

Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey & Wollaton West Area Committee, 2nd June 2014

Title of paper:	Designation of part of Wollaton Park as a Local Nature Reserve	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	John Kelly - Corporate Director of Communities Hugh White - Director of Sport, Culture and Parks	Wards affected: Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey
Report author(s) and contact details:	Eddie Curry – Head of Parks and Open Spaces Email:- eddie.curry@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Tel:- 0115 876 4982	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Felicity Atkin, Biodiversity and Greenspace Policy Officer Email:- felicity.atkin@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Tel: - 0115 876 4986	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	Cllr David Trimble, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, 20 th August 2013	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
This report seeks the support of the Committee to designate part of Wollaton Park as a Local Nature Reserves (LNR). LNR's are protected open spaces for both wildlife to thrive and people to enjoy.		
Recommendation(s):		
1	Support the proposals to designate part of Wollaton Park as a Local Nature Reserve.	
2	Note the process to be followed.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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 13 LNR's and LNR provision stands at 0.53 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 (BPS). The target within the BPS is for an additional 10 LNRs by 2020. A list of proposed LNRs has been produced in agreement with the Champions group.
- 1.4 Wollaton Park within Area 7 has been selected for designation as an LNR due to its ecological importance and position within the community. Not all of the site is proposed (see Appendix 1) in order to retain the multifunctional nature of the site. If the designation proceeds the site will exceed the City Council's target of providing 1ha LNR per 1,000 population - to 1.08ha LNR per 1,000 population.

The site largely comprises historic parkland, mixed deciduous woodland, acid grassland and open water. Woodlands are diverse and include oak, beech, sweet chestnut and lime with an understorey of rhododendron, yew, hawthorn, hazel and other regenerating tree species. Lime Tree Avenue to the east is as the name states, two rows of mature lime trees parallel to a main pedestrian route into the site and vehicular access to the golf course. The golf course is a typical mosaic of well maintained amenity grassland; rough grassland, individual trees and bare sand.

The two deer herds comprise of 150 fallow deer and 80 red deer. They are free to roam across the whole site and have fenced off areas where they can seek refuge during rutting and calving seasons as well as when the park is busy.

Surfaced paths run throughout the site and are easily accessible for all abilities. Pedestrian entrances exist off Wollaton Road, Middleton Avenue and Parkside. Vehicular access is via Wollaton Road and there are two pay and display car parks available which serve the entire site.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 Between November 2013 and February 2014 a public consultation was held on the proposals to designate part of Wollaton Park as an LNR.

The consultation involved the following:

- Displaying a sign on the site entrances
- Posters within the Hall
- Letters to adjacent residential properties (212)
- Letters to internal and external consultees (38)
- Attendance at the Friends of Wollaton Park meeting
- Posters in community notice boards
- Meeting with Wollaton Park Golf Course
- Site visit with Natural England

- Online consultation promoted on website and Parks and Open Spaces Facebook page

2.2 11 email responses were received from members of the public. 12 online responses were submitted through the on-line consultation. Internal emails were received from colleagues Arts and Events, Rights of Way and Drainage. Letters of support were received from the Wollaton Park Golf Course and the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. No support letter has been received from Natural England to date, as they have requested a final boundary following the consultation. This will be sent in May 2014. A summary of responses is detailed below:

External responses

Severn Trent have enquired as to the implications of the designation. They have been advised that they will still be granted access for necessary works. We have asked that they contact us in advance of any planned work.

The National Grid has asked to be made aware of our decision to proceed with the designation.

Online responses

Of the 12 responses submitted, 10 people said they were in support of the proposals and 2 said there was not enough information about any restrictions or limitations that may be put in place. There was no way of responding to these queries as they did not leave contact details. One consultee commented that they were in support if necessary measures were in place to protect boundaries properly and prevent badgers from escaping the park.

Internal responses

The Senior Drainage Engineer responded regarding Wollaton Park lake (classified as a dam) and the associated its associated control features and the watercourses downstream of the dam. The dam is Category A (highest risk category) and is subject to the Reservoirs Act 1975. Concerns were raised about an LNR designation preventing the Council from complying with the associated legislation. The dam area has high botanical value. Advice from colleagues in the Legal department is that the statutory responsibilities with regard to the dam aren't considered a bar to declaring a nature reserve. The declaration would enable the lands to be managed for a recreational purpose which would include preserving wildlife. They advised that the management plan includes ways to establish a working relationship with colleagues to ensure no harm to the area during statutory works.

The Public Rights of Way Officer is in full support of the proposal

The Markets and Events Service Manager submitted the following comments:

- *Lime Tree Avenue*

This is the main vehicular access point during large scale events so there is a significant amount of traffic on the avenue on these days. In the past some vehicles have been parked on the verges of the avenue.

