

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	Local Nature Reserves Designations
Committee:	Cabinet
Date:	10 th July 2018
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Sue Dann
CMT Member:	Anthony Payne (Director for Place)
Author:	Kat Deeney (Natural Infrastructure Manager)
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Ref:	180619 LNR Designation Cabinet Report
Key Decision:	No
Part:	I

Purpose of the report:

In Plymouth there are currently 10 formally designated Local Nature Reserves protecting 255ha of land for the benefit of communities and wildlife. The report sets out a recommendation to designate 48ha of new LNR to provide new areas of protected land. This will be delivered through the designation of three new sites – Kings Tamerton Woods, Newnham Meadows and Seaton and Lower Bircham Valley (part of Derriford Community Park). It also recommended that small areas of two existing LNRs are permanently de-designated, a total of 0.8ha, to enable the delivery of strategic transport schemes. Overall this would deliver a net increase of 47ha of LNR within Plymouth.

Corporate Plan

Pioneering Plymouth

The delivery of 47ha of new LNR will further protect and highlight sites that are valued as environmental, social and educational asset and resources for the people of the surrounding neighbourhoods, Plymouth and further afield.

Growing Plymouth

The significant extension of the LNR estate demonstrates Plymouth's commitment to sustainable growth. The small areas of de-designation to enable strategic transport projects to progress will be fully mitigated and a net gain for biodiversity delivered through the provision of 47ha of new LNR designation. This approach demonstrates the City's ability to grow in a manner, which protects, enhances and values the natural environment.

Caring Plymouth

The designation of the new sites will include the enhanced management of the sites for access, wildlife and interpretation of the sites. This will provide communities new opportunities to explore support activities that will increase health and wellbeing and enable a greater understanding of and engagement with the local environment.

Joint Local Plan

These designations will support the Council to achieve the ambitions within SPT11 - Setting a strategic approach to the natural environment and DEV28 - Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

Capital - To enable the new areas to be designated formally as LNRs the sites must achieve a certain standard of community access and wildlife value. To achieve this some capital investment is required. The total investment for the three sites is £83k and this will be or has been (a lot of the work has already been completed) funded through S106/development contributions and utilisation of existing greenspace budgets. No new capital money is required to enable the formal designations to progress.

Revenue – Once designated the LNRs must be managed to a good standard in line with the agreed management plans. This has a revenue implication of £8500 per year. This revenue requirement will be met through S106/development contributions and reconfiguration of existing greenspace budgets.

No new capital spending is required to enable the designation of the sites and the revenue implications have been acknowledged and funding streams identified which do not place additional pressure on Council budgets.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

1. Approve:
 - The designation of three new LNR sites - Kings Tamerton Woods, Newnham Meadows and Seaton and Lower Bircham Valley;
 - The de-designation of small areas of two existing LNRs – Bircham Valley and Forder Valley.
 2. Instruct officer to commence the legal process to enable the statutory designation/de-designation of the sites utilising the Local Authorities powers under Section 19(3) – "Establishment of **nature reserves** by **local** authorities" – of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949
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Alternative options considered and rejected:

1. Do not progress the de-designation of small areas of the existing LNR estate. This would prevent the progress of 2 strategic transport projects.
 2. Progress the de-designations without designating new LNR sites. This would result in a net reduction of the LNR estate which would not enable the delivery of sustainable growth.
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Published work / information:

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Local Nature Reserve Designation – Briefing Paper.	Yes									

Sign off:

Fin	p118.19.33	Leg	LS/3 0715 /JP/ une1 8	Mon Off	NA	HR	NA	Assets	NA	IT	NA	Strat Proc	NA
Originating SMT Member: Cllr Sue Dann													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

1. Local Nature Reserve Designation

- 1.1. Local Nature Reserves (LNR) can be statutorily designated by Plymouth City Council utilising powers under Section 19(3) – "Establishment of **nature reserves** by **local** authorities" – of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Currently there are 10 LNRs designated within the City protecting 255ha of land for communities and wildlife as part of a wider network of green spaces.
- 1.2. This paper sets out recommendations to designate three new LNRs utilising these powers to protect a further 48ha of land, supporting the protection and enhancement of the natural environment as a fundamental principle of sustainable growth.
- 1.3. The three sites recommended for designation are Kings Tamerton Woods, Newnham Meadows and Seaton and Lower Bircham Valley. These sites contain a mix of habitats including woodland, grassland, wetland and stream and will be accessible to the public, providing opportunities for communities to access, and engage with areas of high wildlife value. LNRs are also a great educational resource.
- 1.4. Our existing LNRs are managed by the Council but with the support of many 'Friends of' groups. Each of the proposed new LNRs has an emerging Friends of group.
- 1.5. If these three new sites are approved for designation, Plymouth will have a total of 13 Local Nature Reserves and the area protected will increase to 302.7 hectares. This takes Plymouth above the threshold of 1ha per 1,000 inhabitants, which is Natural England's [Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard](#) for the UK.
- 1.6. The designation of the new LNRs will also support the Council to deliver the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan and sustainable growth for the City. The LNR designations will achieve the ambitions of SPT11 - Setting a strategic approach to the natural environment and DEV28 - Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation in the Joint Local Plan area. Since 2007 the Council has designated 123.4ha of new LNR, far exceeding previous targets and these new designations continue this momentum of valuing natural spaces within the city.

2. Local Nature Reserve De-Designation

- 2.1 There are three highways improvement schemes coming forward in the year ahead that are adjacent to and need to deliver works within existing LNR's. These works require small areas to be permanently de-designated. Council officers have worked hard to ensure the any LNR losses are minimised through the design process and only considered when other options are not feasible.
- 2.2 Each of the schemes will provide environmental mitigation, which will be used to enhance the habitat condition, access points and interpretation in the reserves, this includes areas that will be temporarily disturbed through the construction phase (3 Ha). The three schemes resulting in de-designation of LNR area are:
 - Forder Valley Link Road (affecting Forder Valley LNR)
 - Forder Valley Interchange (affecting Forder Valley LNR)
 - Morlaix Drive and Brest Road improvement scheme (affecting Bircham Valley LNR)
- 2.3 The total LNR de-designation required to deliver these schemes is 0.81ha.

3. Summary

- 3.1** The recommendations set out in this report will deliver a net gain of 47 hectares of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) area whilst allowing small areas of existing LNR's to be de-designated to allow for three highway improvement scheme designs to be developed.
- 3.2** The new designations will provide protection for key areas of green space, safeguarding them for future generations. It will ensure that Plymouth's growth continues to be sustainable and that valuable green lungs are maintained for the community's enjoyment and for the benefit of the city's wildlife.