

**07 December 2017****Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR PLACE****CONSERVATION STAFFING RESTRUCTURE 2017****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to reorganise the staffing structure of the Conservation Team, in light of the proposed transfer of the Council's Green Estates functions from Commissioning, Resources and Culture Service and the cessation of partner funding for the Greenwood Community Forest Partnership.

**Information and Advice**

2. From April 2018, the Country Parks (Sherwood, Rufford, Bestwood), will be managed by third parties under contract or, in the case of Bestwood, through collaboration agreement and Sherwood will be on its way to transfer to RSPB management in Summer 2018 when the new visitor centre opens. The contracts will be managed as commissioned services within the cultural portfolio by the Cultural Services Commissioning Manager within the new Place & Communities Division, along with the Inspire contract and Holme Pierrepont NWSC and Country Park. This just leaves the Green Estates unit from the Country Parks and Green Estate Service as a stand-alone unit within the Commissioning, Resources and Culture Service and, as agreed by committee in June, it is proposed to transfer the unit to the Conservation Team in the Planning Group.
3. The Green Estates unit manages c. 90 green spaces (largely reclamation sites) ranging in size from 0.1ha to more than 160ha and totalling over 1400ha, working closely with a range of partner organisations and volunteers. The country park at Cotgrave is managed as part of the Green Estate and will transfer with the unit. Addressing budget challenges to ensure that the County Council can adequately manage and maintain the publicly accessible Green Estate is a priority.
4. The Greenwood Community Forest partnership is hosted, and largely funded, by the County Council through the Conservation Team. The Community Forest was formed in the 1990's and works to increase woodland cover and support communities in accessing, managing and enjoying their local environment. In 2016/17 they supported 61 groups and schools. As partnership contributions have declined in recent years, however, budgets have become unsustainable, whilst demand from communities for support and advice has increased. Partnership contributions have reduced to zero from April 2017.

5. The proposed new structure integrates the natural environment functions, including Greenwood, Green Estates management, Biodiversity and Ecological planning advice, with a view to placing management of the c. 90 NCC-owned green spaces on a more sustainable footing and increasing effectiveness/ reducing areas of overlap through closer working relationships and standardisation of roles and job descriptions.
6. The proposals would also increase support for community groups and volunteers (site management, project development, skills training, co-ordination) across both conservation and heritage, whilst retaining support for the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum, including the provision of advice and practical assistance to Friends groups.
7. Following a formal, four-week consultation period with staff from the two teams, and with the unions, a range of comments, suggestions and concerns were received. The proposed structure in Appendix 2, and the key changes outlined in paragraph 9 have been amended to better reflect the outcome of the consultation.
8. The current staffing arrangements for the two services are shown at Appendix 1. The proposed structure is attached at Appendix 2. It is envisaged that the new structure will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.
9. The key proposed changes are:
  - Disestablish the posts of
    - Green Spaces Manager (Green Estate) – Hay Band A
    - Senior Practitioner Greenwood – Hay Band B
    - Senior Practitioner Nature Conservation – Hay Band C
    - 2 Greenwood Conservation Project Officer posts – Grade 5
    - 1 Land Management Officer post – Grade 5
    - 2 Countryside Officer posts – Grade 5
    - Community Liaison Officer – Grade 5
    - Community Archaeologist – Grade 4
  - Establish the posts of
    - Natural Environment Manager – Hay Band D
    - 3.6 FTE Land Management Officer posts (Green Spaces, Greenwood) – Grade 5
    - 3 Community Liaison Officer posts (Greenwood, Green Spaces, Heritage) – Grade 5

All the above posts will be subject to Job Evaluation.
10. Staff will be enabled from the disestablished posts in to the new posts following the normal procedure. There will be an overall loss of 2.4 FTE posts from the establishment.
11. All posts with changed responsibilities arising from the new structure will be subject to job evaluation (Team Manager Conservation, Biodiversity Officer). All posts within the new Conservation Team structure, with the exception of those related to the Sherwood Landscape Partnership Scheme (Miner 2 Major), would be permanent.

## **Other Options Considered**

12. The option to simply move the existing Green Estate unit into the Conservation team was considered. It was not, however, considered that this would achieve the more effective management of the natural environment that would result from an integrated approach.

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

13. To provide greater integration of staff and work programmes, enabling the development of a more co-ordinated and effective approach to the management of the natural environment, including the County Council's Green Estate.
14. To strengthen support for volunteer management of, and engagement with, greenspaces and heritage sites across the County, including training and skills development.
15. To retain support for the work of the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment 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**

17. The purpose of this restructure is to integrate the Green Estates functions into the Conservation team, rather than to make a budgetary saving. It is, however, envisaged that the overall effect on the combined Conservation and green estates budgets will deliver a small saving of around £10,000.

### **Human Resources Implications**

18. The proposals have been subject to a four week formal consultation period and there is ongoing discussion with the affected staff and their union representatives about the proposed changes. The County Council's agreed enabling process will be applied in making appointments to the posts in the revised structure. Where applicable staff will be supported through the redeployment process.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That approval is given to reorganise the staffing structure of the Conservation team, as set out in Paragraphs 8 – 11 and Appendix 2.

**Adrian Smith**  
**Corporate Director Place**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact: Heather Stokes, Team Manager Conservation**

### **Constitutional Comments [KK 22/11/17]**

19. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Communities and Place Committee.

