

Report for Resolution

Report to Mousehold Heath Conservators
13 January 2012
Report of Head of local neighbourhood services
Subject Annual work programme

Item

5

Purpose

To propose to Conservators the draft work programme for 2012/13

Recommendations

That the Conservators comment on and approve the draft work programme for 2012/13.

Financial Consequences

Any costs that arise from this report will be met from existing budgets, or external funding.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority Safe & Healthy Neighbourhoods

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Background Documents

Mousehold Heath management plan 2008-2013, and annual work programme 2012/13.

Report

Background

The Conservators have in more recent years, approved the annual work programme for the following financial year at the same meeting that the budget is approved. This is to ensure that activity is aligned with the setting of the budget.

As in previous years, the draft work programme has been produced in a spreadsheet format to show the following:

- Each proposed action has been listed under one of nine thematic headings, together with the relevant management plan objective and location details.
- The actions have been prioritised as follows: 1 = highest priority, 2 = medium priority, 3 = lowest priority. Priorities may need to change during the year depending on circumstances.
- Tree works, and items included in the grounds maintenance contract or as grounds maintenance day works are identified separately and costs provided where available. Projects, including those which are one off, are identified separately. It should be noted that many of the actions will be carried out by volunteers, or by City Council staff as part of their normal duties, so these items are not separately costed.
- The lead person(s) or organisation for each action is identified. The coloured chart depicts the proposed date range for the action and the individuals and/or organisations involved.

Rational

Many of the proposed actions in the work programme consist of ongoing site management works and activities such as the annual programme of events. It is intended to at least maintain, and where possible expand, the levels of habitat management activity, infrastructure improvement and services to the public undertaken in previous years, subject to the availability of resources. This should be possible for the following reasons:

- New ways of working, especially the greater availability and involvement of volunteer time, have reduced costs and enabled an increase in the amount of management work undertaken. It should be noted that organising volunteer work parties takes up a considerable amount of staff time, and this has only proved possible due to a second Mousehold warden being employed.
- The use of contractors with specialist machinery has been increased, especially for heathland management. Also, the increased use of machine tools e.g. chainsaw and brush-cutter for use by the Mousehold wardens, has enabled many smaller tasks to be undertaken at lower cost and more efficiently.
- It is hoped to continue to expand the amount of external funding available

