

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North East Area Council

27th July, 2017

Report of North East Area Council Manager

North East Area Council Wildlife Corridor Proposal

1. Background

Following on from the North East Area Council adopting the Hedgehog as it's mascot, a significant amount of wildlife projects have taken place across the area involving all sections of the community. The North East Area Council has formed good working links with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Groundworks at Rabbit Ings, the Carlton Marsh Volunteers, Hogwarts Hedgehog Hospital, Parks Services and the Countryside Team.

2. Overview of the Project

During a community biodiversity event it was suggested that a Wildlife Corridor should run across the North East Area Council, from North to South, from Rabbit Ings to Priory Campus, and from West to East from Athersley Memorial Fields to West Haigh Wood. At a recent meeting with all interested parties a draft plan was drawn up with a possible route which would encompass the Trans Pennine Trail, areas of the Dearne Valley, Carlton Marsh, Rabbit Ings and West Haigh Wood, for the Councillors consideration (please see Appendix A). The proposed Wildlife Corridor will help create a connected landscape, which will encourage and support the wildlife living in these areas.

It is proposed that the routes included will be improved and areas will be 'adopted' by Volunteers to look after. Two primary schools have already expressed an interest in getting involved. This will help promote the Council's vision of 'Working Together' and a 'Better Barnsley' by getting local people active and involved in their local green spaces through Volunteering. There are significant benefits with regard to Health and Wellbeing, and the proposals to increase Volunteering opportunities will help to reduce social isolation, improve fitness and provide a sense of achievement and team spirit.

It is proposed that the routes will be improved for the recreational activities of walking and cycling. A series of Interpretation Boards will highlight the wildlife in the area for all residents and families, and will inspire them to discover their local wildlife and become involved in creating and sustaining environmental areas to help wildlife to thrive. It is also proposed that parts of the routes will become orienteering areas, which may eventually involve free-to-play, location based technology. This activity is proving very popular in many tourist resorts and it is anticipated that these innovative routes will encourage residents to enjoy their local environment.

3. Recommendations

That the North East Area Council supports the proposal for a Wildlife Corridor, as per Appendix A.

That the North East Area Council forms a Steering Group to take this initiative forward, working together with partners agencies.

That the North East Area Council explores additional funding streams to help finance this proposal.

Caroline Donovan
North East Area Manager
27th July, 2017