

**20 April 2022**

**Agenda Item: 4**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES**

### **SHERWOOD FOREST – RSPB ANNUAL REVIEW AND COVID RECOVERY**

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

1. To update the Committee on the activities undertaken at Sherwood Forest by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) during the Covid 19 pandemic and appraise members of the plans for activities during 2022/23.

#### **Information**

##### **Context**

2. The RSPB manage the Sherwood Forest nature reserve and the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre (SFVC) under a contract with the County Council signed in 2016.
3. The new SFVC funded by a range of partners including the County Council was opened in autumn 2018 and replaced the ageing facility previously located close to the Major Oak in the heart of the forest. The old visitor centre has now been demolished and the site returned to nature.
4. A successful first full season of operation in 2019/20 saw a programme of events held on the site including the traditional short week long but intense Robin Hood Festival in August, and also saw the RSPB continue to build the wider tourism offer on site including strengthening the Robin Hood theme and improving the overall forest facilities. This work continued throughout 2020/21 and 2021/22.
5. The end of March 2020 saw the Country entering it's first lockdown as the Covid 19 pandemic took hold, and much of the following two years have been impacted by the recurring waves of infection and restrictions on public activities, and particularly the ability to hold events and mass gatherings.
6. Other than in the late weeks of spring and early days of summer 2020 the car parks have been open to allow access to the wider forest, and subsequently the visitor centre has open to the public with varying states of access during 2020/21 and the early part of 2022.
7. Most events and planned activities were cancelled during 2020, but 2021 saw an alternative to the Robin Hood Festival, Go Wild in the Green Wood, held through most of August, bringing in many of the previous smaller festival activities spread over a

longer period and without the mass participation elements, to ensure the protection of public health.

8. Heading into 2022/23, and with all Covid restrictions finally withdrawn, the RSPB are planning a series of activities for the coming months.
9. Colleagues from the RSPB will present at the meeting, sharing their experiences of the last two years and plans for the future.

### **Finance**

10. The County Council made a substantial capital payment towards the construction of the new visitor centre of over £4m but does not provide any ongoing revenue funding for the operation of the site.

### **Other Options Considered**

11. No other options were considered.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

12. To inform Committee of the latest developments in the history of Sherwood Forest.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, 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, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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 from this report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That Committee recognise the activities undertaken at Sherwood Forest by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) during the Covid 19 pandemic and support the plans for activities during 2022/23.

**Derek Higton**  
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### **Constitutional Comments (ELP06/04/2022)**

15. The recommendations fall within the delegation to Communities Committee by virtue of its frame of reference.

### **Financial Comments (SES 15/03/2022)**

16. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this 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 Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All.