

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 20 OCTOBER 2011

DECLARATION OF MADEBROOK POOLS AND STIRCHLEY DINGLE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

REPORT OF HEAD OF HOUSING AND PLANNING

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the declaration of a new Local Nature Reserve, an area of land around the pools in Madebrook and Stirchley Dingle (Appendix 1).
- 1.2. The proposal has been developed in liaison with a local community group, the Madebrook and Stirchley Dingle Steering Group and will involve volunteers carrying out small-scale conservation tasks as part of the management of the site.
- 1.3. The selection, declaration and management of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) is a function of local authorities. These sites play an important role in maintaining a healthy balance in spatial planning between the built environment and the green infrastructure.
- 1.4. The site in question is referred to as the proposed Madebrook Pools and Stirchley Dingle LNR and is within council ownership. It is considered to fulfil the requirements of becoming a formal designated site. The site:
 - Is currently a Wildlife Site and not allocated for development
 - Has an up to date management plan
 - Has a strong level of community involvement; and
 - Is one of the few sites in the borough suitable for access by disabled anglers
- 1.5. Subject to approval, the next stage will be to progress the site further through the formal process with Natural England prior to final declaration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1 Approve the declaration of the Madebrook Pools and Stirchely Dingle Local Nature Reserve

2.2 Delegate authority to complete the declaration process to the Head of Housing and Planning following consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Maintaining a clean, quality environment and improved green infrastructure and public realm: - Protect and enhance the green infrastructure and biodiversity of the borough
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Particular benefits for children and young people and disabled anglers that use the site
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Sep 11 - Formal Consultation with Natural England Dec 11 - Declaration of Local Nature Reserve	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	There is an existing budget for the maintenance of the site and the maintenance of the proposed Local nature Reserve will be contained within this budget. JAC 240611	
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council has power under the National parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to declare that land which it owns is to be managed as a nature reserve and the declaration stands as conclusive evidence that the land is being managed as such. There is a procedure that needs to be followed regarding the declaration and Legal Services will assist the Head of Housing and Planning as required regarding the process.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Declaring this area as a Local Nature Reserve will enhance the natural environment of the ward.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The proposal is located in the Nedge ward, although the site will benefit the wider the community who will have access to it. Brookside Ward is situated to the west of the boundary.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1. This report sets out a proposal to declare a statutory Local Nature Reserve known as 'Madebrook Pools & Stirchley Dingle Local Nature Reserve'. This is in accordance with the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 . Subject to approval, the proposal will then need to receive a formal welcome by Natural England.
- 4.2. Declaration of the land as a LNR requires the Borough of Telford & Wrekin to manage the land shown in Appendix 1, as a nature reserve and to protect it from inappropriate uses or development. The site currently holds wildlife site status and is not allocated for development in the Borough Plan.

- 4.3. The site has nature conservation value and a strong level of community interest and involvement. This includes the Madebrook and Stirchley Dingle Steering Group who have played a key role in developing the proposal in liaison with the Council. Through active engagement with the community, local people are already getting involved in the management and protection of the site, with regular volunteer work parties and nature walks co-ordinated by the South Telford Rights of Way Partnership and the local Green Gym.
- 4.4. The proposed LNR is within the Council's ownership (Appendix 2), meets the necessary criteria for selection, has an up to date management plan, and has gained support from Telford Angling Association, the Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 5.1.1. All members of the community should have the opportunity to benefit from the diverse range of species and habitat present in the Borough. Research has shown that improving the provision of and access to natural green space can be valuable to a wide range of groups within the community, especially children and young people. A formal declaration provides clarity that public access is encouraged.
- 5.1.2. Improving the provision of and access to natural green space can be valuable to a wide range of groups within the community, especially children and young people, including opportunities for local schools to use the site as an outdoor classroom. In addition, the site is one of the few venues in the borough suitable for access by disabled anglers; a key benefit that would be retained.
- 5.1.3. Declaration of Local Nature Reserves is beneficial to a number of priorities associated with Environment, Transport and Community and Health & Wellbeing, in particular the protection and enhancement of the green infrastructure and biodiversity of the borough. The council has a local target associated with LNRs¹ which will benefit from the declaration of this site.

