

1 September 2021**Agenda Item:4****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, INVESTMENT AND GROWTH****NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND WOODLAND CREATION****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide the Transport and Environment Committee with an overview of the natural environment work of the Authority's Conservation Team.

Information

2. This report is accompanied by a presentation that will provide Members with an overview of the natural environment work of the Conservation team, including management of the County Council's Green Spaces and the Trees for Climate woodland creation programme.
3. The Natural Environment unit comprises:
 - ecology, including the provision of specialist advice on the County Council's plans and programmes;
 - biodiversity, including support for the work of the Biodiversity Action Group and for volunteering;
 - management of the Authority's Green Spaces;
 - and, Greenwood Community Forest.
4. The County Council's Green Spaces currently comprise over 80 sites across the County, equating to approximately 1600 hectares of land, managed for people and wildlife. 46 sites are wholly or partly designated as Local Wildlife Sites, 6 are Local Nature Reserves and 5 are legally protected as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
5. The Green Spaces can make a significant contribution to delivering the objectives of the County Council's Environment Strategy in relation to protecting and enhancing habitats and species; achieving net gains in biodiversity; creating new woodlands; and, establishing a nature recovery network across the County to increase the resilience of biodiversity to the negative impacts of a changing climate.
6. The current Green Estate Development Strategy 2013-2023 is due to be reviewed and a further 10 year Strategy developed.
7. Greenwood Community Forest, which is hosted by the County Council, was formed in the early 1990s and its core area covers 161 square miles of west Nottinghamshire, from Mansfield in the north to Nottingham in the south and from Eastwood in the west to Farnsfield in the east. It supports Nottinghamshire's communities to create, improve and enjoy

woodlands and other high quality accessible green spaces in a sustainable way that benefits the environment, landscape and the local economy.

8. Trees for Climate is a five-year programme (2020-2025) committed to the creation of over 6000ha of new woodland across England's eleven Community Forests, with funding coming from Defra as part of the government's Nature for Climate Fund.
9. In Nottinghamshire, Greenwood Community Forest has contracted to create 250ha of new woodland as part of the Trees for Climate programme, establishing new accessible green space for local communities, new habitat for wildlife, and capturing thousands of tonnes of carbon.
10. The work of the Biodiversity Action Group, which is hosted by the County Council, includes the completion of Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping to inform nature recovery work; actions to protect priority habitats and species; and, a programme of control measures to address invasive non-native species issues across the County.

Reason for Recommendation

11. To enable Committee to consider the work of the Conservation Team in relation to the natural environment.
12. To enable Committee to consider and reaffirm support for the work of the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, in view of the recent declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. 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

14. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

15. The implications for sustainability and the environment are set out in the report and will be discussed during the presentation.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) It is recommended that Committee considers the information contained in the presentation, to inform any future reports.
- 2) It is recommended that Committee reaffirms its support for and commitment to the work of the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, in view of the declaration of a Climate Emergency.

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

Constitutional Comments (CEH 19.08.2021)

16. The report and recommendations fall within the remit of the Transport and Environment Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments [RWK 16/08/2021]

17. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from 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