

Report to	Cabinet	Item
	14 December 2016	
Report of	Head of citywide services	9
Subject	Declaration of West Earlham Woods as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	

Purpose

To seek approval to declare West Earlham Woods as a local nature reserve.

Recommendation

To approve the designation of the West Earlham Woods as Norwich's ninth Local Nature Reserve.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a safe, clean and low carbon city.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications.

Ward/s: Bowthorpe

Cabinet member: Councillor Ryan - Customer care and leisure

Contact officers

Adrian Akester, Head of Citywide services 01603 212343

Simon Meek, Parks and open spaces manager 01603 213582

Background documents

None

Report

1. Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, amended under Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006.
2. The legislation enables all county and district authorities to declare LNRs. An LNR must have biodiversity or geological interest, and some degree of public access provision is necessary. Natural England, the government body responsible for wildlife and geological conservation, actively encourages local authorities to declare and manage LNRs.
3. West Earlham Woods (WEW), date back to at least the 18th century and they were left largely intact when the surrounding area was developed for housing during the mid-20th century. They are an important wildlife site and a valuable community asset.
4. The woods are appreciated by many local people for their wildlife and as a place for quiet recreation and 'natural play'. They are also used for educational activities, notably Forest Schools.
5. Despite this, the woods have suffered from anti-social behaviour, especially fly-tipping and a lack of a consistent management approach.
6. During the 1990s, 8 LNRs were designated in Norwich. The WEW were listed for LNR designation at this time, but this never actually occurred and since then no further LNRs have been designated in Norwich.
7. The Friends of West Earlham Woods, a local community-based group, asked the city council to pursue LNR designation for the site.
8. The designation process requires a wildlife survey to be carried out and a management plan to be prepared for the site. This work has been completed.
9. Natural England, the government's wildlife conservation advisor responsible for overseeing LNRs, has given its official support for the LNR designation.
10. LNR designation for the WEW would provide several key benefits, and it would be consistent with the following key actions in Norwich City Council's current corporate strategy:
 - Safe, clean and low carbon city
 - Prosperous and vibrant city
 - Healthy city

11. LNR status offers strong legal protection to sites and their associated wildlife, and it helps to raise their profile with both the public and potential funding bodies.
12. Designation would highlight Norwich City Council's continuing commitment to biodiversity conservation; and enhanced its reputation with regards to protecting the natural environment.
13. Building on the work of the local Friends group, LNR designation could also engender community pride in what is currently an area of social deprivation. In turn, this may lead to positive changes in behaviour and increased respect and appreciation for the woodlands.
14. Previous LNR designations have not resulted in the council incurring extra costs, or any other adverse impacts. In the past additional external funding has been obtained due to the sites' LNR status.

Integrated impact assessment



NORWICH
City Council

Report author to complete

Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	
Director / Head of service	Adrian Akester
Report subject:	West Earlham Woods: proposed Local Nature Reserve designation
Date assessed:	21/11/16
Description:	An assessment of the impacts of the proposed Local Nature Reserve designation

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Nature Reserve designation may help to improve the overall image of the area, and thus improve prospects for local business investment .
Financial inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Nature Reserve designation will help to highlight the value of the woodlands for healthy exercise and mental well-being.

	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Activiites organised in the woodlands have already helped to bring local people together. Local Nature Reserve designation would raise the profile of the two sites and create more opportunities for this to happen.
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Nature Reserve designation may encourage more people to use the woods as a walking route to local facilities rather than drive.
Natural and built environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Nature Reserve designation is specifically aimed at maintaining and enhancing the natural environment, as well as raising public awareness of 'nature on your doorstep'.
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is hoped that Local Nature Reserve designation might help to change attitudes about the woodlands and to discourage fly-tipping.
Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Impact			
Energy and climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Woodlands are valuable for carbon storage, and for helping to cool the atmosphere in urban areas during high summer temperatures.. Local Nature Reserve designation will ensure that the woods are able to continue this function through being protected and properly managed.
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Impact either neutral, or a slight positive in that Local Nature Reserve designation may enhance the council's reputation.

Recommendations from impact assessment	
Positive	
The overall impact of the proposed Local Nature Reserve designation for the West Earlham Woods is positive. The potential benefits could be achieved at minimal effort and at no extra cost to the council.	
Negative	
It is not envisaged that there would be any negative impacts of Local Nature Reserve designation for the West Earlham Woods.	
Neutral	
LNR designation would have a neutral impact on most of the IIA indicators.	

Issues