

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

If you consider this decision and supporting documents to be exempt [confidential], insert a short paragraph stating why in this box.

Any queries must be directed to the Senior Committee and Member Services Manager.

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted <i>[if applicable]</i>	
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DIRECTORATE: *Place*

1. DECISION TAKEN

- 1.1 To approve the continuation of the inter authority shared services agreement with Countryside & Rights of Way (CROW) at Herts County Council (formerly Countryside Management Services).
- 1.2 The agreement would be for a period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2021 and with the agreement of both parties can be extended on an annual basis up to a maximum of 5 years up to March 2024.

2. DECISION TAKER

- 2.1. Vaughan Watson – Service Director Place

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

- 3.1 8/1/19

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 To continue the management of Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) and other environmentally sensitive areas of land owned by North Herts District Council.
- 4.2 To enable the on going development of Greenspace Action Plans and delivery of agreed actions through developed and established Friends of Groups and Volunteer Activities.
- 4.3 To secure on going technical support for Officers in regards of the management of LNR's and other locations in conjunction with other organisations such as the Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Natural England.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Consideration has been given to expanding the work we undertake in conjunction with Groundwork Herts. However it has been established that the key skill set for Groundwork is within the urban areas of the District and not the rural locations which CROW currently manage in partnership with us

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

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken with Officers from CROW and the Council's Procurement Solicitor

- 6.2 In addition the Executive Members for Waste & Environment and Leisure and Community Engagement have been consulted regarding this matter.

7. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The arrangement continues co-operation between the participating contracting Councils with the aim of ensuring that public services they have to perform are provided with a view to achieving objectives they have in common.
- 7.2 Co-operation is governed solely by considerations relating to the public interest.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Under section 14.6.4 (a) (ii) of the Council's Constitution, Service Directors have authority to enter into contracts in respect of their service areas
- 8.2 Given that the services are provided by Hertfordshire County Council as lead authority for Councils within Hertfordshire, the arrangement amounts to cooperation between Councils to improve provision of common public services and accordingly is exempt under section 12 (7) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial implications that are outside our existing budgets or financial allocations.

10. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no risk implications.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 Central Government and national groups have expressed the continued importance of public Green Space in the health and well-being of communities. From April 2013 local authorities at county level are required to take on the statutory duty to improve the health of their communities as required by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and with it, to acquire many of the public health services currently the responsibility of the NHS. The use of open spaces, parks, playgrounds and relevant leisure facilities are promoted in terms of reducing the impact of obesity on long term health, the importance in the management of wellbeing and in aiding relaxation, as well as sensory' enjoyment.

12. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The nature of this agreement ensures that there will be a continuation of Health Walks and numerous volunteer activities occurring on land owned by North Herts District Council.
- 12.2 In addition this agreement will ensure that our LNR's are maintained appropriately for the benefit of the flora and fauna found at each site but also for the numerous visitors that enjoy visiting these diverse sites.

13. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 This item of work is contained with Leisure and Environmental Services existing work programs.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

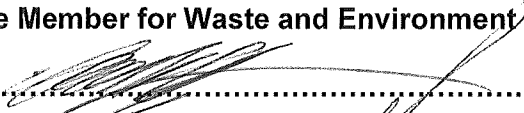
14.1 Policies as they relate to the above.

14.2 As per the details attached at appendix 1

15. NOTIFICATION DATE

15.1

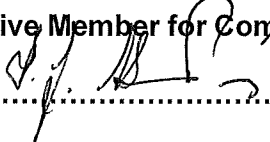
Signatures of Executive Members Consulted
Executive Member for Waste and Environment

..........Date 08.02.19

Executive Member for Leisure

..........Date 14-01-2019.

Executive Member for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs

..........Date 8/2/19

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

Appendix 1

PROVISION OF SERVICES BY THE COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY SERVICE (CRoWS).

Two year Agreement between NHDC & HCC for period 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2021 and with the agreement of both parties can be extended on a yearly basis for up to a maximum of five years (March 2024)

AIMS OF SERVICE:

Improving people's quality of life.

- Hertfordshire's Green Infrastructure is improved to enhance people's natural environment
- People are actively encourage to increase usage of Hertfordshire's Green Infrastructure to improve their health and wellbeing
- Residents are involved in decision making through the production of Greenspace Action Plans
- Volunteers give time to their local communities, learn about and add value to the management of green space and the Rights of Way network
- The CRoWS secure external funding for local environmental projects.

Community involvement

- The CRoWS will work with individuals, groups and whole communities
- Volunteering activity accords to the Investing in Volunteers standard (Volunteering England/NCVO).

Communities will be involved through:

- the production of plans that guide the management of open spaces
- individual, voluntary events to achieve public environmental benefit
- organising and managing, weekly, peripatetic volunteer groups drawing from a base of volunteers
- awareness raising and promotional work, information leaflets, interpretative materials and events
- training people in volunteer task leadership, First Aid, Health Walk Leadership and land management skills as part of an annual volunteer programme
- establishing and facilitating 'Friends' Groups for local sites. Their form and role to be tailored to the site's needs and community interest.

They may be either:

- supervised by the CRoWS with the Service providing the tools, tuition, H&S, insurance
- run independently but with advice, training, validation and support from the CRoWS enabling training, insurance and a resource pack (Friends of Greenspaces Action Pack).

Volunteering

- The CRoWS to offer a range of volunteering opportunities, encouraging people to get involved in looking after their local countryside or park. To promote outdoor recreation through organising events and working with groups to develop walking and cycling routes that link towns to villages and to their surrounding countryside.

Practical Conservation

- The CRoWS to enable volunteers to create and restore wildlife habitats and work to improve access to the environment on local authority owned land and the Rights of Way network. CRoWS to supply health and safety plans, supervision, risk assessments, tools, materials, training and tea.

Land Management

- CRoWS to promote and deliver practical environmental land management best practice that helps achieve the council's Green Space Management Strategy objectives
- Provision of support to the council in securing Biodiversity Action Plan targets e.g. designating Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and securing Positive Conservation Management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites
- Production of Greenspace Action Plans for council owned sites ranging from extensive woodlands to small urban green spaces
- Provision of advice and support to the council, completing applications for external funds such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Countryside Stewardship or Biodiversity Offsetting opportunities linked to development.

To achieve the aims of the service the CRoWS will meet the Council annually in January each year to agree the work programme for the coming financial year.

In April each year the CRoWS will submit a report detailing their achievements over the previous year. The report will include:

- achievements against agreed work programme

- number of volunteer hours worked
- value of external investment

The Council will pay the CRoWS £33,290 in April each year for the delivery of the agreed work programme.

Works outside the scope of this annual payment to be delivered on a project by project basis, agreed as part of the work programming process and VAT chargeable at the standard rate.