

REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	23rd JANUARY 2020	CATEGORY: (See Notes) DELEGATED or RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	TONY SYLVESTER 01283 595743 Tony.sylvester@southderbyshire.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	NATIONAL FOREST GREENPRINT: A 25 YEAR VISION FOR THE NATIONAL FOREST	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	CHURCH GRESLEY, LINTON, MELBOURNE, MIDWAY, NEWHALL AND STANTON, REPTON, SEALES, SWADLINCOTE, WOODVILLE	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS01

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 To request that the Committee endorses the actions and outcomes outlined in the draft Greenprint and states the Council's ongoing commitment to the creation of the National Forest.
- 1.2 To approve that the comments contained in this report are provided to the National Forest Company as its initial response to its Vision with a commitment to participate in the future consultation exercises that are planned.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 To make the Committee aware of the National Forest Company's (NFC) Draft Greenprint and the vision and actions included within this document and to outline how these relate to the Council's long-term aims to deliver economic regeneration, sustainable communities and environment enhancements within the District (articulated in the Council's Corporate Plan).

3.0 Details

- 3.1 The first National Forest Strategy was published in 1994 and the Forest itself created shortly after. At that time forest cover within the newly designated area stood at 6.1% and much of the landscape had been substantially altered as a result of past industrial use and minerals extraction. Since then over 7,500ha of new habitat has been created and nine million trees planted. Today forest cover within the National Forest stands at 21%.

- 3.2 The National Forest Greenprint outlines a number of key drivers for change around which its 25-year vision is based. In brief these are:
- Climate Change
 - Placemaking
 - Sustainable living
- 3.3 In order to address climate change, improve placemaking (i.e. creating somewhere with a distinct identity or urban design¹) and deliver sustainable economic growth the Greenprint sets out nine specific actions.
1. To increase forest cover to reach the National Forest long-term target of 33% forest cover by 2045.
 2. To bring 95% of woodlands into active management by 2045 and 100% of plantations on ancient woodlands into active management by the same date. The Greenprint also proposes to move beyond woodlands to enhance other priority habitats
 3. Increase urban canopy cover by at least 20% within towns within the Forest by 2045 to deliver urban cooling, water management and habitat connectivity and support the delivery of new hedgerows and other linear habitats.
 4. To continue to ensure a high level of accessibility across the Forest landscape with a target for 80% of households being within 500m of woodland.
 5. Ensure that all settlements reflect a set of National Forest character standards to bring a stronger identity to the area.
 6. Support 80% of the Forest population to undertake regular outside activity by 2045.
 7. Grow the green economy by facilitating new enterprise aligned to the Forest and encouraging existing businesses to adopt sustainable practices. Priority sectors identified by the National Forest include, tourism and hospitality, food and drink, creative industries, sports and physical activity, wellbeing, farming and forestry. Currently these account for 14% of the Forest workforce and a target to increase these to 25% of the workforce is outlined.
 8. Greening services by delivering a net zero carbon economy by 2030
 9. Support the creation of a circular economy for example through supporting increases in recycling, and reuse of materials; though it is worth noting that no target has yet been set within the Greenprint in respect of this action.
- 3.4 The Greenprint outlines a number of challenges and the NFC is seeking views on these. In respect of the Environment: views are sought on whether 33% forest cover by 2045 is achievable or even a high enough target; What the most important public benefits are that should be delivered through that forest creation and whether the three key actions in respect of the environment (bullets 1-3 above) should have the greatest priority?
- 3.5 Whilst the ambition to deliver increased planting to meet the longstanding target of delivering 33% remains unchanged and is supported within the adopted South Derbyshire Local Plan, it is worth highlighting that the greatest benefits from new woodland provision can be made when this is targeted towards areas where multiple benefits can be delivered such as flood alleviation, improved public access and water quality improvements. This fact is reflected in the Greenprint which identifies the areas where the greatest benefits can be delivered. Clearly reaching the long-term target of 33% forest cover is an important part of the Forest Vision. However, achieving this by 2045 is perhaps less important than ensuring that new provision is in the right places and delivers a wide range of community and social

¹ Definition given in the Dictionary of urbanism, Robert Cowan, 2005

benefits. Moreover, there is a desire to deliver or enhance other priority habitats such as grassland, heathland and wetland, which will inevitably also require land to be safeguarded for these habitat types the delivery of in excess of 250 hectares of land each year which represents a very ambitious target. This Council already includes policies in its Local Plan which mandates tree planting and will continue to contribute towards delivering this target. Indeed, the provision of new areas of tree planting in new development also contributes towards increasing urban canopy cover in Swadlincote, the edge of Burton on Trent and the main villages and so will contribute towards the delivery of Action 3. However, wider opportunities for new habitat creation could also be delivered through changes to how existing open spaces are managed. South Derbyshire District Council has recently set up a Biodiversity Working Group and is seeking to prepare an Action Plan for Nature. Through this work the Council is looking to review how publicly owned sites are managed in order to enhance their biodiversity value. This may provide opportunity for further tree planting and habitat creation which could contribute towards meeting the National Forest's stated targets.