- *Middleton Paddock*

The former cricket pitch and Pilkington's Paddock are used for event car parking and exhibitor's caravan parking. As long as the option remains to continue to use

these areas for these requirements then the proposal should not impact the events programme.

- *Various Footpaths*

The site is used for cross country and orienteering events. Local Nature Reserve which would link up to form a route for this type of activity. We discussed that a small scale event would not have an impact on the reserve, but there is ambition to host national and international events that could become a much larger scale event. The proposal should be flexible enough to allow such events to be staged.

The Local Nature Reserve designation handbook advises that Schedule 11 (12) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, which replaced Section 15 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, describes a 'nature reserve' as:

- land managed solely for a conservation purpose, or
- land managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.

Some of the current recreational activities that take place would not appear to be an appropriate use of a LNR, and the management of the site for the recreational purposes could be seen to compromise its management for the conservation purpose. The boundaries have been drawn up to reflect this. Occasional use of parking would have to be controlled to ensure no damage to ground flora. Consultation with Arts and Events team prior to event planning is recommended.

Email responses

The table below includes a summary of the key queries raised as part of the consultation, followed by the response from the Biodiversity and Greenspace Policy Officer. Full details of responses is available if necessary

FAQ	General response
<i>What are the differences on the ground</i>	There will not be much of a visual impact. Habitats will be managed in similar way to existing to be sensitive to deer herds and other wildlife. Site will receive an extra layer of protection. We hope to increase wildlife themed events and interpretation.
<i>Will there be restrictions on dog walking?</i>	Dog walking will be allowed in the non-fenced areas of the proposed Local Nature Reserve area. Existing restrictions will continue to be in place, including signs being displayed asking visitors to control dogs around the deer herds; especially during times of breeding and calving. This is for safety reasons. We will work with partners to identify a way of tackling issues which may arise through dogs which are not under control. Incidences of dog fouling can be reported on line using the Councils 'Report a Problem' webpage.
<i>Will dogs be managed?</i>	This can be difficult to enforce, due to staff availability but we are working with partners to identify a way of tackling issues which may arise through dogs which are not under control. Incidences of dog fouling can be reported on line using the Councils 'Report a Problem' webpage.
<i>The way the park can used</i>	There won't be any added restrictions to how the site is used by the public. An LNR will provide an extra layer of statutory protection that protects the site from development. LNR's are about getting people involved with their local environment, and we hope to arrange a programme of events with a wildlife theme for site users.
<i>Access to current public areas/ will access arrangements change?</i>	There are no plans to change access to the public areas. Areas which are currently inaccessible will remain so and there is no additional fencing planned (other than ongoing repairs)
<i>How the park will be maintained?</i>	The site will continue to be maintained as it currently is, to ensure a continued mosaic of habitat and to provide foraging and refuge for the deer herds. We are hoping to be able to secure funding for on site information panels and a wildlife based leaflet to provide access to nature and inform site users of the valuable habitats and species on site.
<i>Any new fencing on site?</i>	There are no additional fences or gates currently proposed
<i>How will the golf course be affected?</i>	The golf course is an interesting wildlife area and we hope to be able to provide structured guided walks at appropriate times.
<i>Will concerts and other major events continue to be held?</i>	Events will operate as usual within Wollaton Park. The park is a multi-functional open space.
<i>Feeding ducks and geese - will the reserve try to educate the public on this matter?</i>	Feeding of wildlife can be an issue, and we have produced an information leaflet on common wildlife that includes a relevant section. Our Park Rangers hand these out, and they are a good way of explaining why not to feed wildlife. As part of our programme for wildlife themed events at the site, we can include this.
<i>Foreign species - will the reserve try to manage numbers of such species?</i>	Currently we do not control Canada Geese at the site. Occasionally the grey squirrel population is humanely controlled. Should any pest species be considered an issue on the site, we could work with colleagues in Pest Control in the future.
<i>Are there to be any do's and don't affecting residents?</i>	As an LNR, site users will be encouraged to be involved in wildlife themed events and activities on the site (for example guided walks, wildlife identification etc). There is a new Friends group for the site, and you are welcome to join this. In terms of the 'don'ts', an LNR won't bring any additional restrictions to residents that are already in place; that involve any actions resulting in the damage of the site.

IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

- 4.1 In declaring the site as a Local Nature Reserve there is a duty to maintain safe access and manage it for the protection of wildlife and biodiversity, however as the site is already owned by Nottingham City Council and maintained as accessible, this duty already exists.

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

5.1 Legal Implications

The declaration of the site as an LNR is within the Council's powers subject to the relevant processes being followed.

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 the site will ensure that it remains as natural open space, which is accessible to all communities and will therefore play a part in improving the quality of life of the local residents and citizens from the wider community now, and into the future.

