

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM
6th November, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Rushforth (in the Chair); Councillors Wallis and Andrews.

F12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no Declarations of Interest to record.

F13. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2012.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th September, 2012, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism be agreed as an accurate record for signature by the Cabinet Member.

F14. SILVER WOOD MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Trees and Woodlands Officer, Environment and Development Services, which outlined a proposed Management Plan for Silver Wood over the period 2012 - 2017.

Silver Wood woodland area covered 1.64 hectares (4.0 acres) and had been in the ownership of the Council since 2008. The woodland area is open for public access and recreation and consultation with local people suggested that the resource was well regarded by them.

The report noted that the last significant management of Silver Wood had taken place in the early 1900s, when it had been clear-felled and replanted with beech trees. The trees planted at this time had matured together and it was likely that they would start to die at a similar time, which would place at risk the woodland amenity and wildlife benefits currently there.

The proposed Management Plan included a detailed work programme for the 2012 - 2017 period. This included a number of specific actions: -

- Thinning of mature beech trees;
- Creation of a felling area for around 10 mature trees;
- Coppicing along the woodland edge.

It was intended that these actions would remove the more poorly formed trees, giving the best trees more light and room to grow and encourage a ground flora, shrub layer and the next generation of trees. Coppicing along the woodland edge would create a light, warm and sunny edge to the woodland, providing a habitat to encourage fruit and nectar rich plants to thrive, helping to support insects, butterflies, birds and bats.

Consultation on the proposed Management Plan had been undertaken with one-hundred and forty local households, Ward Members, Ravenfield Parish Council and ten local interest groups. The Wentworth South Area Assembly

had been informed of the Plan. Thirty-one responses had been received that were largely positive about the proposal to manage the woodland area. Three objections had been received and were largely related to the removal of healthy trees.

It was proposed that, following the decision of the Cabinet Member on the proposed Management Plan, a consultation response be issued that confirmed the importance of delivering the proposals to protect the long-term value of the site.

Discussion ensued, and the following issues were discussed: -

- Resulting health and safety issues of not managing the woodland, including negative implications for the public's access;
- Percentage of Ash trees within the woodland in light of the recent news coverage of Ash Die Back Disease;
- Financial implications;
- Balance of allowing natural regeneration of woodland area, as opposed to specific planting projects, which came with more risks and cost implications;
- Low incidence of anti-social behaviour within Silver Wood;
- Involvement of school groups in the proposed Plans.

Resolved: - That the Silver Wood Management Plan for the period 2012 – 2017 be approved.

F15. BAR PARK, THORPE HESLEY.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Leisure and Green Spaces Manager, Environment and Development Services, which updated the Cabinet Member on the terms of the intended transfer of Bar Park, Thorpe Hesley, from Sheffield City Council to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. The Former Cabinet Member for Culture, Lifestyle, Sport and Tourism agreed on 30th November, 2010, that negotiations should commence with Sheffield to agree the transfer of the freehold of Bar Park, to Rotherham on the principle that a community group would take control of the site under the Council's Asset Transfer Policy (Bar Park, Thorpe Hesley; Minute F43 refers).

Initial efforts to agree the transfer of the freehold from Sheffield City Council were protracted and ultimately unsuccessful because Sheffield informed the Leisure and Green Spaces Manager in July, 2012 that, owing to a policy change, they could only offer an eighty-year lease on Bar Park. However, with regards to the previous decision to transfer the asset from Sheffield and allow a community group to control the site, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Asset Transfer policy only allowed for the transfer of assets that were owned freehold by the Council.

Under the Localism Act, 2011, local communities had the right to buy council-owned assets. Sheffield City Council's policy that related to this, 'Community Buildings Strategy, 2007 – 2010', was provided at Appendix A. It was understood that Sheffield City Council were developing a revised updated policy.

It was proposed that, should any local group/s confirm their interest in taking

control of Bar Park, that they would be advised to seek confirmation from Sheffield City Council on their current asset transfer policy.

Discussion ensued on the issues presented. Ongoing communication and engagement had taken place with the Friends of Bar Park throughout the negotiations with Sheffield, and they were satisfied that Rotherham officers had undertaken appropriate actions. No local groups had come forward as being willing to take control of the site at the time of writing the report.

Resolved: - (1) That Sheffield City Council be notified that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council will not pursue Sheffield's offer of a lease on Bar Park, Thorpe Hesley.

(2) That Green Spaces Officers advise any local group interested in controlling and developing Bar Park to contact Sheffield City Council to seek an asset transfer directly from them.

F16. COMMUNICATION UPDATES

The Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing, Commissioning, Policy and Performance, Resources Directorate, provided an update on a number of issues relating to promoting Rotherham.

This included: -

- Exploration of potential advertising around the programme of events taking place in Rotherham and its visitor attractions, including costing, contributions and collaboration from/with partner organisations;
- Role of advertising in a wider programme of activity;
- Website development;
- Role of the Visitors' Centre in the Rotherham Town Centre;
- Rotherham's subscription contribution to 'Welcome to Yorkshire';
- South Yorkshire's Tourism Advisory Group.

Resolved: - (1) That the information shared be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member receive further reports in relation to the promotion of Rotherham.

F17. CONFIRMATION OF DATE AND TIME OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism take place on Tuesday 4th December, 2012, to start at 10.00 am in the Rotherham Town Hall.