

EXECUTIVE – 12 AUGUST 2015

**CHARNWOOD FOREST REGIONAL PARK ACTION PLAN AND
GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS
REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY DIRECTION)**



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

**WARDS AFFECTED: GROBY, MARKFIELD, STANTON AND
FIELD HEAD,**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to permanent governance arrangements for the Charnwood Forest Regional Park (CFRP) and the associated Action Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Executive;

- Agree the permanent governance arrangements for the CFRP
- Agree the Action Plan (attached) for the Steering Group.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 Since July 2007 an officer level steering group has co-ordinated work on the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The steering group developed a Vision Statement and 3 core objectives to set out working boundaries for the Regional Park. This was endorsed by all four local authorities (Charnwood Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council) and associated key partners covering the Charnwood Forest area.

Vision Statement

“The unique natural and cultural heritage features of Charnwood Forest will be managed and promoted through the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The Regional Park will be recognised as an essential part of the growing communities in the Derby, Leicester and Nottingham area, now and in the future.”

Objectives

In support of the Vision Statement the following objectives have also been agreed:

- To manage and promote landscape and settlement character, including biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and industrial heritage features
 - To promote sustainable leisure and tourism
 - To support agricultural diversification and woodland and rural economy uses which respect local character.
- 3.2 On 17 August 2011 Members of the Executive approved a 3 year interim governance structure to take forward the Charnwood Forest Regional Park initiative and allow the project to move forward into its delivery phase. Following this approval the steering group was formalised to function as an umbrella organisation and bring together key partners concerned with the future of the Charnwood Forest. This provided a collaborative approach to developing projects focused on promotion and protection of the Charnwood Forest area.

3.3 An action plan wasn't developed by the Steering Group as resources were focussed on the Landscape Partnership bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. However despite this the following tasks / actions have been pursued over the past three years;

- preparation of a Landscape Partnership bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which was unfortunately unsuccessful.
- commissioning of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park map which is on sale and has been very successful.
- consideration of geopark status, this was not pursued owing to the CFRP being too small in area and the process was lengthy and expensive.
- consideration of tourism potential and branding this is still on-going the group are taking advice on these matter from experts invited to meetings.
- consideration of the potential for climbing in quarries, this is still being considered as there are health and safety and land ownership implications.
- stakeholder meetings and communications involving a quarterly newsletter to stakeholders.

3.4 At a meeting of the Steering Group on 4 March 2014 it was agreed that the interim Governance arrangements were working well and they should continue on a permanent basis. However it was agreed that an action plan should now be prepared, so in November 2014 the Steering Group and Stakeholder Group developed the attached Action Plan for the next 3 year period from April 2015.

3.5 The Steering Group's remit is:

- to oversee the implementation of the agreed Action Plan ;
- to work with other organisations to help ensure the implementation of the Action Plan

3.6 The Steering Group's member organisations consist of:

One elected member from each of the following local authorities:

- Leicestershire County Council
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (Councillor Cartwright)
- North West Leicestershire District Council

One representative from each of the following bodies:

- Mineral Products Association
- Country Land and Business Association
- National Farmers Union
- Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (on behalf of all wildlife organisations)
- Local Access Forum (on behalf of user groups including ramblers, horse-riders, cyclists, rock climbers, runners and orienteers)
- National Forest Company
- Natural England

3.7 It is requested that the attached Action Plan and the above Governance arrangements are agreed by the Executive at the meeting on 12 August 2015.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [MA]

4.1 The contribution of HBBC officers' time is commitment to four steering group meetings per annum and periodically assisting with grant bids. It is anticipated this will be met within the existing resources and will have no material impact on the budget.

4.2 There are no other activities that will have any budgetary impact

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [MR]

5.1 The Local Government Act 2000 provides wide powers for councils to do anything which they consider is likely to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and these powers would seem to cover the proposals for the Charnwood Forest projects.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The following aims of the Corporate Plan are met by the subject of this report;

- Creating a vibrant place to live and work
- Empowering Communities

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The contents of this report has been discussed at the Charnwood Forest Regional Park Steering Group and has had input from all the parties represented on that group, see paragraph 3.6 above.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

8.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

8.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failure to approve would result in the Core Strategy Policy 22 not being implemented.	Officers and Members have been involved in the production of the Action Plan and also discussions regarding the governance arrangements, to ensure that the Core Strategy Policy can be implemented and actions are consistent with the policy.	Policy and Regeneration Manager

9. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The approval of this report will enable the provision of permanent governance arrangement which will enable the delivery of the vision and objectives for the Charnwood Forest Regional Park which are particularly focused on environmental and economic elements.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications – none arising from this report
 - Environmental implications – contained within the body of the report
 - ICT implications – none arising from this report
 - Asset Management implications – none arising from this report
 - Human Resources implications – none arising from this report
 - Planning Implications – contained within the body of the report
 - Voluntary Sector – none arising from this report
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Background papers:

- Executive Report dated 17 August 2011 entitled Charnwood Forest Regional Park – Interim Governance arrangements.
- Charnwood Forest Regional Park Action Plan (Attached)

Contact Officer: Andy Killip, Ext 5732
Executive Member: Councillor Hall