitors per year). A sample breakdown of visitor numbers is outlined below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitors</th>
<th>Number of visits per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Volunteers</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Participants</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Visits</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Public (including visitors to shop and cafe)</td>
<td>12,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Opening Hours
Many city farms are open six or seven days a week. The presence of livestock will mean that staff will attend the farm 365 days a year. This will be worked on a rotational basis. The exact opening hours of the farm will be decided further down the line.
5. Potential Sites

The ability to deliver our proposed projects and activities is largely dependant on finding an appropriate site. Two potential sites have been considered and their relative suitability is outlined below.

5.1 Simon’s Hill Allotment, LN6 7QE

Site Description
The site is split into two sections; there is an area of approximately two acres within the allotment, an additional area of approximately six acres on the opposite side of the cycle path, adjacent to the river. The site is low lying, un-drained, and forms part of the designated flood plain. It is in the highest flood risk zone (zone 3). Any changes to land drainage would need to be approved by the Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board. We would also need to complete a flood risk assessment for the Environment Agency. Simon’s Hill is in a surface water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.

The area within the allotment is designated as statutory allotment land and therefore subject to legal protection and restrictions of use according to the Allotments Act. Change of use requires permission from the Secretary of State.

Access and Transport Links
Access is via one of two gates on St Peter’s Avenue, a small residential street on a council housing estate. The entrance closest to the proposed city farm site leads down a very narrow track; the other entrance is at the far end of the site, requiring any vehicles to drive down the unpaved track through the centre of the allotments. The City of Lincoln Council Planning Department has raised concerns about an increased volume of traffic approaching the site via the small residential roads. Particular concerns were raised in relation to lorries, tractors, and coaches.

The site has very good cycle and walking links via the multi-use cycle path which runs at the back of the allotment site adjacent to the river Witham.

Utilities
The charge for connecting to the national electricity grid for a three phase supply is quoted at approximately £4,100 (at the time of writing).

It is not possible to provide the cost of connecting to the water mains and sewers at this time. Costs could be in the region of £2,500

Security
The site is largely unfenced and allotment holders have reported issues with security. A security fence would need to be erected around the core infrastructure of the farm. This would cost approximately £13,000 for a 1.8m high palisade fence plus installation fees.
Local Projects, Organisations and Businesses
The Linkage Trust, a Lincoln based learning disability charity, and the City of Lincoln Council are about to begin a major restoration project of Boultham Park, immediately next door to the allotment site. The project will include an education centre, strawbale built cafe, and high specification glass house. It will deliver NVQ accredited horticulture training and produce vegetables and bedding plants. As well as being for Linkage Trust beneficiaries, the project will also engage with the local community and nearby schools. Elements of our proposed project would compliment the Boultham Park project very well however; other parts would create undesirable duplication and potential competition.

There is a local green grocer within one mile of Simon’s Hill Allotment. Our project could also cause undesirable competition for this business.

The local Community/ Community Need
Simon’s Hill Allotment is situated at the Southern End of Bouthlam Ward, bordering Moorlands. It is in close proximity to the City’s most deprived neighbourhood, ranked within the top 1% of the country for deprivation (IMD, 2010). It is approximately two miles from three other areas of deprivation, two ranked within the top 5% of the country and, one within the top 10% for deprivation. As yet, Green Synergy has not worked directly with these communities. Although the farm will offer services for the whole of the city’s community, we would be starting from scratch to build links and support within the immediate neighbourhoods.

Initial View of City of Lincoln Council Planning Department:
“Looking initially at the Simon’s Hill site it seems that from a planning point of view, access to the site and arrangements for parking is likely to be the main issue but careful consideration would also need to be given to how the use would impact on the surrounding residential properties. The Simon’s Hill site seems the most restrictive of the two and I understand there are other issues to overcome, such as the statutory allotment allocation which is not a planning issue in itself but ultimately impacts on the eligibility of the site for the proposed use.”

SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site is of suitable size</td>
<td>Land is poorly drained, waterlogged in winter and, very liable to flooding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good walking and cycle access</td>
<td>Poor vehicular access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In close proximity to the city’s most disadvantaged neighbourhood</td>
<td>Poor site security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Further away from other disadvantaged communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opposite end of town to the area in which we currently work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We do not know the local community and have no pre-existing support or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity for collaborative working with Linkage Trust</td>
<td>• Low ability to generate income (shop and cafe would not be a viable option here, owing to pre-existing local businesses.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It may be possible for coaches to drop school parties at end of cycle track</td>
<td>• Flooding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The site has great potential as a wildlife conservation site or woodland food forest project</td>
<td>• Potential for conflict of interests/ duplication of horticulture projects, as Linkage Trust is also developing a horticulture project at Boultham.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Wragby Road- Ex Allotment Site, LN2 4QQ

Site Description
The site is about six acres. It used to form part of Wragby Road allotments, but has since been taken out of use and therefore no longer has any statutory restrictions pertaining to its function as an allotment site.