5.2. OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.2.1. Internal consultation has taken place within the Council. Whilst there were no objections, a number of issues were raised which have been addressed as follows:
- **Future potential use of the pools for surface water management associated with the Lord Silkin School which lies to the east of the site**
Designation of the site as an LNR would not adversely affect this proposal so long as the works were carried out sensitively. The Headteacher of the school fully supports the LNR proposal, particularly as it provides an opportunity for outdoor learning in the natural environment.
 - **Potential impact of the LNR on accessibility of the site, including vehicular access to the disabled angling pegs, adjacent tennis courts, playing fields and BMX track**

¹ Exceed Natural England's standard for accessible natural green space of 1 ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population (1.3ha 2010/11, 1.4ha 2011/12, 1.5 ha 2012/13)

Roads and access routes can be included in LNR's, including any future maintenance or improvement work subject to it being carried out appropriately. This would also include use of subsoil from the specified area of the LNR site for maintenance of the off-site BMX track.

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

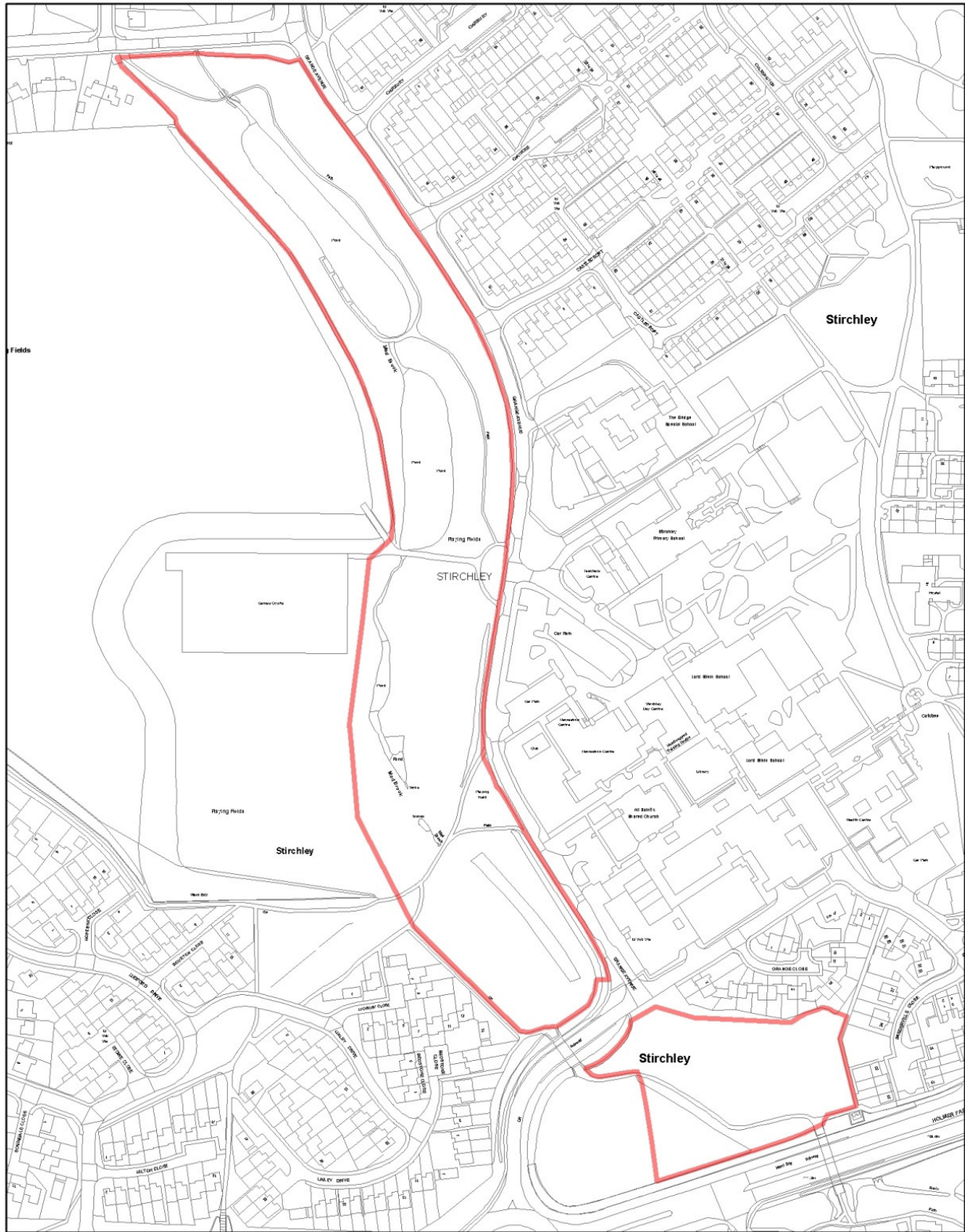
- 6.1 Cabinet report 12th February 2007 entitled 'Declaration of Local Nature Reserves'.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Local Nature Reserves in England: A Guide to their selection and declaration (Natural England, 2009)
- 7.2 Local Nature Reserves: places for people and wildlife (English Nature)
- 7.3 Accessible natural greenspace in towns and cities: A review of appropriate size and distance criteria (English Nature Research Reports No. I53)