### **Financial Comments [CSB 22/11/17]**

20. The financial implications are contained in paragraph 17 of the report.

### **HR Comments [JP 27/11/17]**

21. The HR implications are contained in paragraph 18 of the report.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

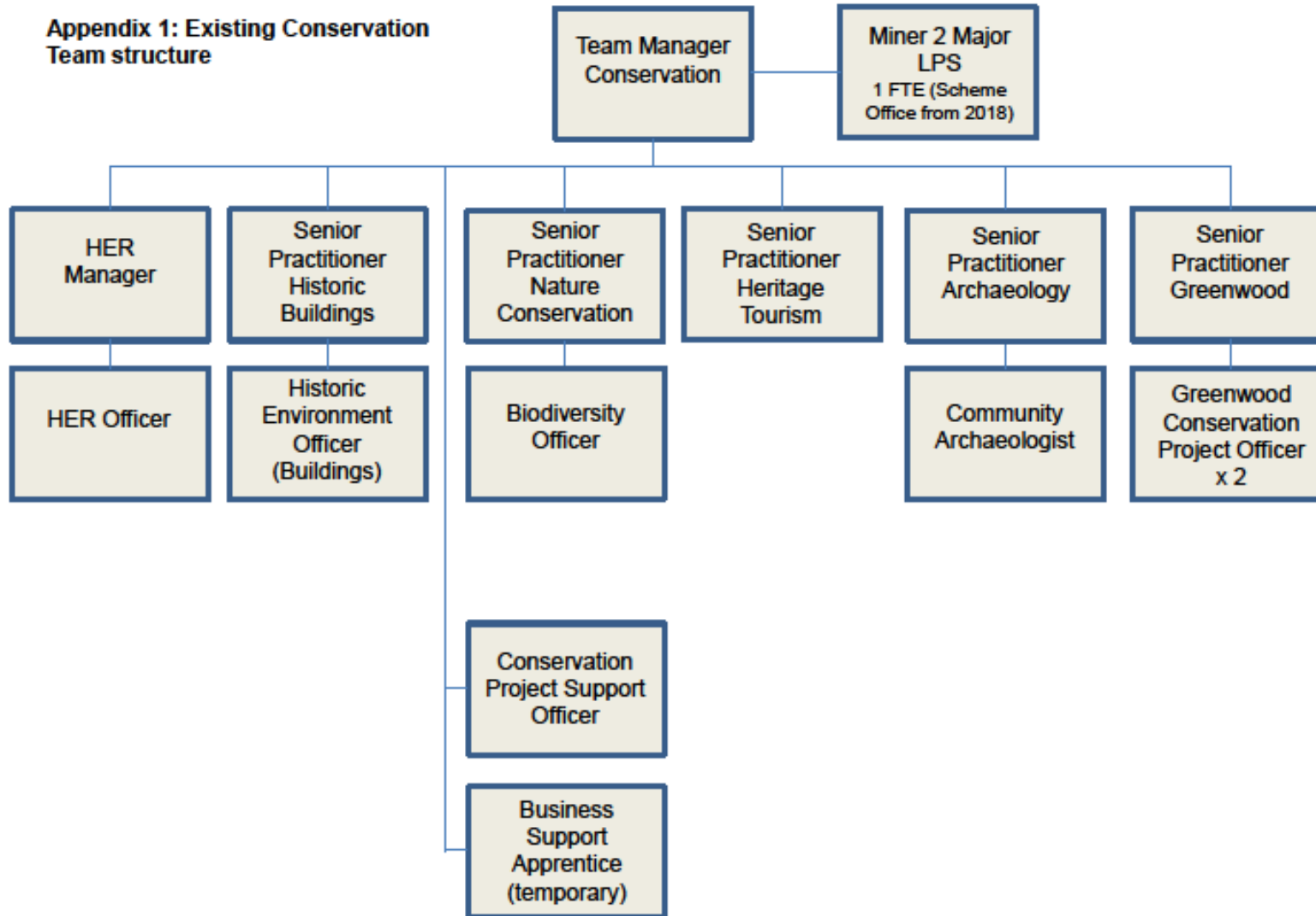
Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

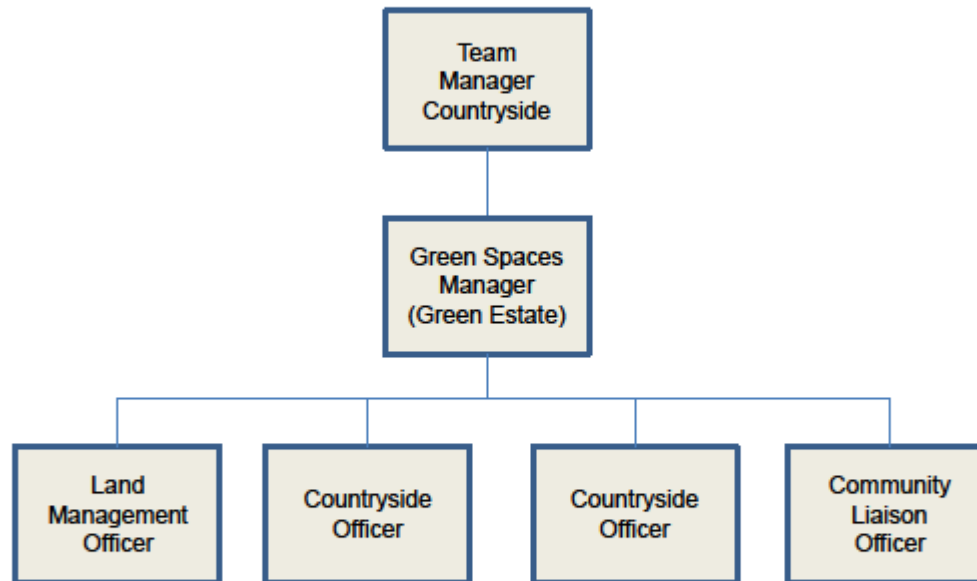
### **Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

- All

**Appendix 1: Existing Conservation  
Team structure**



**Appendix 1: Existing Green Estates  
structure**



Appendix 2: proposed Conservation  
Team structure

