



Partnership Delivery Group

3 July 2018

Nature Conservation Partnership Work

Report of the Executive Manager – Communities

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report is to update Members on how the Council is working with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT), to deliver the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy and biodiversity gain in Rushcliffe.
- 1.2. Janice Bradley, Head of Conservation, for Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust will provide a presentation for Members focussing on delivery of the service level agreement with the Council.
- 1.3. Members are requested to comment on Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's delivery of nature conservation services within Rushcliffe and whether they support this model for delivering biodiversity services in the future.
- 1.4. The work of NWT was previously considered by the Community Development Group on 18 April 2011 and Partnership Delivery Group on 8 July 2014 and Members endorsed the work.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Group:
 - a) Endorse the work that has been undertaken to support nature conservation in partnership with NWT
 - b) Support the continued Service Level Agreement (SLA) with NWT.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust achieved the outcomes within the Service Level Agreement during 2017 and a strong working partnership exists which complements the work of the Council's part time Environmental Sustainability Officer. The end of year report is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2. The Portfolio Holder for Housing Planning and Waste Management will be updated on the performance of NWT throughout the duration of the current agreement and will be consulted on the content of any future service level agreement, which is due for renewal on 31 March 2020.

4. Supporting Evidence

- 4.1 Rushcliffe's 41,000 hectares contains a wide variety of wildlife. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) cover 62 hectares or 0.15% of Rushcliffe and county Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)) cover around 1891 hectares or 4.91%. There are eight designated Local Nature Reserves.
- 4.2 Rushcliffe has had a nature conservation strategy since 1995; this has most recently been refreshed in 2010 and in 2015 and will be due for renewal in 2020. The strategy has six objectives, of which the NWT make a significant contribution to the delivering:
- a. Promote Landscape Scale Conservation to create a more resilient natural environment
 - b. Promote the maintenance and enhancement of nature reserves
 - c. Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas
 - d. Support continuing surveying, monitoring and reporting of Rushcliffe's biodiversity
 - e. Raise awareness of nature conservation issues
 - f. Seek to influence the impact of development on wildlife.
- 4.3 Since 2004, the Council has had a service level agreement with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. The current agreement runs to March 2020.
- 4.4 Highlights of the partnership work include:
- The original 210 hectares classed as nature reserve has more than doubled to around 460 hectares since 2004
 - Recorded voluntary practical nature conservation work has increased from 3,138 hours in 2004 to 10,219 hours in 2016 (worth an estimated £190,993 based on Volunteering England guidance 2014, equating to £18.69 per hour)
 - Cumulative totals of habitat creation in Rushcliffe since 2011 are: Wildlife Grassland: 15.3ha; Woodland: 21.1ha; Wetland: 37.8ha; Ponds: 465m²
 - Approximately 200 educational activities have been carried out in schools across Rushcliffe, working with 4000 plus school children, since 2004.
- 4.4 The SLA end of year report (attached as appendix 1) details work undertaken during 2017.
- 4.5 The end of year report also provides information on complementary work undertaken in Rushcliffe by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. This work is not

funded by the Council through the SLA; however, the Trust has indicated that the Council's SLA funding investment is important in supporting this work.

5. Risk and Uncertainties

5.1 The current SLA is operational until March 2020. It is necessary to review the existing delivery mechanisms and outcomes in order to establish the most appropriate format for a renewed agreement for the period April 2020 onwards.

6. Implications

6.1 Finance

- The Service level agreement with NWT during the period 2016 to 2020 is for £15,750 per annum and is contained within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal

- The SLA with NWT was established in conjunction with the Council's Legal Services team.
- Biodiversity Duty - Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, section 40 states that the Council has a legal obligation to consider biodiversity in the delivery of its services.

6.3 Corporate Priorities

- Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life.

6.4 Other Implications

- Nature conservation work is promoted to all residents and can help to address issues relating to equality, diversity, mental and physical health.
- Nature Conservation can help reduce the impact of climate change by providing green spaces which can absorb greenhouse gases and provide heat sinks.

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Background papers available for inspection:	Service Level Agreement between Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust – Biodiversity Services 2016 Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy, online at http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/1_rushcliffe/media/documents/pdf/environmentandwaste/environment/nature/Rushcliffe%20Nat

	ure%20Conservation%20Strategy%202016_2020%20final.pdf The Nature of Rushcliffe Annual Report 2016, online at http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/1rushcliffe/media/documents/pdf/environmentandwaste/environment/nature/Annual%20Report%20June%202016.pdf
List of appendices:	Report for Activity Delivered January to December 2017