

**17 September 2012****Agenda Item: 10**

## **REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, COUNTRY PARKS & GREEN ESTATE**

### **A PROGRAMME OF IMPROVEMENTS TO MANTON TIP WOODS**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to:
  - a) carry out a programme of improvements to the site infrastructure, access, recreational and ecological opportunities of Manton Tip Woods, near Worksop.
  - b) accept external funding for these works and vary the capital programme accordingly.

#### **Information and Advice**

##### **Background**

2. The reclaimed waste tips of the former Manton colliery were transferred to Nottinghamshire County Council's ownership as part of 'The British Coal' programme of land acquisition and restoration. The 100ha site was reclaimed to a mixture of woodland, grassland and other habitats from 1996 using external funding and is now managed by the Country Parks and Green Estate Service.
3. However, in the intervening years, the site has become seriously degraded by increasing levels of vandalism, anti-social behaviour and illegal motor-bike activity. Levels of legitimate public use have been further limited by the lack of car park provision.
4. Post restoration, it had originally been intended that the site be handed over to the Forestry Commission as a country park on a long term lease. This process has now been delayed and potentially jeopardised because of the current state and use of the site.
5. The ongoing cost of maintaining the site and reactively responding to fly tipping, repairing broken boundaries etc. is significant and can reach £5-6,000 per year.
6. The site has, however, significant potential to be an attractive and popular recreational forest park. It is strategically located at the southern approach to Worksop, adjacent to Manton, and just north of Clumber Park. It is easily accessed by the local community and can function as a gateway site to the core Sherwood Forest to the south. The woods also contain valuable heathland and woodland habitats, including those highlighted for restoration in the Nottinghamshire Biological Action Plan. The site location is shown in the 'Manton Gateway' plan, attached as **Appendix 1**.

7. A programme of works is now proposed to realise the full potential of the site in terms of recreation and ecology, reversing the culture of neglect and reducing future County Council revenue liability. In outline, the proposed works include:

- construction of a car park and formal vehicular access
- enhancement of site security and boundary treatment
- upgrading of routes around the site and linkages to wider path and cycleway network
- fencing works, hedge planting, habitat mitigation works.

In parallel with these proposals for physical improvements, it is hoped to increase significantly the level of local community participation through involvement in some of the above conservation tasks and other events.

8. The Concept Plan, attached as **Appendix 2** to this report, shows the proposed works. A planning application has been submitted and is in the process of being determined.
9. A funding package has been prepared combining external and internal sources as set out in Table 1:

Source	Status	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	Total £
ERDF	Funding offered			131,700
Natural England	Application being appraised	14,000		14,000
NCC /LTP	2012/13 allocated	5,000		55,000
	2013/14 allocated in provisional budget		50,000	
NCC /British Coal	Allocated. (Part of 2012/13 Reclamation Capital Programme)	20,000	0	20,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>220,700</b>

10. It is anticipated that the planning approval and procurement and initial design will be achieved in 2012/13, with the majority of construction work undertaken in 2013/14.

### Other Options Considered

11. The other option considered was to do nothing. However, there would be no benefits from this and the drawbacks would be:
- continued ongoing expenditure to maintain status quo and fund ongoing repair work
  - previous restoration work and sensitive habitats increasingly degraded by ongoing criminality and anti-social behaviour
  - adjacent business park continues to suffer from blighted neighbourhood
  - local community deprived of potential recreational resource and social enterprise opportunities generated from sustainable use of woods.

## Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. The proposed recommendation uses majority external funding to enhance a site which is in danger of becoming a significant financial liability to the County Council. Once works are complete, it is anticipated that the site will become significantly improved in terms of both the opportunity for recreation it offers and ongoing maintenance liability.

## Statutory and Policy Implications

13. 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

14. The total projects costs are anticipated to be as Table 2:

Item		Estimated cost £
Site investigation, surveys and planning		5,000
Construction car park, access road		125,000
Path upgrades, boundary treatment new path links and habitat works		62,000
Design and project management		28,700
<b>Total</b>		<b>220,700</b>

15. The County Council contribution comprises £55,000 against an inward investment of £165,700.
16. Costs for the Manton Forest Park and Link scheme were included as a reserve scheme in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2012/13 budget, which received County Council approval in February 2012. The scheme has also been allocated a construction budget of £50,000 in the provisional LTP 2013/14 budget, which will be presented to Members for initial approval in September 2012 and final approval in February 2013. The LTP has also funded the design development required to formulate outline proposals for 2012/13.
17. Ongoing maintenance costs of the access road and car park will continue to be the responsibility of the Country Parks and Green Estate Service until such time as the site may be transferred into the ownership of the Forestry Commission.

## Equalities Implications

18. Design proposals are being prepared to be compliant with statutory requirements. All new paths and trails will be Disability Discrimination Act compliant.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Finance and Property Committee approve:

- 1) acceptance of the offered external funding to enable the project to be implemented
- 2) the consequent variation to the capital programme.

**Patrick Candler**

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### **Constitutional Comments (CEH 08/08/12)**

19. The report deals with a variation to the Capital Programme. This decision falls within the remit of the Finance and Property Committee.

### **Financial Comments (NDR 08/08/12)**

20. The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 of the report.

### **Background Papers**

None.

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

Worksop East: Coun Glynn Gilfoyle

C0053