

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>14 October 2013</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Rotherham Rivers project</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Environment and Development Services</b>

### 5. Summary

This report provides an update on the Living Don: Rotherham Rivers project, the funding obtained and the proposed timetable for delivery.

### 6. Recommendations

- **That Cabinet member endorses the Council's support for the delivery of the Rotherham Rivers project.**

## Proposal and Details

The Living Don is a 25 year strategic partnership programme (underway since 2009) covering a Priority Landscape-Scale Project Area. The programme aims to bring about the pro-active management of the River Don catchment in South Yorkshire, to create a robust and ecologically functional green network from the high Moors of the Peak District to the floodplain of the Lower Don Valley and the heart of urban Sheffield and Rotherham. Between 2009 and 2012 the programme has successfully drawn down and delivered over £1 million of biodiversity enhancement, public engagement and community stewardship work with focus on the Sheffield Moors and Western Valleys; the Rotherham Rivers area was identified by the partners as the next priority area.

During 2012 a working group comprising Rotherham MBC, the Wildlife Trust for Sheffield and Rotherham and the Environment Agency developed the Rotherham Rivers project and sought external funding.

A successful application has been made to the WREN Biodiversity Action Fund (£226,929.00) and has been matched with £94,849 cash funding and £75,420 of in-kind contributions from the project partners; generating a total project amount of £397,198. Rotherham MBC has provided £20,000 to release the WREN funding.

The WREN / NE project work will start in September 2013 and continue until October 2016; an approximate outline timetable is attached as Appendix One. Action will take place at the following sites:

Code	Site	Main Ownership	Summary of Action
R1	Rother Valley Country Park (LWS)	Rotherham MBC	Scrub treatment to open relic meadows and enhance wetland / grassland habitats (nature reserve lake).
R13	Catcliffe (in-channel)	Environment Agency	Changes to channel morphology to improve water quality & enhance fish populations.
R15	Catcliffe Flash LNR (LWS)	Rotherham MBC	Wetland / woodland actions to restore positive management.
R18	Old Flatts Farm Marsh (LWS)	Environment Agency	Reedbed / wetland management to introduce positive management. New footbridge
R23	Forgemasters Tip (LWS)	Rotherham MBC	Wetland / grassland actions to enhance positive management (HLS site: match)
R24	Whiston Meadows (LWS)	Rotherham MBC	Wetland / woodland actions to restore positive management.
L1	Blackburn Meadows	Sheffield City Council	Woodland, meadow & wetland actions to restore positive management.
L2	Centenary Riverside (cLNR)	Rotherham MBC	Additional wetland maintenance & planting.
L3	Don Island	Canal & River Trust	Woodland actions to introduce positive management
L4	Bow Bridge	Rotherham MBC	Wet grassland creation, improved grassland / scrub / woodland

			management.
L5	Fitzwilliam Canal	Rotherham MBC	Wetland and woodland actions to introduce positive management.
L9	Kilnhurst Ings (LWS)	Environment Agency	Creation of ditch networks to enhance grassland / wetland features and restore positive management.

The project will improve and create 94 hectares of habitat which contributes to the objectives of the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and will:

- Deliver actions in Sheffield and Rotherham Biodiversity Action Plans
- Bring five Local Wildlife Sites into positive ecological management (a National Performance Indicator)
- Help improve water quality
- Reduce the extent of invasive plant species
- Increase the amount of quality ecological data
- Enhance visitor experiences by improving the quality of nature reserves
- Improve partnership working in the area and engage local site users

Work is currently underway to raise awareness of the project with relevant Ward and Parish Council representatives.

## 8. Finance

The Wildlife Trust Sheffield and Rotherham is managing the project funding. The Rotherham MBC contribution has been paid to WREN in order to release the funds.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

The secured funding has been allocated to specific actions and sites based on detailed and costed project plans; delivery will be through project partner organisations, using external contractors only where necessary. The project partners, as part of the wider Living Don Partnership, will continue to work with other identified land owners to develop and deliver wider programme actions. As part of the WREN funding agreement an exit strategy has been prepared that demonstrates how future long-term management will be maintained.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The delivery of the project will support RMBC to demonstrate compliance with the Biodiversity Duty placed on local authorities by the Natural Environment & Rural Communities 2006.

