

AREA 8 COMMITTEE – 11th September 2013

Title of paper:	Local Nature Reserve Designations	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Hugh White Director Sports, Culture and Parks Loxley House, Nottingham 0115 8764980 hugh.white@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	Wards affected: Clifton South
Report author(s) and contact details:	Eddie Curry Head of Parks and Open Spaces Loxley House, Nottingham 0115 8764982 eddie.curry@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Emily Aron Biodiversity and Greenspace Policy Officer Loxley House, Nottingham 0115 8764973 emily.aron@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Ann Barrett Senior Solicitor Loxley House, Nottingham 0115 8764411 ann.barrett@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
World Class Nottingham		X
Work in Nottingham		
Safer Nottingham		X
Neighbourhood Nottingham		X
Family Nottingham		X
Healthy Nottingham		X
Leading Nottingham		X
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>This report seeks the support of the Committee in relation to proposals to designate Brecks Plantation and Glapton Woods as Local Nature Reserves (LNR's). LNR's are statutorily protected open spaces for both wildlife to thrive and people to enjoy.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	Support the proposals to designate Brecks Plantation and Glapton Woods as Local Nature Reserves and	
2	Note the process to be followed.	

1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 gives local authorities the power to acquire, declare and manage nature reserves. These sites are commonly known as Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) and are statutory protected sites which are of a high value for nature conservation and provide opportunities for people to enjoy wildlife and recreation. From Natural England's perspective LNR's have an important part to play in biodiversity conservation, the protection and interpretation of features and in helping to reach priority targets. Local Authorities can benefit from declaring Local Nature Reserves through the contribution that the sites make to the quality of the environment for local people, the part that they play in community development and their value in education.
- 1.2 Natural England recommends that Local Nature Reserves be provided at 1 hectare per 1000 population; Nottingham currently has 11 LNR's and LNR provision stands at 0.5 Ha per 1000 population.
- 1.3 Provision for further LNR's has been discussed at the Open and Green Spaces Champions Group and is an action in the 2011 Breathing Space strategy and the Biodiversity Position Statement. A list of proposed LNRs has been published following agreement with the Champions group.
- 1.4 The following sites within Area 8 have been selected for designation as LNRs and have been chosen for their ecological importance and position within the community. If the designations proceed these sites will contribute to the City Councils target of providing 1ha LNR per 1,000 population.

Brecks Plantation – see Appendix A - is an area of mixed urban woodland which covers 4.3 hectares. The habitats are predominantly mixed deciduous planted woodland, with a network of paths throughout. The majority of the site was originally planted between 1887 and 1901, with replanting taking place over subsequent years. Species include oak, ash, rowan, silver birch, larch and Norway spruce. A mixed hawthorn and hazel hedge marks the southern boundary and a hawthorn hedge to the west. Ground flora is dominated by tall herbs, with open grassland and thickets of bramble. The site is managed by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust under a management contract.

Glapton Woods – see Appendix B - measures 3.6ha and consists of mixed deciduous woodland, previously thought to be a remnant of the old Clifton Woods, although one which has been a separate copse since at least 1883. Species include oak, elder and hawthorn, with ash, Scots pine, hazel and sycamore. Situated on the southern edge of the site is an area of grassland, supporting a number of herbs and grasses including false oat grass, Yorkshire-fog grass, agrimony, black knapweed and ox-eye daisy. The site is managed by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust under a management contract.

- 1.5 The proposed sites meet the criteria specified by Natural England following a formal consultation, and they are in full support of designating the sites as LNRs.
- 1.6 It has been ascertained through correspondence with Property services that Nottingham City Council owns and therefore has a legal interest in the land, and that there are no covenants on the land that would prevent or conflict with the proposed LNR designation.

- 1.7 A formal consultation has been carried out involving onsite notices, notices in local community hubs and online notification of the proposed declaration and the consultation period. Local residents, Councillors, organisations who may have statutory rights over the land (Severn Trent Water, National Grid etc) and other City Council Departments who may be affected by the site designation have been contacted and given an opportunity for comments and questions. One letter of objection and three pieces of positive feedback have been received.
- 1.8 The decision to formally declare any or all of these sites as LNRs will also be referred to the relevant Portfolio Holder.
- 1.9 Exact site boundaries were confirmed as part of the internal consultation process and are shown on the enclosed site plans.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 To add to the protected sites network in Nottingham and safeguard Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species, whilst providing valuable wildlife sites for people to learn and enjoy.
- 2.2 Support our commitment to implementing the 'Biodiversity Duty' as set out under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 which states that *'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'*
- 2.3 To deliver actions set out in the adopted 2010-2020 Breathing Space strategy.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

- 4.1 In declaring the sites as Local Nature Reserves there is a duty to maintain safe access and manage them for the protection of wildlife and biodiversity, however as the majority of these sites are already owned by Nottingham City Council and maintained as accessible sites, this duty already exists.
- 4.2 The sites have been managed by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) for some years under a Service Level Agreement. Under a new management contract, Nottingham City Council pays an annual fee to NWT for the management of each site.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)

- 5.1 The declaration of these sites as LNRs is within the Council's powers subject to the relevant processes being followed.
- 5.2 All sites are free to access and aim to be accessible to all. Any capital works and improvements identified will consider the requirements under the Disability

Discrimination Act and will seek to identify and remove physical and emotional barriers to access. Designating these sites will ensure that they remain as natural open space, which is accessible to disadvantaged communities and will therefore play a part in improving the quality of life of the local residents now, and into the future.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

No. This report does not include proposals for new or changing policies, services or functions.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1 None.

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 Breathing Space strategy 2010-2020.

8.2 Biodiversity Position Statement 2011-2020.

8.3 Site management plans.

8.4 Evaluation of Possible Local Nature Reserve Sites, Sport Leisure and Parks, 2006.

8.5 Natural England Publication '*Local Nature Reserves in England: A guide to their selection and declaration*' 2010.