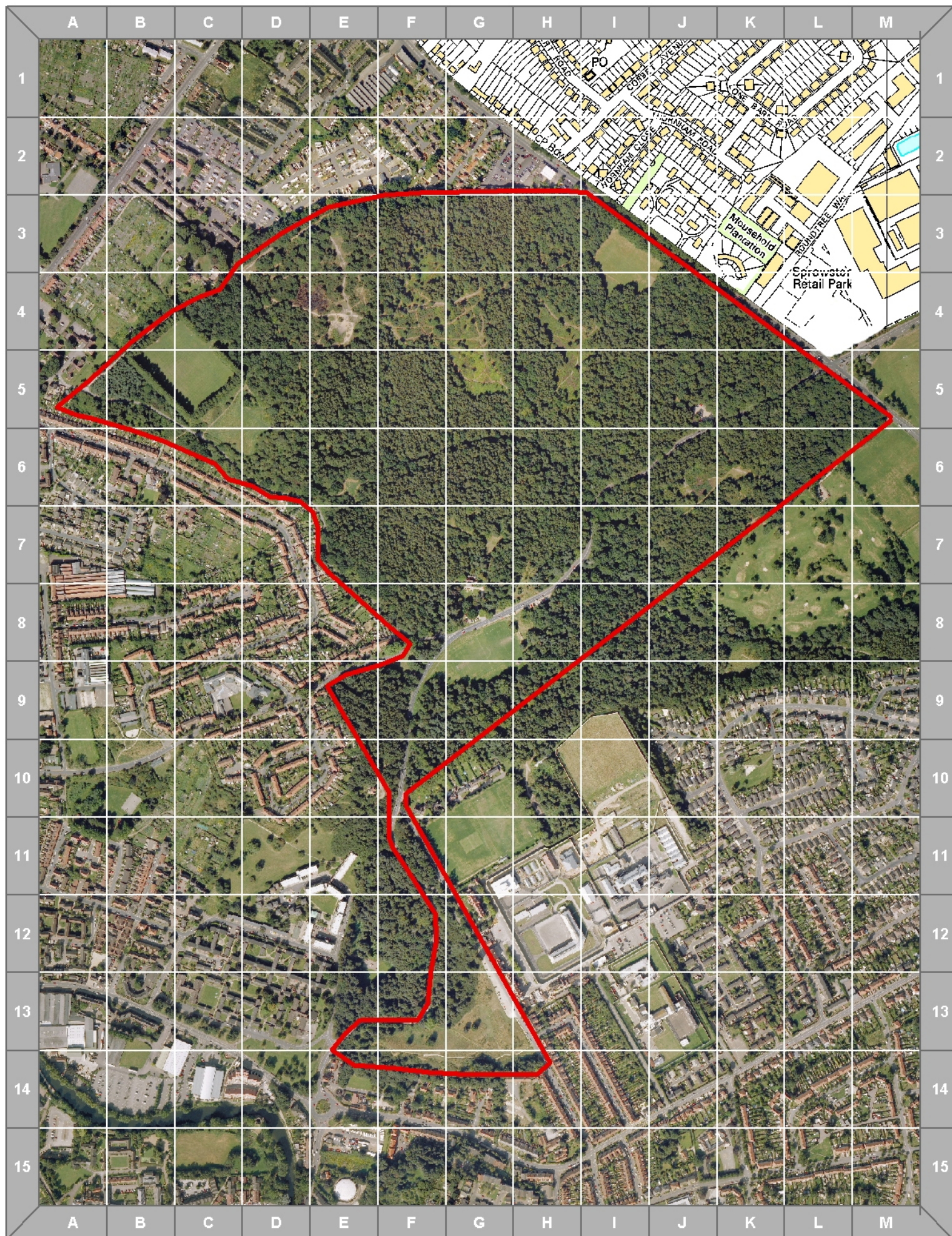
for management works at Mousehold. For example, in 2012, it is proposed, subject to the views of the Conservators, to enter part of the site into the government's Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, which will replace the Countryside Stewardship Scheme that has been in place on a small area of Mousehold since 2002. The HLS scheme should also be able to fund one-off habitat management projects.

In addition to regular work, several specific projects or one-off works are proposed in the 2012/13 work programme. These include:

- Feasibility study for a new wildlife pond. The existing Vinegar Pond and the very small pond dug nearby in 2003 are utilised by spawning frogs, but otherwise they are of very limited value to wildlife. A new, purpose-built pond, possibly on a site just to the north of the Pavilion, has been suggested. This could have considerable conservation value as well as offering an additional educational resource for visitors. A feasibility study involving a site survey and soil analysis would first be required; estimated cost would be £1,000. The cost of the pond itself, should it be decided to proceed, would depend on the lining method used but would probably be £7,000 – 10,000. If possible, external funding would be sought to cover at least a proportion of the cost.
- Earth Heritage Trail – the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership (NGP) has already obtained funding for geological interpretation at Mousehold, and some small-scale works to expose and conserve some of the best geological exposures. The latter will also benefit insects associated with these habitats, such as solitary bees and wasps; several uncommon species of these occur at Mousehold Heath. The types of interpretation media and site works to be funded will be agreed between the NGP and the Mousehold Heath Conservators. It is envisaged that the entire cost of the project will be covered by the NGP's grant.
- Heathland management: regular heathland management is carried out mainly by volunteers and the Mousehold Heath wardens, but the use of specialist machinery in 2010 and 2011 has enabled new areas of heathland to be brought back into active management. It is proposed to use this machinery again in 2012/13, both for cutting and collecting vegetation and for removing the build up of humus that has prevented the regeneration of heather and other heathland plants. The estimated cost of this work is £7,000.
- Some of the site 'furniture' at Mousehold, notably bollards and roadside fencing preventing unauthorised vehicle access to the heath, is in need of replacement. Several of the historic cast metal signposts and way-markers also need refurbishment. The cost of these replacement and repair works for 2012/13 would be £5,000 – 7,000, depending on the number involved.