The land is in the lowest flood risk category, zone 1, and has no known issues with drainage. It is also in an NVZ, but this time for groundwater as opposed to surface run off. The area is known to have been mined in the past, as has much of the land at the top end of the city. We have sought initial guidance from a local site surveyor, they have advised that the site would need to undergo a comprehensive survey (unless one has recently been carried out), potentially necessitating test pits. This could cost in the region of £4,000.

Access and Transport Links
The site is located on the South side of the A15 ‘Wragby Road’. Just over a mile from the city centre. It is well connected with bus routes. It is in walking/ cycling distance of three neighbourhoods ranked in the top 5% of the country for deprivation and one neighbourhood ranked in the top 10% for deprivation.

The site is relatively easy for larger vehicles (lorries, tractors, coaches) to access and has the potential for parking facilities.

Security
The site is already surrounded by a palisade security fence.
Utilities
Connection to national grid for a three phase electricity supply would cost in the region of £5000.
It is not possible to provide the cost of connecting to the water mains and sewers at this time. Costs could be in the region of £2,500

Local Projects, Organisations and Businesses
The site is next door to the Wragby Road Tesco. This store is currently undergoing major renovations. These will include demolishing the existing store and building a new one, moving the petrol station to Wragby Road and adding five new retail units. The store has expressed a strong interest in supporting local community organisations and it is intended that one of the units will be let to a local charitable/ community organisation. Tesco have also expressed an interest in local food growing and environmental projects.

‘The Darwin Wildlife Group’ has had an interest in and presence at the site since the year 2000. Their aim is to preserve Darwin Field as a wildlife area and protect its biodiversity. The group has been offered a lease for the land, but as yet have not completed. Green Synergy has previously met with Darwin Group to explore and understand each other’s organisational aspirations and potential for partnership working. Unfortunately, at the time we found very limited opportunities for joint working.

We already work in partnership with several local organisations and initiatives including: Developmentplus; The Tower Action Group; The Nomad Trust (at their ‘Moving on Up Project’ based on St Giles’; The Monks Road Neighbourhood Initiative; The Abbey Neighbourhood Board; The Abbey Children’s Centre and the Neighbourhood Managers for both the central and north areas of the city. We have been delivering projects around the Monks Road area for the past twelve months and well known to the local community. We are also about to start delivering two new projects around St Giles and Ermine. We are also looking to develop our first office in this area of the city. This would be perfectly placed to manage the logistics of the site build.

For a brief period during 2012, there was a community animal park at Lincoln Prison on Greetwell Road. Green Synergy had begun to work with the prison on this project with a view to managing it on their behalf. However, changes at the prison resulted in the funding for the project being removed. Members of the local community expressed their sadness in the loss of this project (Lincolnshire Echo, 27th November, 2012).

Local community/ Community Need
As mentioned above, in reference to accessibility, the site is located within a mile of four highly disadvantaged areas, and less than half a mile from two of these. Our previous feasibility study into community growing projects was conducted around Abbey Ward and included local residents living within close proximity of the Wragby Road site. Our community consultations provide empirical evidence of high levels of need and interest in community gardening and farming projects.
The Wragby Road site is in close proximity to Lincoln County Hospital. We will be able to offer services which are of specific benefit for the rehabilitation of patients in numerous departments including cardiology and psychiatry.

The site at Wragby Road is also in close proximity to the prison. There is potential for creating projects with probation to help in the successful rehabilitation of prisoners.

**Initial View of City of Lincoln Council Planning Department:** “The Wragby Road site seems to have more scope for such a use and the redevelopment of Tesco in close proximity to the site may present positive opportunities particularly for improved access to the site. Obviously this would need to be discussed with Tesco directly we would be happy to facilitate initial discussions with the planning agents for this site if this is something you would like to pursue. With regard to the principle of the use on this site, it is allocated as a proposed playing field in the local plan although given the local plan was adopted in 1998 there is a case to put forward for alternative uses on the site. Again, parking, access and impact on surrounding residential properties would all be key considerations through the planning process.”

**SWOT Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Site is of suitable size</td>
<td>• Potential subsidence risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good walking and cycle access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In close proximity to four areas of disadvantage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Closer to city centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We already have already forged strong networks and partnerships with local residents and organisations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We have evidence of local support and need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Underused site, no statutory allotment restrictions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tesco have expressed an interest in supporting local community organisations</td>
<td>• Availability of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many other businesses in close proximity, high potential for corporate sponsorship.</td>
<td>• Ability to gain necessary planning consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of collaborative relationship with the nearby hospital and prison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32
5.3 Preferred Site

Based on the reasons outlined above, we have a strong preference for the Wragby Road site. We do not feel that we would be able to develop a comprehensive farm and garden at the Simon’s Hill site, largely owing to the high flood risk, restricted access and close proximity to the Linkage Trust Project.

6. Summary and Next Steps

If we are successful in securing a suitable site for this project we would wish to proceed with the steps outline in section 4.8.

At that stage we will then also refine the business case into a comprehensive business plan.

In the meantime, please contact Green Synergy CEO Mary Whiting should you require any further information.
7. References