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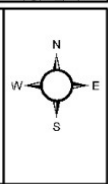

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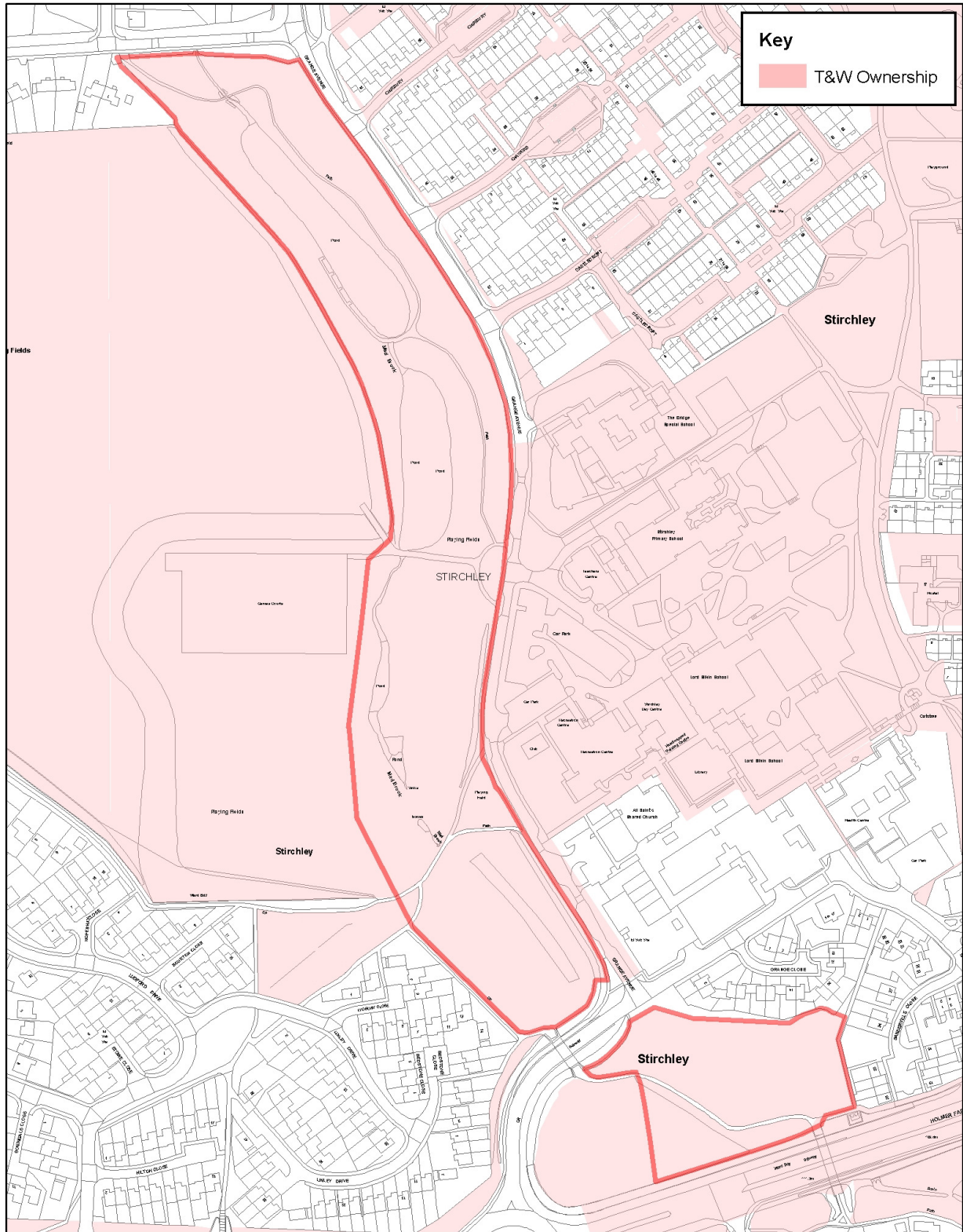
Borough of Telford & Wrekin
Darby House
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Madebrook Pools and Stirchley Dingle
Appendix 1: Site Boundary

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Madebrook Pools and Stirchley Dingle
Appendix 2: Site Ownership

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