Mousehold Heath Conservators - 13 January 2017

Type	Obj.	Location Name	Item	Action	Management Plan Map 5 Aerial Map Location	Pr	Contract	Projects	Grounds Maintenance Dayworks	Trees	Lead	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Habitat Management - Water	4.8	Vinegar Pond	Pond	Monitor condition	E4	1					D/MW	D/MW											D/MW
	4.8	Nth of Zak's (or other location)	New pond	Investigate feasibility of new pond	G7	2					PH								PH	PH			
Habitat Management - Heath	4.5	Heathland areas	Gorse management	Cut/collect gorse areas on rotation	TBA	1			4,000		MW								D/BTCV/MW				
	4.5	Heathland areas	Scrub clearance	Cut scrub	E13-14/F13-14/G13-14/H14	1					MW								D/BTCV/MW				
	4.5	Heathland areas	Scrapes	Remove topsoil from selected areas to encourage heathland regeneration	TBA	1		3,000			MW								MW	MW	MW	MW	
	4.5	St. James' Hill	Scrub clearance	Cut back scrub	E13-14/F13-14/ G12-14/H13-14	2					MW								D/BTCV/MW				
	4.5	All Heathland areas	Control scrub regrowth	Control regrowth from previously cut scrub	D3-4/E3-5/F3-5/G3-5&7/H4-5&7/I4-5/J6-7/K6-7/L6	1					MW							D/MW/BTCV					
	4.5	Heathland areas	Bracken control	Cut/bruise bracken in open areas	G4-5/H5/I5	1					MW			MW/D/BTCV									
	4.5	Playing field adj pitch & putt	GNDP project	Monitor/manage heathland project area	K6/L6/M6	1					PH/MW	PH/MW	PH/MW										
Habitat Management - Grassland	4.6	The Desert	Grassland management	Cut areas & remove arisings (Cons.Cut 5)	C5-6/D5-6	2	Yes				MW						C						
	4.6	The Anthills	Grassland management	Cut areas & remove arisings (Cons.Cut 5)	G8/H8	2	Yes				MW						C						
	4.6	The Anthills	Grassland management	Control any encroaching scrub	G8/H8	2					MW								MW/D		MW/D		
	4.6	St James' Hill/Cav Track area	Scrub management	Control, or coppice areas on rotation	E14/F12-14/G14	2					MW							C	C	C			
Habitat Management - Woodland	4.7	Long Valley	Coppicing	Expand woodland glade	E6	2					MW								MW/D		MW/D		
	4.7	Gilman Rd	Path/cycleway	Complete tree work (if not done 2010/11)	A5-F8	2					IM/MW									C	C	C	C
	4.7	All areas	Programmed works	Carry out safety related tree works		1				4,254	IM/MW							C/MW		C/MW			
	4.7	All areas	Emergency works	Carry out safety related tree works		1					IM/MW							C/MW		C/MW			
	4.7	All areas	Woodland Grant Scheme	Investigate viability for Mousehold		2					PH	PH	PH										
Historic Landscape Management	4.9	St. William's Chapel Site	Maintain site	Clear encroaching vegetation to agreed plan	J4/K4	1					MW							MW	MW	MW	MW	MW	
	4.9	St. William's Chapel Site	Interpretation sign	Design & install	J4/K4	2					MW					MW	MW						
	4.6	Tram Track	Historic routes	Open up	I6/J5-6/K5	3					D/MW								D	D	D	D	D
Visitor Management	4.10	Whole site	School visits	Organised visits & activities		2					MW	MW	MW	MW					MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
	4.10	Off site	School talks	Talks & activities to schools		2					MW	MW	MW	MW					MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
	4.10	Whole site	Public events	Organise & run year round programme		2					D/MW	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
	4.10	Whole site	Interpretation Plan	Develop interpretation plan recommendations		2					PH/MW			PH/MW	PH/MW								
	4.10	Whole site	Site management notices	Produce site info notices prior to works commencing		1					MW					MW			MW	MW	MW		
	4.10	Orienteering Trail route	Orienteering Trail	Replace trail posts/review upgrade		3					MW			NH/NOG									
	4.10	Selected areas	Geological interpretation	Design & implement	Various	1		External funding			NGP			PH/MW/D		PH/MW/D			PH/MW/D		PH/MW/D		



Map 5: Aerial view of Mousehold Heath with Location Grid