

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Place

1. DECISION TAKEN

To renew the working agreement between Countryside Management Services (CMS) as part of Herts County Council (HCC) and North Herts Council (NHC) regarding the support and provision of services for the regular maintenance of NHC's Local Nature Reserves (LNR), including the organisation and management of volunteer activities on these sites.

2. DECISION TAKER

Sarah Kingsley Service Director, Place

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

6 October 2024

4. REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure ongoing delivery of planning, management and delivery of projects on NHC's LNR's and to provide technical support to NHC Officers as and when necessary.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternative options were considered as previous marketplace testing had identified no alternative options.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

Due to the location of the seven LNR's in North Herts, consultation has taken place with the Executive Member for Leisure and Environment, Cllr Mick Debenham, as part of the Service Directorate Briefing process for Leisure and Greenspace

7. FORWARD PLAN

7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The previous agreement between NHC and CMS expired as of 31 March 2024 and both parties have continued the positive working partnership since, as though the agreement remained in place. The previous agreement had been in place for a total of four years and has proved successful in delivering several significant projects.

8.2 Over the term of the previous agreement, CMS have renewed several Greenspace Management Plans, including undertaking extensive consultation with residents for each site, including Oughtonhead Common, Hitchin, Ivel Springs and Weston Hills

Baldock, Walsworth Common, Hitchin. CMS are currently working on the next Greenspace Action Plan for Norton Common, Letchworth.

- 8.3 Oughtonhead Common, Hitchin, Ivel Springs, Baldock and Norton Common Letchworth are all accredited with Green Flags and without the support of CMS to manage the local friends of groups and volunteers, we would not have been successful in gaining the accreditation.
- 8.4 CMS also manage the delivery of activities within the agreed Greenspace Management Plan by the Friends of Groups and Volunteers and without their support these activities would not take place.
- 8.5 CMS also provide a valuable resource of technical assistance to NHC Officers, including the Greenspace Team, Ecology and Planning colleagues, which would otherwise be lost without this agreement.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Under paragraph 14.6.4 (a) (ii) of the Council's Constitution, Service Directors have general authority to enter contracts to carry out works and/or for the supply of goods and services within approved budgets.
- 9.2. Paragraph 14.6.10(b) (ii), (iii) and (vi) further gives the Service Director - Place the authority to manage, direct and control resources relating to, amongst others, environmental services, grounds maintenance and parks and open spaces. The Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Green Spaces is also responsible for leadership, strategic planning and development, partnership working and decision making within these stated service areas under this paragraph.
- 9.3. Under the LNR designation of some of these sites, NHC has a duty to maintain and manage the environmentally sensitive habitats for the benefit of wildlife and biodiversity.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are existing budgets allocated to cover the costs of the agreement and as such there is no further additional financial burden upon NHC.
- 10.2. There are no capital implications.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 11.2. As this decision refers to the renewal of an existing arrangement that has proved successful and has significant benefits to the local community and to NHC officers there is no reason to anticipate any additional risks.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment,

victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 There are no known Equalities Implications associated with this Decision.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are potential negative impacts if this agreement is not renewed due to the loss of resources and technical knowledge specifically focused upon our LNR’s which will have a detrimental impact upon the sensitive habitats that NHC is responsible to maintain.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no known human resource implications associated with this report as the existing structures within NHC already accommodate this agreement.

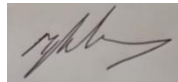
16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None

17. APPENDICES

17.1 None

NOTIFICATION DATE 15 November 2024



Signature of Executive Member Consulted

Date ...11 November 2024.....

Signature of Decision Taker.....



Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.

Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS