



Officer Decision Record – Non-Key Decision

Key decisions taken by an officer are subject to the 5 day call in period from circulation to Members, and therefore the decision will be released for implementation following the call-in period and no call in being received

1. Cabinet date and copy resolution this decision relates to

Joint Scrutiny Panel for Economy, Communities, Tourism, and Visitor Economy considered the Natural Capital Plan on 9th November 2021. During the meeting requests were made for officer assessment of a number of places as part of the Council's proposed nature recovery and biodiversity work. The nature area covered by this decision is one of the locations assessed on request by ward councillors.

2. Subject and details of the matter (to include reasons for the decision)

2.1 The area known as Freshney Parkway (and aka Freshney Meadows) is located east of Great Coates Road to Cromwell Road, between St. Michaels Church and the River Freshney. A map of the location can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 The area is an old landfill site. An ecological assessment has confirmed that the area is now valuable for wildlife, including birds, deer, mammals, invertebrates, and wildflowers, and acts as an essential buffer to the River Freshney Local Wildlife Site and for the European water vole, *Arvicola amphibius*, which is protected in UK law under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and a UK Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

2.3 The area is also a valuable 'piece' of the countryside in the middle of an urban area and is very much valued and appreciated by local residents for that reason and is widely used by residents to connect the west of Grimsby to the town, and as part of the River Freshney wildlife corridor.

2.4 Consultation has been carried out with Spatial Planning and Flood Management Officers, with no concerns identified in relation to alignment with local plan and flood management strategy.

2.5 The designation will include a proposed management plan for the area to protect and enhance nature values. The estimated cost of improvements to the area is £60,000. Whilst some of this funding (such as path maintenance) form part of the Council's general land maintenance budget, the Council would require further grant funding to complete this work. The designation and close working relationship with the community groups will assist in grant funding applications and increase the likelihood of securing grant support for proposed improvements. The annual maintenance cost of the land is £9,162 which forms part of existing budgets.

3. Decision being taken

To designate the area known as Freshney Parkway (and aka Freshney Meadows) east of Great Coates Road to Cromwell Road, between St Michael's Church and the River Freshney, as a Local Nature Reserve under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, subject to consultation with Natural England. A map of the area can be seen in the draft designation in Appendix 1.

4. Is it an Urgent Decision? If yes, specify the reasons for urgency. Urgent decisions will require sign off by the relevant scrutiny chair(s) as not subject to call in.

No

5. Anticipated outcome(s)/benefits

5.1 To formally recognise the park's value to residents and recognise it as a wildlife haven, to raise the profile of the park, to encourage more residents to use the park, to encourage educational use, and to protect and improve the biodiversity of the area.

5.2 To increase opportunities to apply and secure grant funding to further enhance the area.

6. Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision (this should be similar to original cabinet decision)

6.1 To increase the size of the area to be designated, to include the Environment Agency's flood storage area to the north of the River Freshney and further west to include the Local Wildlife Sites of Freshney Bog and Town's Holt. This option was rejected at this time as focused work on a smaller area is more achievable in the short-term. The designation can be amended in the future to include more area, just as it can be de-designated at any time.

6.2 To do nothing. This option was rejected due to the high nature value identified and the strong community support for a designation.

7. Background documents considered (web links to be included and copies of documents provided for publishing)

Freshney Parkway Management Plan (appendix 1)

8. Does the taking of the decision include consideration of Exempt information? If yes, specify the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A and the reasons

No

9. Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Cabinet Member who was consulted by the officer which relates to the decision (in respect of any declared conflict of interest, please provide a note of dispensation granted by the Council's Chief Executive)

N/A

10. Monitoring Officer Comments (Monitoring Officer or nominee)

The Local Authority has a power to establish a nature reserve under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as respects any land which it appears to be expedient that it should be managed as such. Functions under this section must be in consultation with Natural England and an agreement can be entered into with any drainage authority.

11. Section 151 Officer Comments (Deputy S151 Officer or nominee)

As outlined in the decision record, improvement works are required with an estimated cost of £60,000. Submissions are to be made to bid for grant funding in order to fund any works not able to be covered from within existing budgets.

Ongoing maintenance costs are to be met from within existing service budgets.

12. Human Resource Comments (Head of People and Culture or nominee)

There are no direct HR implications in relation to this report.

13. Risk Assessment (in accordance with the Report Writing Guide)

Should the decision be taken to declare a Local Nature Reserve the following risks and opportunities exist:

Risk:

There is a potential reputational risk if the Council implement the declaration and then are unable to find funding to implement the recommended improvement. A communication plan is in place to manage this risk.

Opportunities:

The declaration of an LNR has wide public and member support. Ensuring we respond to public priorities as part of our land management strategy will have positive impact on Council reputation and relationship management.

14. Has the Cabinet Tracker been updated with details of this decision?

N/A

15. Decision Maker(s):

Name: Sharon Wroot

Title: Director of Environment,
Economy & Resources

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 09.09.22

**16. Consultation carried out with
Portfolio Holder(s):**

Name: Cllr Stewart Swinburn

Title: Portfolio Holder Environment and
Transport

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 09/09/22

**17. If the decision is urgent then
consultation should be carried out
with the relevant Scrutiny
Chair/Mayor/Deputy Mayor**

Name:

Title:

Signed:

Dated:

Key Decisions are defined in the Constitution as:

A decision (whether taken collectively or individually by members) which is likely:

- (i) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

A decision will be considered financially significant if:

- (i) in the case of revenue expenditure, it results in the incurring of expenditure or making savings of £350,000 or greater;
- (ii) in the case of capital expenditure, the capital expenditure/savings are in excess of £350,000 or 20% of the total project cost, whichever is the greater

In determining whether a decision is significant in terms of its effect on an area comprising two or more wards, consideration shall be given to:

- (i) the number of residents/service users that will be affected in the wards concerned;
- (ii) the likely views of those affected (i.e. is the decision likely to result in substantial public interest)
- (iii) whether the decision may incur a significant social, economic or environmental risk.

APPENDIX 1

FRESHNEY PARKWAY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE APPLICATION

Freshney Parkway lies to the north-east of Wybers Wood and is separated from it by Great Coates Road: outlined in red (figure 1). Freshney Parkway comprises approximately 10ha. To the north-west it is bound by the river Freshney, and to the south-east by the Yarborough housing estate. Its northern section contains the Grimsby Leisure Centre and its pitch and putt course and all weather pitches. The level of the land has been raised in most areas by tipping. There is a footpath running through the parkway from Great Coates Road to the golf course boundary and up to Yarrow Road on the east of



the Parkway.

Figure 1: Freshney Parkway boundary

PRESENT SITUATION

The woodlands within the Parkway are approximately 30 years of age and are now well-established. Maintenance is required to retain the benefits of shelterbelts, and the longevity of the woodlands. Current grassland management has resulted in a predominant coarse grassland habitat, though areas of neutral grassland support species such as common knapweed, rough hawkbit, lady's bedstraw, and cowslip. Recent works have been undertaken in 2021 by NELC on the soak dykes parallel to the river Freshney to maintain local flood defences. The EA has also performed bank stabilisation works on the river in 2021. The parkway is popular for recreational use, exercise and dog walkers, a hard-surface footpath runs from Great Coates Road to Yarrow Road, as well as two informal paths, desire lines, leading to the Yarborough Estate, at Meadow Court and Laburnum Drive. Residents on Laburnum Drive have developed the southwest corner of the Parkway area with additional non-native planting and installation of bird boxes.

MANAGEMENT AIMS - LONG TERM

- To maintain Freshney Parkway as an area of open space accessible to the public.
- To develop and enhance the recreational value of the Freshney Parkway.
- To develop and enhance the wildlife and conservation value of the river Freshney.
- To enhance Freshney Parkway as a conservation corridor
- To develop Freshney Parkway as part of a 'traffic-free route' from the western boundary of the Borough to Alexandra Dock on the east.
- To enhance the educational value of Freshney Parkway

RECREATIONAL

- To maintain and develop the footpath/cycleway network and associated system of lesser paths and trails, to be entirely accessible.
- To provide interpretation and signage.
- To provide a natural space for play.

NATURE CONSERVATION

- To conserve and enhance the existing landscapes of the Parkway.
- To conserve and enhance the existing habitats of the Parkway.
- To create and maintain new landscape and habitats where appropriate.
- To encourage local residents and community groups to become involved with nature conservation
- Develop and undertake a monitoring programme to determine biodiversity in the Parkway, including contribution of wider benefits.

EDUCATIONAL

- To encourage schools, colleges and community and volunteer groups to make use of the Parkway in projects and courses of study.
- To encourage schools and colleges to undertake research and survey projects in conjunction with the Borough Council.
- To encourage schools to make optimum use of the Parkway for study within the scope of the National Curriculum.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Woodland

Management is required to ensure the health and endurance of woodlands, and to enhance biodiversity. It is important to maintain the health of the trees planted as shelterbelts for the surrounding housing estates also. Appropriate coppicing of mature trees will enable light to reach the ground flora, and help to extend the life of the individual trees. Planting of new trees where gaps have naturally appeared in the canopy will create a diverse age-structure, extending the life of the overall copses. Dead, or fallen wood is beneficial for woodland health and should remain in-situ wherever appropriate. The woodlands offer potential for local schools to engage in education opportunities.

Management objectives - Long Term

- To manage mature copses to create diversity of age-structure, biodiversity, and overall woodland longevity.
- To manage shelterbelts effectively.
- Encourage scrub cover where appropriate.
- Dead/fallen trees to remain in-situ where appropriate, or repositioned within the copse or park wherever possible.
- To manage dominant and invasive species.

Management objectives - Short Term

- Undertake coppicing, leaving wood to rot down/provide hibernacula, where appropriate
- To supplement tree and shrub planting in thin areas using native species of trees and shrubs.
- To cut back grass and weed growth around young trees and shrubs when needed.

Trees and Hedges

Management Objectives - Long Term

- To develop and maintain existing tree and hedge cover on the site.
- Establish age structure with new planting
- To establish and maintain small woodland plantations similar to those in other areas of the Parkway.

- To separate areas of differing use, such as housing, meadows, and areas for quiet recreation, by means of barrier hedges or other planting.

Management Objectives - Short Term

- To inspect trees adjacent to any existing or proposed paths.
- To replace lost or vandalised trees.
- To trim and prune damaged trees and hedges as necessary.

Grassed Areas

At present much of the grassed areas within the Parkway are covered with a mixture of tough grasses with some areas of neutral grassland. A wildflower meadow cut-and-collect mowing regime would allow the floral seedbank to re-establish. Where appropriate, between April and Sept, grasses and flowers should be allowed to flower and set seed before a late season cut-and-collect is undertaken. The undulating topography of the Parkway, owing to its former use as a landfill site, offers fantastic potential to increase biodiversity in the area.

This area was previously seeded with a native wildflower mix but due to lack of management is currently floristically poor.

Due to the capping of the old landfill site the area has an undulating topography that provides diversity of habitat able to support a huge variety of flora and fauna species once a proper mowing management regime is instated.

This area offers fantastic potential for local schools to engage with the Parkway for education opportunities.

Management Objectives - Long Term

- To develop and maintain areas of meadow containing as many species of native grasses and wildflowers as possible.
- To encourage local school engagement with the Parkway for education and recreation.

Management Objectives - Short Term

- To carry out a grassland and meadow mowing regime.
- To monitor the success of introduced wildflowers.
- To monitor invertebrate assemblages.

Soak Dykes

There are two soak dykes running parallel to the river Freshney that are designed to capture any water that flows through the Freshney flood embankments. The soak dykes are maintained to an appropriate standard to help manage flood risk in the local area.

River Freshney

The river Freshney management and maintenance is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. Between Great Coates Road and Cromwell Road the river flows through an artificial channel constructed in the 1930s as part of a flood control scheme. This is virtually straight and with a uniform width and depth. The main footpath/cycleway runs parallel to the river but is separated from it by a drain and a raised flood bank. This means that throughout most of the area, the river cannot be seen from the footpath within the park.

Management Objectives - Long Term

- To return the river to as natural a state as possible within the confines of the flood control measures and legislation by creating a system of pools and runs, and developing those pools, shelves and channels already created, in conjunction with the EA and partners.
- To work in consultation with the EA and partners to re-establish the presence of the river in the area by regrading to make it visible from selected areas on the footpath.

- To work in consultation with the EA and partners to increase the nature conservation value of the area by providing islands and other inaccessible areas.

Management Objectives - Short Term

- To work with the EA on enhancing management regimes

Routeways

There are two main routeways across Freshney Parkway: The Yarrow Road/Willows footpath/cycleway and the Great Coates Road/Cromwell Road footpath/cycleway which cross at a staggered junction.

Management Objectives - Long Term

- To maintain the hard surface pathways so that they remain accessible to all members of the public
- To provide additional information boards and signage as necessary.
- To monitor desire lines and create unsurfaced paths where necessary.

Management Objectives - Short Term

- To resurface paths for accessibility, as necessary.
- To maintain bridges, information boards and signage as necessary.
- To identify and develop desire lines and to keep unsurfaced and minor paths clear.

Future Aspirations

- Plant an orchard in south east section of neutral grassland.
- Promote as part of the Freshney walkway/cycleway joining Laceby village to the docks.
- To create a greater Local Nature Reserve encompassing the surrounding valuable natural environment and public space of Freshney Parkway and Town's Holt.
- To designate, as part of the wider natural environment and public space, as a Country Park.
- To create corridors of connecting valuable habitat with the surrounding Local Wildlife Sites
Town's Holt

Task	Frequency	Cost
Short Term		
Woodlands management	N/A	£8880
Supplement tree planting	N/A	£1000
Interpretation/signage	N/A	£3,500
Path resurfacing	N/A	£25,000
Bridge Installation	N/A	£15,000
Orchard planting	N/A	£1,800
Hedgerow planting	N/A	£5,000
Long Term		
Tree and Hedgerow maintenance	3-5 year rotation	£2,500/annum
Understorey maintenance	Three times a year March/June/Sept	£2,362.50/annum
Amenity Grassland Maintenance	Three weeks rotation	£2,500/annum
Meadow Grassland Maintenance	Twice Yearly	£1,800/annum

National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Freshney Parkway Nature Reserve Declaration No 5. 2022

In pursuance of Sections 19 and 21 of the above-mentioned Act, and all other powers enabling them in that behalf, North East Lincolnshire Council hereby declares that the land containing 10 ha or thereabouts situated in the County of North East Lincolnshire and shown edged in red on the attached plan is owned by the Council AND in pursuance of Section 19 (2) of the above-mentioned Act and all other powers aforesaid the Council hereby further declare that the said land is being managed as a Nature Reserve.

This declaration may be referred to as the Freshney Park Nature Reserve No 5.

Declaration 2022

Given under the Common Seal of the Council this day of SEAL Two thousand and Twenty Two

(Signed)

(Signed)