Crime and Disorder Act Implication

The project will help to attract additional visitors to the park and reduce the fear of crime and disorder.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

The project will help to improve the wildlife based education and interpretation on the site. These improvements will encourage more people to participate in casual recreational activities such as walking and wildlife watching, contributing to improvements to physical and mental health.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An EIA has not been carried out. 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

None

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

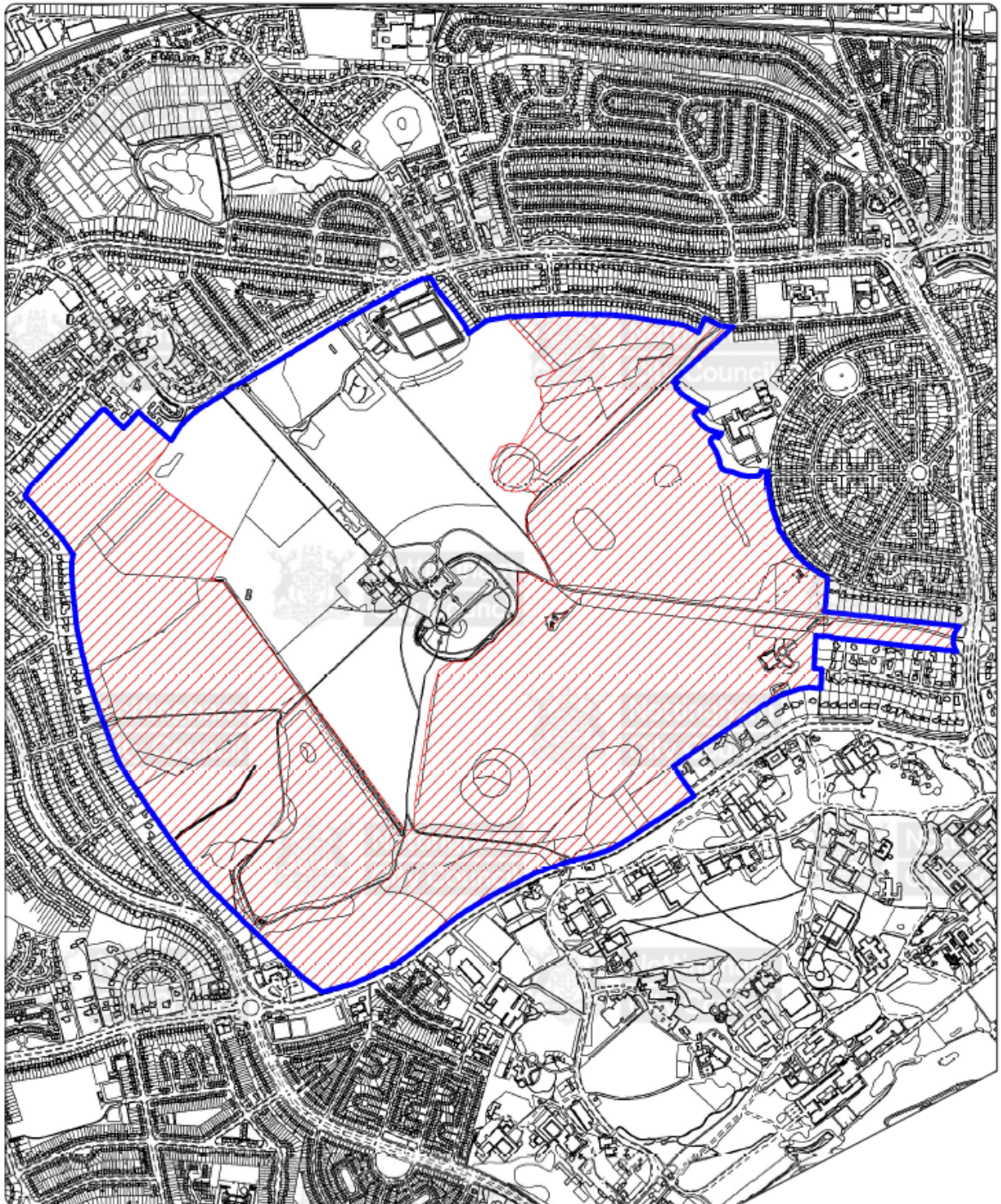
Wollaton Park pLNR management Brief (2014)

Open Spaces Champions Group report 29.04.2014



Site plan (attached at Appendix 1)

Appendix 1: Site Plan

Wollaton Hall Proposed Local Nature Reserve Boundary



Key

-  Wollaton Park Site Boundary
-  Proposed Local Nature Reserve

© Crown copyright and database right 2013. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019317.
H:\Users\DOLACS\Ipsr\Rec\Fis\ALNR\Wollaton_pLNR_2.mxd FA Parks and Open Spaces Team 04/11/2013

