
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2013

EEOSP.19/13 KINGMOOR NATURE RESERVE

The Director of Local Environment submitted Report LE.05/13 on the proposal to declare Kingmoor South Nature Reserve as a Local Nature Reserve pursuant to Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which gave local authorities, in consultation with Natural England, the power to designate Local Nature Reserves. Slides of the Nature Reserve were presented.

The Director of Local Environment provided Members with the location and history of the site. There were many different habitats present within the reserve with the main land use being pasture. There were also woodland blocks as well as still and flowing water, wildflower meadows, hedgerows and green tracks. Amongst the many species of wildlife found within the reserve were Great Crested and Smooth Newts, woodpeckers, nuthatches, tree creepers, squirrels, hedgehogs and foxes.

Kingmoor South had been managed as a nature reserve for many years and while there was open access throughout the site to the public the site was managed for both leisure use and nature conservation. A number of volunteer groups worked regularly within the reserve carrying out ecological work and there was also a “Volunteer Warden” who patrolled the site regularly helping to keep it tidy and well maintained and informing the Green Spaces team of any problems.

The Director of Local Environment advised that to date Natural England had been consulted on the proposal and a public notice was to be displayed in the information boards on site at Kingmoor Nature Reserve and a public notice published in the press.

There were a number of benefits to the declaration of a Local Nature Reserve and the declaration encompassed the values of the City Council’s Corporate Plan by increasing people’s pride and respect in their local area, and improving the quality of the local environment. The declaration also tied in with the Green Infrastructure Strategy contributing towards Carlisle being a “Big Green City” for all four of the core benefits. Local Nature Reserves also helped local authorities to meet Local Biodiversity Action Plan and sustainable development targets. In particular some species named in the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan were present at Kingmoor South Nature Reserve, including bats, Great Crested Newts and damselflies as well as one habitat, namely wet woodland.

In considering the report Members raised the following questions and comments:

Did the Landfill Cash Credit Scheme still exist and could that money be used in the Nature Reserve?

The Director of Local Environment confirmed that the scheme still existed and if the designation of the Nature Reserve went ahead Officers may be in a stronger position when applying to the scheme for funding.

Ten years ago the PTA of James Rennie School provided funding to repair the 2 bridges in the reserve but the paths on either side were still muddy.

The designation of the Nature Reserve would make it easier to obtain funding from the scheme although the pot of money was smaller. The Director agreed to discuss the issue with the Green Spaces Operations Manager.

There were a lot of residential properties along the lane to the reserve. It may be useful and enhance the consultation to include them in the consultation.

The Director of Local Environment agreed to put up a notice along the lane. In response to a query the Director advised that the statutory notice would provide information to the general public regarding the change of designation.

While there were a lot of advantages to the change were there any disadvantages anticipated?

The Director explained that the Nature Reserve would be managed in the same way as it was currently. The re-designation referred only to the land use.

The Director of Economic Development added that the development of a management plan was a requirement and that the re-designation was a formal designation which would be included in the Local Plan.

The Director of Local Environment advised that once classified, the Nature Reserve would be on a national list that could be accessed by visitors to the area.

Other parts of Carlisle also needed protection but it was agreed that it was important that the Executive supported the designation of the Nature Reserve.

Work was being undertaken with local schools regarding planting in the Nature Reserve.

RESOLVED: 1) That Members of the Panel supported the designation of the Nature Reserve and:

- Requested a public notice to be placed on the road East of the Nature Reserve
- That the opportunity to apply for the Landfill Tax Credit scheme funding for pathways and improvements in the nature Reserve be followed up
- To maximise the use of volunteers from a broader range of local organisations including local schools.