

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017

Agenda Item: 8

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING, RESOURCES  
AND CULTURE**

**COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATE STAFFING RESTRUCTURE 2017**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to reorganise the staffing structure of the Country Parks and Green Estate Service in the light of the recent transfer of the commercial and visitor services elements to Parkwood Leisure at Rufford Abbey, the collaboration agreement with Gedling Borough Council for the management of Bestwood Country Park, and the impending transfer of responsibility for Sherwood Forest Country Park to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

**Information and Advice**

**Background**

2. The commercial and visitor services operations at Rufford Country Park transferred to Parkwood Outdoors (Parkwood) on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 leaving just the grounds maintenance and ranger elements in-house. Following Committee approval on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017, final negotiations are underway with Gedling Borough Council (GBC) to enter into a new collaboration agreement with them for the management of Bestwood Country Park with a target date of 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017. This will see the transfer under TUPE Regulations of five members of staff to GBC.
3. Both these events will impact on the remaining operational service, as some staff from the operational team have transferred to Parkwood from Rufford, and Bestwood is now temporarily covered remotely from Rufford as a combined ranger operation so there will be further changes as staff transfer to GBC management at Bestwood.
4. The County Council staff team at Bestwood nominally comprises a site manager, two rangers, two estate wardens (grounds maintenance operatives) and a temporary part-time janitor. The two ranger posts are combined with the remaining ranger team at Rufford which now consists of an assistant site manager, two rangers (plus the two from Bestwood), two wardens and a temporary warden.
5. The operational and commercial service at Sherwood is now being managed as a stand-alone entity pending transfer to RSPB in 2018 once the new visitor centre is complete. It is not envisaged that any of the changes discussed here will materially affect staff at Sherwood with the exception of the storeman post discussed below.

6. By the end of March 2018 the three staffed country parks of Rufford, Sherwood and Bestwood will therefore be largely managed under contract as commissioned services within the cultural portfolio. Consideration is being given to the Green Estate function merging with the Conservation Team in the Planning Group with effect from April 2018. Should this be agreed (a report will be brought to a future meeting of the Communities and Place Committee), the post of Countryside Service Manager will be disestablished from April 2018. Responsibility for contract management for the three Parks would transfer to the Cultural Services Commissioning Manager post. This post currently manages the Council's contractual arrangements relating to the National Water Sports Centre and Inspire.
7. The transfer of commercial functions at Rufford to Parkwood has also meant the closure of the central stores based at Rufford Mill which served both Rufford and Sherwood. The storeman role transferred to Sherwood to oversee the establishment of a temporary store whilst commercial operations continue there but it is clear that there is no longer a need for this position in the future.
8. The current staffing arrangement for the Service is shown at **Appendix 1**. The proposed structure is attached at **Appendix 2**. This will come into effect once the changes set out below have occurred.
9. The key proposed changes are as follows:
  - Disestablish the post of Bestwood Site Manager (Hay Band B) once the Bestwood Agreement with Gedling Borough Council commences
  - Disestablish 2 Ranger posts (Grade 5) once the Bestwood Agreement with Gedling Borough Council commences
  - Disestablish 2 Warden posts (Grade 2) once the Bestwood Agreement with Gedling Borough Council commences
  - Disestablish the post of Storeman, effective 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017
  - Establish the post of Green Space Manager (Green Estate) at Hay Band A
  - Establish 3 Country Park Officer posts (Grade 4)
  - Establish 1 Trainee Country Park Officer post (Grade 2).
10. Staff will be enabled from the disestablished posts into the new posts following the normal procedure. There will be two voluntary redundancies.
11. The five posts to transfer under TUPE Regulations to GBC when that agreement is concluded are:
  - Two Ranger posts (2 FTE)
  - Two Estate Warden posts (2 FTE)
  - One part-time Janitor post (0.54 FTE).

### **Other Options Considered**

12. The current staffing structure is inefficient and no longer fits for the changed circumstances of service provision. The proposed structure is the most robust achievable.

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

13. To ensure that the parks and green spaces are effectively, safely, and sustainably maintained, and that the current visitor offer is properly supported.
14. To minimise the impact of financial constraints on local residents and park users.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

15. 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**

16. The purpose of this restructure is primarily to realign staff roles to fit the changing position of the Service during the transition rather than to make a budgetary saving. The budgetary position is complicated by the transfer of functions making a direct comparison of staff costs very difficult but overall the effect on the staffing budget is neutral to potentially delivering a small additional saving of around £5,000 once potential protected pay provisions have worked through.

## **Human Resources Implications**

17. There is ongoing consultation with the affected staff and their union representatives about the proposed changes and the Bestwood restructuring was reported to the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panel on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017. No compulsory redundancies are expected as a result of the proposals.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That approval to reorganise the staffing structure of the Country Parks and Green Estate Service (set out at **Appendix 2**) in the light of the recent transfer of the commercial and visitor services elements to Parkwood Leisure at Rufford Abbey, the collaboration agreement with Gedling Borough Council for the management of Bestwood Country Park, and the impending transfer of responsibility for Sherwood Forest Country Park to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), be granted.

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**Children, Families and Cultural Services**

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**Constitutional Comments (LM 24/05/17)**

18. The recommendations in the report fall within the Terms of Reference of the Communities and Place Committee.

**Financial Comments (SAS 05/04/17)**

19. The financial implications of the report are contained with paragraph 16 above.

**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.

Bestwood Country Park – collaborative agreement – report to Culture Committee on 7 March 2017

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

All.

C0974