

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE****PROPOSAL TO ENTER INTO A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH THE  
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF  
DANESHILL LAKES LOCAL NATURE RESERVE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Committee approval for a new Service Level Agreement to be made with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust for the future Management of Daneshill Lakes Local Nature Reserve near Retford.

**Information and Advice**

2. Daneshill Lakes Local Nature Reserve is an extensive and popular Green Estate site situated between the villages of Ranskill, Torworth, Lound and Sutton cum Lound, north east of Retford. It attracts people from a wide area due to the Nature Conservation interest, good car parking facilities and flat surfaced paths.
3. Located on a former gravel works, the 54 hectare site is divided by Daneshill Road, with the area to the north (20 hectares) leased to Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) and managed for Nature Conservation. The area to the south (34 hectares) is presently managed by the Green Estates team and promoted for both nature conservation and public access. The main lake is also licensed to a local sailing club and an angling club. The two sites are delineated as shown in **Appendix 1**.
4. Until November 2010, the NCC site had a part time warden, who was responsible for day to day management, site security and organising events and tasks for volunteers. However, after the warden post became vacant, and following the restructuring of the Country Parks and Green Estate Service as part of the wider financial savings required of the County Council in 2011/12, the post was deleted. Since that time, the Green Estates team has managed the site under a limited 'care and maintenance' regime.
5. As such, the site is in need of a more dedicated management programme to engage and work with the public, and to undertake the day to day maintenance required (e.g. scrub clearance, litter picking and monitoring). To this end, discussions have been held with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) with a view to it extending its management presence on behalf of the County Council.
6. The NWT has a major presence in the area, based at the Idle Valley Wetlands Reserve 4 miles to the south east near Retford. It has a large volunteer resource and dedicated site officers who currently manage the leased land to the north of Daneshill Road as part of their wider estate.

7. The proposal is therefore for the NWT to take on the management of the area to the south of Daneshill Road under a new Service Level Agreement with effect from 1 April 2013 for a period of three years. In so doing, the NWT will then be able to provide a part time warden service (working to the NWT Site Officer) which covers the entire Daneshill Lakes LNR north and south of the Daneshill Road, the key features of which are to:
- undertake day to day management work to keep the site tidy
  - provide the much needed 'site presence' to engage with visitors
  - help monitor the angling and sailing clubs and provide an 'on site' point of contact in the event of disputes that may arise
  - develop and implement a programme of events for visitors
  - develop a programme of volunteer task days drawing on the existing resources of the NWT volunteer base, the proposed Friends Group and hopefully new volunteers from the local area.
8. It is further proposed that the Green Estates team will work in partnership with NWT to:
- review the expired management plan for the site and implement an annual work programme including much needed vegetation management
  - source and bid for major capital funding for projects highlighted as part of the management plan review, including potential improvements to visitor facilities and site infrastructure, improvements to water quality and significant vegetation management programmes
  - support the development of a new Friends Group for the site
  - attend and contribute to regular 'steering panel' meetings with NWT and representatives from other User Groups.
9. For its part, the Green Estates team will make an annual contribution to the NWT, and provide the site cabin as a base for the warden.
10. In addition, the County Council will retain direct management of the main lake currently used by the angling and sailing clubs. Both of these licences are due for renewal during 2013, and the rental income from both will help supplement the financial contribution made to the NWT.

### **Other Options Considered**

11. Other options were considered but the proposal provides the best fit to meet the needs of the County Council, NWT, local community and designated user clubs.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

12. The proposal will both reduce and cap at a known annual sum the Country Parks and Green Estates revenue liability for the management of the Daneshill Lakes LNR, whilst maintaining a corporate presence at this important and well used site.
13. It will enable a significant programme of works to be carried out using the NWT's volunteer resource and expertise to bring the site back into good condition. This will benefit biodiversity (for which the Authority has a responsibility under the designation of the site as a Local Nature Reserve) and the public in terms of improved visitor amenity.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

15. The total County Council contribution will be £13,500 which is factored into the base budget for 2013/14.

## **Equalities Implications**

16. The proposal will help to improve visitor access and use.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

That Culture Committee:

- 1) approves the proposal to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, for the future management of the Daneshill Lakes Local Nature Reserve, to be effective from 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2016.
- 2) notes that the Group Manager, Country Parks and Green Estate Services, in consultation with the Group Manager, Legal and Democratic Services, completes the required documentation, subject to approval of recommendation 1 above.

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## **Constitutional Comments (SG 22/02/13)**

17. The Committee is the appropriate body to decide the issues set out in this Report. The Committee has responsibility for country parks, open spaces and other countryside services under its Terms of Reference set out in the Constitution.

**Financial Comments (KLA 18/02/13)**

18. The financial implications of this decision are set out in paragraph 15 of the report.

**Background Papers**

None.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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