



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Report to Cabinet

Report of: Simon Green - Executive Director Place

Date: 17th July 2013

Subject: Sheffield Moors Partnership and Masterplan

Author of Report: Chris Heeley, Head of Countryside and Environment

Summary:

The Sheffield Moors Partnership (SMP) includes approximately 56 square kilometres of upland landscape in public sector or charitable ownership on the western edge of Sheffield containing habitats of both national and international importance, and providing some of the most popular destinations for outdoor recreation in the Peak District National Park. (Please refer to the Map in Appendix 1)

This report seeks support for the Sheffield Moors Partnership, a unique partnership with the purpose of leading an innovative approach to deliver the vision of the SMP area as the UK's leading model on how the uplands should be managed in the future and securing the long term sustainability of this wild and open landscape. The report also seeks formal support from the Council as a key land owner for the recently developed Sheffield Moors Masterplan. This document provides the long-term vision for the landscape as a whole, and is designed to provide the overarching framework for individual site management plans.

A successful Moorland landscape managed for both people and wildlife, on Sheffield's doorstep contributes to a number of corporate plan outcomes, most notably in making Sheffield a "Great Place to Live."

Reasons for Recommendations:

The recommendations are made to ensure the improved coordinated management of a locally, nationally and internationally important landscape. This partnership and masterplan provide the best opportunity for partnership working across a landscape scale area of land that is fundamental to Sheffield's identity and success.

Recommendation: That this Cabinet:

1. Supports the work of the Sheffield Moors Partnership and agrees that the City Council should continue its collaborative work within the Partnership.
2. Endorses the Sheffield Moors Masterplan and as a major land owner and partner in the area agrees it as a statement of the City Council's vision for the Sheffield Moors.
3. Authorises The Director of Capital and Major Projects, provided the disposal has been advertised and no objections received, to negotiate a lease with the RSPB and National Trust for Burbage, Houndkirk and Hathersage Moors on terms that meet the requirements set out in this report and to instruct the Director of Legal and Governance Services to complete the necessary legal documentation.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial implications
NO cleared by Paul Schofield
Legal implications
YES cleared by Andrea Simpson
Equality of Opportunity implications
YES to be cleared by Ian Oldershaw
Tackling Health Inequalities implications
NO
Human rights implications
NO
Environmental and Sustainability implications
YES
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
YES

1. Summary

The Sheffield Moors Partnership (SMP) includes approximately 56 square kilometres of upland landscape in public sector or charitable ownership on the western edge of Sheffield, containing habitats of both national and international importance and providing some of the most popular destinations for outdoor recreation in the Peak District National Park. (Please refer to the Map in Appendix 1)

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2. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

The Sheffield Moors Partnership and Masterplan provides the people of Sheffield with:

- a) A collective vision and landscape scale masterplan for the Sheffield Moors Partnership area, developing local pride and involvement in an area of international importance for people and wildlife.
- b) A sustainable future for a cherished landscape thriving with wildlife, rich in cultural heritage and accessible to all
- c) Increased recreational opportunities through integrated access routes between individual moors in different ownerships and into and out of Sheffield
- d) A co-ordinated programme of participative learning, resulting in an increased sense of public ownership and enhanced opportunities for even more diverse groups of people to enjoy, appreciate and ultimately support the area

3. Outcomes and Sustainability

The adoption of the masterplan and partnership arrangements will ensure the long term sustainability, in the widest sense, of this exceptional area. This approach will ultimately deliver the coordinated management arrangements that fully reflect the outcome of extensive public consultation and secure the future sustainability of the moors.

4. Full Proposal

4.1 Origins of the Sheffield Moors Partnership

The partnership developed in spring 2010 out of recognition from the various land owners and managers in the area of the benefit of increased collaborative working, building on the work to date between the organisations in the partnership, for example, in relation to future management of the Peak District National Park Authority's owned Eastern Moors Estate.

The core partners are the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), National Trust (NT), Sheffield City Council (SCC), Sheffield Wildlife Trust (SWT), and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Natural England, the government's statutory advisors on nature conservation, is also a partner as most of the SMP area is designated nationally and internationally for its important habitats and wildlife.

The key areas include:

- North Lees/Stanage Estate, owned and managed by the PDNPA
- Burbage, Houndkirk and Hathersage Moors, owned and managed by SCC
- Blacka Moor, owned by SCC and managed by SWT
- Longshaw, owned and managed by the NT
- Eastern Moors Estate, owned by PDNPA managed by the NT/RSPB

The Council's land holding within the SMP is 1,070 hectares, just under 20% of the overall SMP area.

4.2 Purpose and Aims

The purpose of the SMP is to:

'To lead an innovative partnership to establish and deliver the vision of the Sheffield Moors as the UK's leading model on how the uplands should be managed into the future for people and wildlife'

Its main aims are to:

- To establish a clear vision and strategic direction, steering delivery across the sites through integrated and holistic planning and thinking
- To develop a strategic landscape scale masterplan for the SMP area, through a robust process of stakeholder and community engagement and consultation

The vision for the masterplan looks forward to 2025 and covers five main themes:

- **Being involved** – including education, interpretation, volunteering, training, events and visitor experience.
- **Access and recreation** – including access networks, recreation, gateways into the area, and visitor facilities.
- **Sustainable land management** – including landscape, archaeology and cultural heritage, wildlife, geo-diversity, and farming and woodland management.
- **Recognising the wider value of the moors** – including the local economy, tourism and wider ‘ecosystem services’ such as climate change mitigation, and water storage.
- **Delivering the masterplan** – including working collectively to achieve the vision, sharing best practice, and monitoring and review of the masterplan.

The final draft of the Sheffield Moors Masterplan can be found in Appendix 2.

It is important to note that the partnership does not get involved in the day to day management of each individual site; relying instead on existing partner arrangements and site specific management plans to continue to carry out project activity at site level. This should be in consultation with the communities and other stakeholders with an interest in these sites.

5. Consultation

The draft masterplan for the Sheffield Moors was developed during summer 2012 following a series of public and ‘Officer’ workshops held between February and April 2012, and a number of ‘focus groups’ held in June 2012 with representatives of wildlife, archaeological and access groups. Following internal consultation on an early version of the draft masterplan within the organisations represented in the Sheffield Moors Partnership (SMP), a period of public consultation on the draft masterplan took place from the 18th September to the 30th November 2012.

One of the ways of promoting consultation on the draft masterplan was through the dedicated website www.sheffieldmoors.co.uk, where electronic copies of both the draft masterplan and the associated maps could be viewed on-line or downloaded. A ‘round robin’ email was sent to all of those individuals and organisations on a stakeholder database developed since 2011, to help raise further awareness of the consultation.

A web-based questionnaire was also provided, to help structure comments. Alternatively, the public could request a copy of the questionnaire be sent directly to them electronically or as a hard copy. At the same time, it was made clear that comments could also be provided in writing or by email to the Sheffield Moors Partnership Project Officer, and would be acceptable in other formats to that suggested by the questionnaire. In addition, hard copies of the full document and maps were provided on request.

Over 100 posters were put up in and around the Sheffield Moors at main entrances for visitors including car parks and public rights of way, as well as within Sheffield and nearby communities such as Bamford and Hathersage. In addition a series of 15 public road shows were held within the Sheffield Moors during September and October 2012, led by the SMP Project Officer, to raise awareness of the Sheffield Moors Partnership, the draft masterplan and the consultation process. The comments received during the consultation on the draft masterplan were grouped into key issues. In total 175 of these key issues were raised, with each one having a specific response from the SMP through its Consultation Report (Appendix 3).

6. Financial Implications

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

In progressing the partnership arrangements and proposed masterplan for the SMP area, the partners, both collectively as the SMP and individually, will be better placed to attract funding and other resources to help deliver the long-term vision for the area. This has already proved the case with the SMP playing a key role in securing the designation of the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area. This national designation will see over £700,000 of DEFRA funding allocated for the Dark Peak area and of this funding, £128,000 will be invested in projects on Sheffield City Council owned land.

Appropriate approvals will be sought under the Leader's Scheme of Delegation when a detailed grant offer is made, and, for the Capital expenditure once a detailed project has been drawn up.

At the same time, closer partnership working between the various organisations will help in using resources more efficiently and resolving issues related to the landscape as they arise.

7. Property implications

Burbage, Houndkirk and Hathersage Moors (as shown outlined in Appendix 4) were acquired by the City Council's former Water Committee in the 1920's when the Council had responsibility for the City's water supply. Rather than transferring to Yorkshire Water on Local Government reorganisation in 1974, the moors were retained in the Council's Estates Committee and have subsequently been managed as part of the Council's rural estate. This land forms a significant part of the overall Sheffield Moors Partnership area and is currently let to the National Trust, who manage the land on a temporary Farm Business Tenancy, granted from March 2010, on a 12 month rolling basis.

Such a short term tenancy is not ideal particularly when trying to deliver long term sustainable land management, however it has been officers opinion that looking at potential partnering arrangements in advance of the outcome of the broader consultation on the Sheffield Moors Masterplan would be premature.

The Council now has a better understanding of the public's aspirations for the moors and these are embedded in the masterplan, which is subject to the

earlier part of this report. With this in mind officers are now recommending that a long term lease arrangement is entered into tied to the objectives set out in the Sheffield Moors Masterplan.

The current temporary arrangement with the National Trust has been beneficial in ensuring compliance with our legal duties in regards to this protected landscape and in securing boundaries and reducing the incidences of illegal activity by off road vehicles. There is also great synergy with the management of the neighbouring block of moorland, known as the Eastern Moors. This land is owned by the Peak District National Park Authority and has been managed through a partnership between the National Trust and RSPB since January 2011. Officers are now recommending that Cabinet instructs the Director of Capital and Major Projects to negotiate a long term lease arrangement with the RSPB and National Trust. This lease is likely to be for 25 years and is recommended to be with the RSPB and National Trust to build on the synergy and experience of the neighbouring Eastern Moors Partnership.

8. Legal Implications

Entering into a long lease hold arrangement with a third party is considered a disposal of land. The Council has the power to dispose of the land for the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 but section 123(2A) provides that no disposal of open space land can take place until notice of the intention to do so has been advertised for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper. Should there be any objections after the Open Space notice then in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation the disposal will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

The Sheffield Moors Partnership is not a partnership in the strict legal sense but an arrangement for collaborative working. The SMP is not a separate legal entity and each of the partners retains autonomy in operation and decision making.

There are no other legal implications arising directly from this report or the Sheffield Moors Masterplan. Any implications arising from individual projects or activities set out in the Action Plan will be considered when they are reported for approval in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation or Constitution as appropriate.

9. Equality of Opportunity Implications

The development of the Sheffield Moors Partnership arrangements and the outcomes of the Masterplan, would undoubtedly extend the 'access for all' opportunities and support the Council's social inclusion priorities.

10. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

The delivery of the masterplan for the SMP area will be instrumental in securing the long term sustainability of the habitats, wildlife, access and

cultural heritage of this nationally and internationally important area. The Moors also play a critical role in Sheffield's water management and climate change mitigation. The Masterplan provides a real opportunity to ensure the landowners and managers of the SMP area work in a coordinated way to reduce the rate at which rain water reaches the main water courses that flow through Sheffield.

11. Alternative Options

Alternative options for visioning work across the SMP area have been considered, including continuing with the current approach where individual land owners and managers continue to focus generally on their own land holdings, with a degree of partnership working with adjoining land managers/owners. This option is not considered appropriate going forward, because of the missed opportunities to develop a much greater 'joined-up' approach to the landscape as a whole, whether it be to take up opportunities to improve access into and across the whole area in a strategic way for example, or to maximise the use of available resources and secure future funding streams to deliver conservation and access management.

12. Reasons for Recommendations

The recommendations are made to ensure the improved coordinated management of a locally, nationally and internationally important landscape. This partnership and masterplan provide the best opportunity for partnership working cross a landscape scale area of land that is fundamental to Sheffield's identity and success.

13. Recommendations. That this Cabinet:

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