

DATE OF COMMITTEE
10 APRIL 2013

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT
AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP ACTION PLAN

EXEMPT INFORMATION

No

PURPOSE

To inform members of the successful application for Higher Level Stewardship and of the subsequent delivery action plan, and to approve the receipt and expenditure of the grant over the 10 year grant period

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to endorse the 10 year Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) action plan, and to approve the creation of necessary capital and revenue budgets applicable to this grant.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2013 a HLS application, encompassing Tamworth Borough Council's landholding, was submitted to Natural England. The application focused, primarily, on the boroughs Local Nature Reserves (LNR's), together with other areas of high and suitable biodiversity interest. These areas are detailed in appendix 1a and 1b on the location maps.

In March 2013 the authority was notified that the application had been successful and a grant of £10,953 per annum would be effective from 1st March 2013 to 28th February 2023. This grant is specifically ringfenced to undertake the level of environmental management detailed below per site and an additional sum of £8,880 as part of the first Capital Works Programme (CWP) for certain specified items.

The identified capital works programme 2013-16 is attached at Appendix 3, after which time a further application may be made for future works.

It is intended that much of this work will be undertaken by the local volunteer groups under the direction of the "Wild about Tamworth" project, with some of the larger tasks being carried out by the Council's Street Scene team or specialist contractor where necessary.

The resulting HLS agreement for Tamworth Borough Council's landholding is summarised below, highlighting the specific land management tasks that are required to be undertaken on the individual sites. The annual payment schedule for this is attached as Appendix 2

Broadmeadow

HK16 Restoration of grassland for target features
HK18 Supplement for haymaking

Wigginton Park

(Note: these options only apply to 1 hectare of the site, located in the south-western area.)

HK7 Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland
HK18 Supplement for haymaking

Tameside

HK16 Restoration of grassland for target features
HK18 Supplement for haymaking

Egg Meadow

Q6 Maintenance of fen
HQ11 Wetland cutting supplement

Hodge Lane

HC7 Maintenance of woodland
HK7 Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland
HK18 Supplement for haymaking
HQ2 Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value > 100 sq m

Warwickshire Moor

HQ4 Restoration of reedbeds
HQ7 Restoration of fen
HQ11 Wetland cutting supplement

Kettlebrook

(Note: these options only apply to the grassland at south-eastern end of the site).

HK7 Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland
HK16 Restoration of grassland for target features
HK18 Supplement for haymaking

Dosthill Park

HK16 Restoration of grassland for target features
HK18 Supplement for haymaking

This agreement is designed to deliver enhancements over and above the day to day maintenance currently undertaken, thus restoring or creating additional features to the land.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The funding provided by the HLS scheme is indicated below. This funding is additional to existing revenue budgets and is specifically for the enhancements detailed in the HLS agreement, therefore these funds are required to be ringfenced. A capital budget of £8,880 will need to be created for Years 1-3 (2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16) in order to facilitate the Capital works.

All monies are required to be released to enable the agreed works to be undertaken.

	HLS Payment	HLS Capital Payment
Year 1	£10,953	£2,960

Year 2	£10,953	£2,960
Year 3	£10,953	£2,960
Year 4	£10,953	
Year 5	£10,953	
Year 6	£10,953	
Year 7	£10,953	
Year 8	£10,953	
Year 9	£10,953	
Year 10	£10,953	
TOTAL	£109,530	£8,880

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

Failure to deliver the HLS action plan in respect of day to day site management and the agreed capital works will result in some or all of the funding being withdrawn.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The HLS agreement provides a 10 year delivery plan for environmental improvements to all land being managed under the scheme; this in turn will provide future sustainability through long term development.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme is one of DEFRA's Environmental Stewardship schemes. The HLS scheme, which is administered by Natural England, is a ten year commitment to undertake a specific selection of habitat management and creation/restoration options that are tailored to meet the individual requirements of a site or landholding.

HLS is targeted towards landholdings that currently support significant biodiversity, archaeological or heritage interest, and/or are willing to restore or create further areas of interest. As part of the ten-year commitment, Natural England will pay a financial contribution to the annual tasks required to achieve this appropriate conservation management.

In addition, there is a Capital Items Budget, available as part of a Capital Works Plan (CWP), that aims to implement such items as the installation of appropriate infrastructure, pond, habitat creation and educational access payments. The CWP is based on a three-year period with the option to submit subsequent programmes in the following years, subject to available budget.

REPORT AUTHOR

Sarah McGrandle – Head of Environmental Management

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Location maps

Appendix 2- Annual payment schedule for tasks

Appendix 3 - Capital Works Program 2013-2016

This page is intentionally left blank