The project has been designed to achieve objectives in the Rotherham Biodiversity Action Plan and site specific management plans.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

**Contact Names: Carolyn Jones, Ecology Development Officer 822462.**

## Appendix One – Outline Project Timetable

	Year 1 (Oct13 - Mar14)	Year 2 (Apr14 - Mar15)	Year 3 (Apr15 - Mar16)	Year 4 (Apr16 - Oct16)
<b>All</b> - Survey of sites by local natural history groups	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>R1 - Rother Valley Country Park</b>				
R1 – herbicide and chipper fuel	✓			
R1 - wetland plants		✓	✓	
R1 excavator hire		✓		
R1 trees		✓		
R1 - chainsaw fuel & oil			✓	
R1 -hire of chipper	✓	✓	✓	
R1 - boat hire			✓	
R1 - RMBC ecologist input to delivery	✓	✓		
R1 - ranger input to site works to work with SWT	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>R13 - Catcliffe Flash (in-channel work)</b>				
R13 - year one detailed design etc	✓			
site clearance - contractor with digger		✓		
creation of upstream bend - contractor excavation and desposition		✓		
creation of backwater and associated reedbed		✓		
creation of flow deflectors - materials and contractor deposition		✓		
reedbed protection - materials		✓		
marginal planting		✓	✓	
R13 Environment Agency input to ensure appropriate delivery	✓	✓		
<b>R15 - Catcliffe Flash LNR</b>				
R15 - digger hire	✓	✓	✓	✓
R15 - boat hire	✓	✓	✓	✓
R15 -reed disposal	✓	✓	✓	✓
R15 - site visit by RMBC Ecologist to advise delivery	✓			
<b>R18 - Old Flatts Farm Marsh</b>				
R18 - reed disposal	✓	✓	✓	✓
R18 - site visit by RMBC to advise delivery	✓			
<b>R24 - Whiston Meadows</b>				
R24 - stump treatment for tree thinning by pond	✓	✓		
R24 - site visit by RMBC to advise delivery	✓			
<b>L1 Blackburn Meadows</b>				
L1 chemicals for knotweed treatment on meadow and wetland	✓	✓	✓	✓
L1 chemicals for crassula treatment on dipping pond	✓	✓	✓	
L1 - excavator, sand and plants for larger pond restoration			✓	
L1 stump treatment and chainsaw fuel/oil for woodland thinning	✓	✓	✓	✓

<b>L2 Centenary Riverside</b>				
L2 (costs from SWT who manage this site)				
L2 knotweed chemicals	✓	✓	✓	
L2 pillwort plants	✓	✓		
<b>L3 - Don Island</b>				
L3 knotweed control chemicals riverbank restoration	✓	✓	✓	
L3 otter holt mini-digger hire and materials		✓		
L3 kingfisher bank materials		✓		
L3 Canal and River Trust staff input into volunteer scrub removal	✓	✓	✓	
<b>L4 - Bow Bridge</b>				
L4 wet grassland plants/seeds	✓	✓	✓	
L4 - stump treatment	✓	✓	✓	
L4 - grassland maintainance (mowing)		✓	✓	✓
L4 - site visit by RMBC Ecologist to advise Highways Dept on mowing		✓		
<b>L5 - Fitzwilliam Canal</b>				
L5 - excavator & skip hire, chainsaw fuel restore wet woodland			✓	
L5 - materials and excavator for balancing pond			✓	
L5 - site visit by RMBC ecologist to advise on balancing pond etc		✓	✓	
L5 - meadow enhancement and scrub clearance	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>L9 - Kilnhurst Ings</b>				
L9 - archaeology walkover & report	✓			
L9 - scheme design ammendments	✓			
L9 - planning application	✓			
L9 -CDM coordinator	✓			
L9 - ditch dredging, contractor		✓		
L9 creation of scrapes and 'foot drains' by rotary ditcher - contractor		✓		
L9 creation of connector channel - contractor		✓		
L9 creation of new backwater - contractor		✓		
L9 disposal of materials offsite (worst case scenario)		✓		
L9 sluice work - contractor		✓		
L9 chain harrow area to be seeded contractor		✓		
L9 seeds and plants		✓		
L9 dumper truck & skip for rotational improvement of existing ditch		✓	✓	
L9 - site visit by RMBC ecologist to advise on delivery	✓	✓		
L9 Environment Agency input to ensure appropriate project delivery	✓	✓		