

Item

EXTENSION OF LOGAN'S MEADOW LOCAL NATURE RESERVE DESIGNATION

To:

Councillor Alex Collis, Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Sustainable Food and Community Wellbeing
Environment & Community Scrutiny Committee 01/07/2021

Report by:

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Wards affected:

Abbey, East Chesterton

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The City Council has 12 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and manages them for wildlife and people. LNRs are a statutory designation local authority can declare in association with Natural England.
- 1.2 Officers have been working with the Friends of Logan's Meadow LNR on a proposal to extend the site's existing LNR designation onto former sports pitches and an area of adopted land. See appendix A for a location and site plan of proposed LNR extension. Red line demarks the existing LNR designation, green line the proposed extension.

- 1.3 A public consultation on the LNR extension and proposed creation of new habitats was widely publicised between 12th October and the 20th November 2020 and received 460 responses, with an overall support for the proposal.
- 1.4 Officers are now seeking the necessary authority from the committee to formally consult with Natural England on the proposed LNR extension, prior to public advertisement and declaration.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- a) Approve the proposed LNR extension to Logan's Meadow LNR and provide authority for officers to formally consult with Natural England and secure its declaration.

3. Background

- 3.1 Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a statutory designation¹ made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities. LNRs are for people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.
- 3.2 The City Council has designated 12 Local Nature Reserves to protect and enhance the key natural green spaces for which we are custodians. The management of these site is overseen by our Local Nature Reserve Officer, working closely with Friends Groups and volunteers, except for two Cherry Hinton LNRs – Limekiln Pit and East Pit. Limekiln Pit LNR is leased by the City Council and managed under contract by the local Wildlife Trust; and East Pit LNR is owned and managed by the local Wildlife trust. For more information on existing reserves visit: <https://lnr.cambridge.gov.uk/>

¹ Local Nature Reserve designation gives the site increased protection from damaging operations, including development, via Local Plan policies. By designating, the authority is committing to management of the space for people and wildlife via an approved management plan.

- 3.3 Logan's Meadow LNR is a riverside site in East Chesterton, incorporating a mix of wet woodland, grassland, backwaters, ponds and reedbed. It also includes the iconic Cambridge Swift Tower. The location of the LNR makes it an important steppingstone in the recently launched Cambridge Nature Network², which seeks to restore and connect habitats through the City.
- 3.4 The council is committed to enhancing our riverside LNRs as part of the wider nature network. In 2020 we consulted on plans to extend the existing Logan's Meadow LNR designation to incorporate former sports pitches and an adopted area of open space in front of the Vie development. We also outlined potential new habitat creation on the space to guide details designs and future projects.
- 3.5 The public consultation was promoted widely by the Council, with considerable support from the Friends of Logan's Meadow, and subsequently received 460 responses. A summary report of the responses is included within the appendices of this report. 93% of responses supported the proposed extension of the LNR.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with the proposed extension of the LNR designation, the site will remain in Council ownership and management.

b) Staffing Implications

The LNR designation will be resourced from within existing staffing resources.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

The designation will ensure the site has statutory protection for the enjoyment of all users. Future for new habitat and access enhancements will be subject to public consultation and associated EQIA.

d) Environmental Implications

² https://www.wildlifebcn.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/CambridgeNatureNetworkStage3ReportFINAL%28lowres%29_0.pdf

Positive. The proposed designation will safeguard and enhance floodplain habitats along the river corridor and help the City adapt to a changing climate and riparian flood events. By increasing, linking and enhancing existing designated wildlife sites the proposed designation will help species to disperse and adapt to a changing climate.

e) Procurement Implications

The designation has no direct procurement implications. .

f) Community Safety Implications

The existing and proposed LNR designation are currently public open space managed by the City Council and are therefore subject to public realm enforcement service visits, tree safety audits, operational management and specialist habitat management. The proposed designation will not generate any specific community safety implications, future proposals for habitat and access enhancements will be subject to careful design to ensure potential community safety issues are addressed.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The consultation explored public support for the broad principle of an LNR extension and opportunities to enhance and extend the LNR for both wildlife and people. Further questions sought an understanding of what people most valued about the current space and the kind of enhancements they would like to see implemented through a series of projects. These views and detailed responses have been captured and will be used to inform detailed designs for future enhancement plans.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:
Natural England and Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
guidance to local authorities, October 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/create-and-manage-local-nature-reserves>

Feedback report on the Logan's Meadow extension consultation. Guy Belcher, Cambridge City Council, December 2020.

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/9079/logans-meadow-local-nature-reserve-extension-consultation-report.pdf>

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Location and site map of proposed Logan's Meadow LNR designation

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Officer, tel: 01223 - 458532, email: guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk.