

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 27 MARCH 2014**

**DECLARATION OF DOTHILL LOCAL NATURE RESERVE**

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: PLANNING SPECIALIST**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR CHARLES SMITH**

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek cabinet approval for a new Local Nature Reserve (LNR), comprising an area of land surrounding a large lake at Dothill, Wellington (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The proposal has been developed in liaison with the local community, the Wellington Conservation Area Working Group and will involve local volunteers carrying out small scale conservation tasks as part of the site management.
- 1.3 The selection, declaration and management of Local Nature Reserves 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 green infrastructure.
- 1.4 The site in question is referred to as the proposed Dothill LNR and is within Council ownership. It is considered to fulfil the requirements to become a formally designated site. The site:
- Is partially designated as a Local Wildlife Site;
  - Has an up to date management plan; and
  - Has a strong level of local involvement
- 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 Dothill Local Nature Reserve**

**2.2 Delegate authority to complete the declaration process to the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist following consultation with the Lead Cabinet member for Housing, Development and Borough Towns.**

### 3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Designation of the LNR contributes to several priorities, including: -ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained -improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities Through the working group and Friends of Dothill, there is active community involvement
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The LNR is a beneficial resource to people who live and visit the area and has parts which are accessible to all members of the community, including those with wheelchairs and pushchairs
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE</b>	May 2014 – Formal Consultation with Natural England July 2014 – Declaration of Local Nature Reserve	
<b>FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	No	The designation of the land (as detailed in Appendix 1) as a Local Nature Reserve requires the Council to manage and maintain the land in accordance with a management plan. In order to avoid a financial pressure as a result of the designation, it has been agreed that the Council will continue to maintain the site at its current level. The site Management Committee will be responsible for securing third party funding for any additional works or site improvements, over and above the current maintenance regime. Should additional funding not be identified, the requirements under the site management plan will be amended accordingly. The land to be designated is in the ownership of the Council and the designation will offer protection from future development or inappropriate use. This may have an impact on future strategic options for asset use or disposal.
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	No	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 Assistant Director: Planning Specialist as required regarding the process
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	The Council is following the formal process for declaring a LNR as set out in guidance from Natural England, ensuring compliance with the requirements. In liaison with stakeholders, the potential impact of the LNR has also been taken into consideration and any adverse impacts addressed. The management plan provides a framework for ensuring the LNR is maintained appropriately and continues to meet the requirements of an LNR.
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	Yes	The LNR is located in the following Wards who are represented on both the Working Group and Steering Group: Wrockwardine: Cllr Jacqui Seymour Dothill: Cllr Karen Tomlinson

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **4. INFORMATION**

- 4.1 This report sets out a proposal to declare a statutory Local Nature Reserve known as 'Dothill Local Nature Reserve.' This is in accordance with the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Subject to approval, the proposal will then need to receive a formal welcome from Natural England.
- 4.2 Declaration of the land as an LNR requires Telford & Wrekin Council to manage the land shown in Appendix 1 as a nature reserve and to protect it from inappropriate uses or development. Part of the site currently holds Local Wildlife Site status and so is already managed for conservation purposes.
- 4.3 Other parts of the site also have nature conservation value and a high level of community interest and involvement. This includes the Wellington Conservation Area Working Group, a subgroup of Wellington Town Council and more recently, the Dothill Open Space Steering Group. These groups have played a key role in developing the proposal in liaison with the local authority. Through active engagement with the community, local people are already getting involved in the management and protection of the site and a regular programme of volunteer work parties are being planned for summer and autumn 2014 with the support of Shropshire Wildlife Trust.
- 4.4 The proposed LNR is within the Council's ownership and meets the necessary criteria for selection, has an up to date management plan and has gained support from Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.
- 4.5 As part of the declaration process, subject to Cabinet approval, a consultation document will be issued to Natural England to seek their formal 'Welcome' prior to completion of the declaration and the associated legal seal.

### **5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 5.1 Consultation with relevant stakeholders has taken place and the declaration of the site as an LNR has received support.
- 5.2 It was noted, however, that the original boundary of the proposed LNR included a number of sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This assessment provides an indication of possible development sites and their suitability. In the case of the proposed Dothill LNR, all SHLAA sites within the boundary are owned by the Telford & Wrekin Council. Through close liaison with the Regeneration & Investment Team, it has been agreed to remove a number of the SHLAA sites located within the LNR, mainly due to the constraints associated with developing these areas and the benefits of protecting this area of valuable green space. It was however agreed to retain a SHLAA site on the periphery of the proposed LNR (SHLAA site reference 181) and the boundary of the LNR has been adjusted accordingly. If this site ever comes forward for future development, then the proximity to the LNR would be a material consideration and the need to demonstrate connectivity between the LNR and other green space would be taken into account.

### **6. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

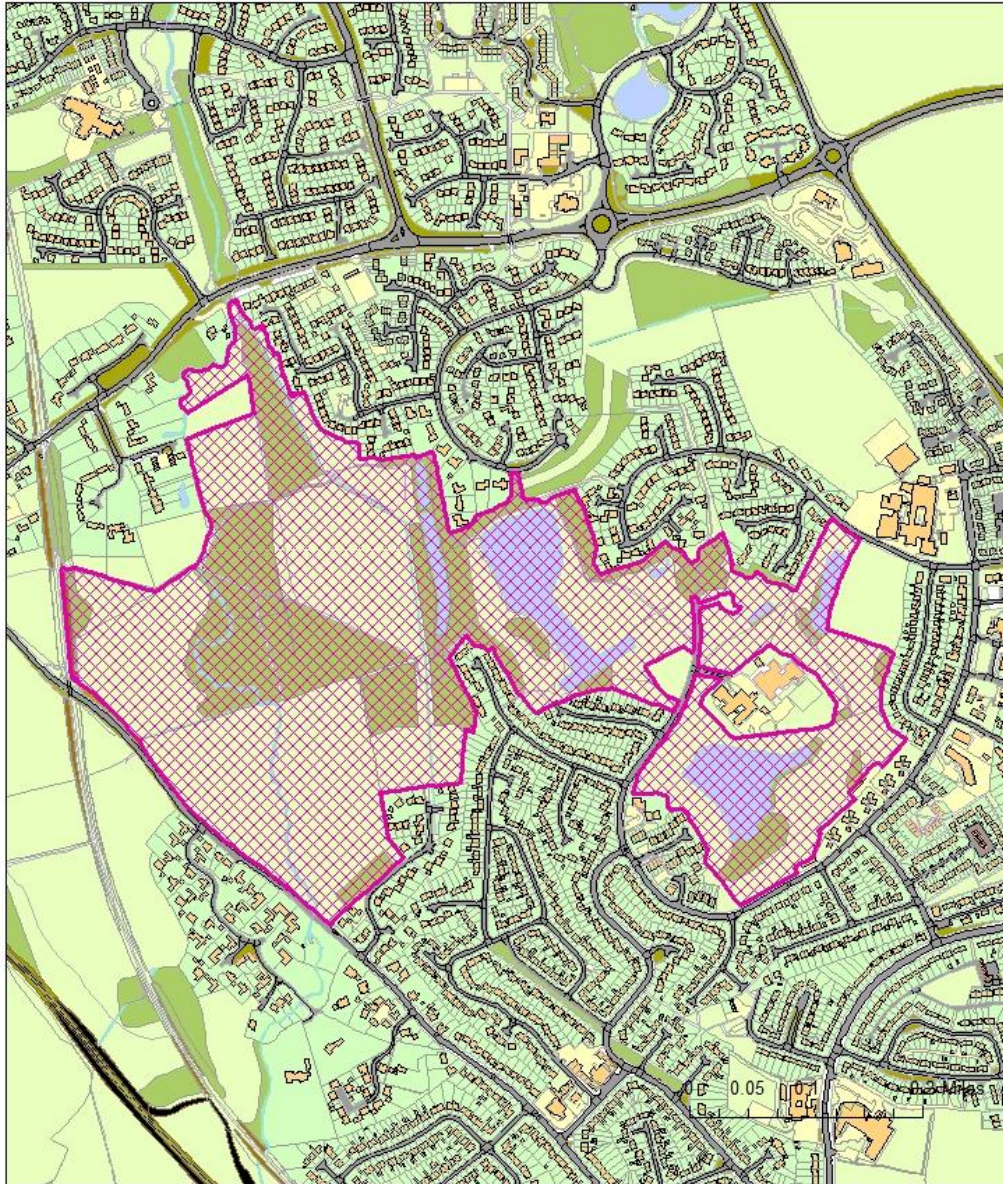
Cabinet report 12th February 2007: 'Declaration of Local Nature Reserves'

## **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. 153)

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## Appendix 1: Dothill Local Nature Reserve Boundary



**Telford & Wrekin**  
COUNCIL

Business & Development Planning  
Telford & Wrekin Council  
Wellington Civic Offices  
Telford  
TF2 2FH

**Title:**  
Dothill proposed Local Nature  
Reserve Boundary

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Date 2014.

**Date:** 11 February 2014

**Drawn By:** Fran Lancaster

