

REPORT FOR DECISION



Agenda Item	9
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MEETING: PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

DATE: 28 OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT: PROPOSED LOCAL NATURE RESERVE AT
CHAPELFIELD, RADCLIFFE

REPORT FROM: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LOCALITIES)

CONTACT OFFICER: CHRIS WILKINSON

TYPE OF DECISION: COMMITTEE

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS: This report is within the public domain

SUMMARY: This report describes progress towards meeting the Council's target of having 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) per 1000 people and proposes the declaration of a new site at Chapelfield, Radcliffe

OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION It is recommended that Planning Control Committee authorises the Council Solicitor to declare a Local Nature Reserve at Chapelfield, Radcliffe and adopts the designation for use in development planning and management.

Other options (not recommended) are to not declare the site or declare only part of the site.

IMPLICATIONS:**Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:**

Policy EN6/2 of the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan anticipates the declaration of LNRs and protects them from unsympathetic development.

Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:

Work in LNRs is led by the Council's existing Local Nature Reserves Officer.

Statement by Executive Director of Resources and Regulation:

None

Equality/Diversity implications:

None.

Considered by Monitoring Officer:

Yes
Para 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides that planning policies should identify and map sites of importance for nature conservation. Para 118 advocates the protection of such sites.

Wards Affected:

Radcliffe West

Scrutiny Interest:

N/A

TRACKING/PROCESS**DIRECTOR: Mike Owen – Executive****Director of Resources and Regulation**

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Commission	Committee	Council	
	✓		

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 1997 the Council adopted a target, recommended by the Countryside Commission (now Natural England) to declare 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve per 1000 residents. The aim was, for the health and educational benefits, to give everyone access to natural greenspace without needing to travel great distances.

1.2 Since then five sites have been declared and the Borough now has 0.8 ha. Per 1000. The sites are Philips Park, Chesham, Hollins Vale, Redisher Wood and the Kirklees Valley.

1.3 The Borough's LNRs are managed by the Council's Parks and Countryside Service and work in them is led by the Council's Local Nature Reserves Officer.

2.0 ISSUES

2.1 Para 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework says that 'To minimise impacts on biodiversity..., planning policies should....identify and map....locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity'. Para 118 says that 'when determining planning applications,.....if significant harm from a development (*to biodiversity*) cannot be avoided... planning permission should be refused.

2.2 LNRs are generally Sites of Biological Importance with particularly strong local community interest. Unlike Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Biological Importance do not have statutory protection. However, the designation of 'regional and local sites' (i.e. SBIs and LNRs) is promoted (in the NPPF and elsewhere) as a planning tool for conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Designation allows identified sites of ecological value to be protected from harmful development that requires planning permission.

2.3 The proposal to create an LNR at Chapelfield, centred on Chapelfield SBI dates from the planning permission for the redevelopment of the Radcliffe Paper Mill site. The consent (36520/00) had an attached s106 which included a land transfer and a sum for site improvement and management. The proposed LNR boundary (see attached plan) encompasses 5.5 ha and includes the land transferred to the Council by Barratt Homes and Woodford Industries for recreation and leisure use, plus some small areas of land already owned by the Council and controlled by Six Town Housing and Education.

2.4 The local community is in favour of the proposed declaration. Meetings about the proposed LNR have been taking place since 2012 and a number of community action days have been led by the Local Nature Reserves Officer. Residents of the new housing estate and members of Chapelfield Residents Association have all been keen to see better management and improvements to the site. If Chapelfield was declared, each Township would then have a Local Nature Reserve

2.5 Declaration requires the support of Natural England and its letter of support is dated 8 January 2014. It also requires a formal declaration document and publication of a notice in the local press.

2.6 An ECIA Initial Screening Assessment is appended to this report. It finds that the proposal to declare a LNR at Chapelfield serves an existing policy with minimal implications for equality or cohesion.

3.0 CONCLUSION

Given the support for the proposal from the local community and Natural England, it is proposed that Chapelfield be declared as Radcliffe's first Local Nature Reserve.

List of Background Papers:-

Natural England/DEFRA advice on LNRs is available at

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

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PROPOSED CHAPELFIELD LOCAL NATURE RESERVE BOUNDARY