- 3.6 In respect of social of objectives the NFC is seeking views on whether aiming for 80% of settlements to be within 500m of accessible woodland by 2045 is ambitious enough and whether it is using the right priorities to demonstrate public benefit from access?
- 3.7 The document seems to indicate that 80% of households will be within 500m of accessible woodland initially, although seems to express the need for 80% of settlements within 500m within the later sections of the Greenprint (i.e. the section on 'what does success look like'). It could be argued that this inconsistency in the Greenprint should be addressed. Notwithstanding this however, the aim of ensuring that residents are near accessible woodland should be welcomed. The desire to deliver and measure improvements to society attributable to the delivery of open spaces in respect of individual wellbeing, equity, satisfaction, participation and sense of place associated the creation of the Forest are noted as are the proposals to create detailed metrics to allow public benefits to be monitored.
- 3.8 In respect of the economy, the NFC's vision is for an economy that is low carbon, aligned to the Forest, and circular in nature, enabling sustained prosperity. In particular, views are sought as to whether aiming for the National Forest area to be net zero carbon by 2030 is realistic and whether seeking to increase the proportion of jobs in tourism, food and drink manufacture, creative industries, energy (low carbon) sports and physical activity and farming and forestry sectors, is the correct approach to job creation.
- 3.9 South Derbyshire District Council declared a climate emergency on the 27th June 2019. the Council is now striving to make South Derbyshire District Council carbon neutral by 2030 and achieve Carbon Neutrality for the District before the Government target of 2050. At the same time the Council called on the UK Government to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target realistic. Clearly to stand any realistic chance of meeting the 2030 target there will be a need to work with partners across the District. The aim to deliver carbon neutrality aligns with this Council's existing commitment which is articulated in the recently produced South Derbyshire Corporate Plan for 2020-24.
- 3.10 In terms of targets to increase jobs in priority sectors as prescribed by the NFC, the 25% target is noted. Whilst this authority's approach to supporting jobs growth is not as prescriptive as that of the NFC, it is worth noting that the National Forest policy included in the South Derbyshire Local Plan does support the diversification

of the economy in the forest area including in relation to the woodland economy and leisure and tourism, whilst other policies support economic development in rural locations where appropriate. In addition, the Council's new Corporate Plan seeks to encourage and support business development and new investment across the whole of South Derbyshire. Existing policies are therefore already in place to support the ambitions of the National Forest in growing new enterprise aligned to the Forest. This should be reinforced yet further in any new iteration of the Local plan and other subordinate revisions due in the coming years.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 Employment Implications: None identified.

5.2 Legal Implications: None Identified.

5.3 Corporate Plan Implications: Many of the actions outlined in the National Forest Green Print align with the Council's aims set out in the Corporate Plan. In particular both documents support efforts towards improving biodiversity, promoting health and wellbeing, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2030, encouraging new business development and investment and seeking to reduce waste. In seeking to implement their own plan the National Forest could also contribute towards delivering many of the aims expressed in the Corporate Plan and vice versa.

5.4 Risk Impact: None Identified

6.0 Community Impact

6.1 Consultation: The National Forest is consulting on its Greenprint currently and will run roadshows to consult on its vision further in early 2020. The new vision is likely to be launched in spring 2020. Comment on the Greenprint will need to be submitted by the end of February 2020. Further information on the Greenprint is available [here](#)²

6.2 Equality and Diversity Impact: A core part of the National Forest Vision is to address inequalities and create woodland access which is accessible to all.

6.3 Social Value Impact: Beneficial. A major strand of the vision is to promote thriving communities, improve access to the Forest Landscape and increase engagement.

6.4 Environmental Sustainability Beneficial. As previously stated the Greenprint seeks to work towards improving biodiversity including landscape scale tree planting and other habitat creation, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2030, seeking to reduce waste and resource use

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The vision and actions articulated in the Greenprint, align closely with the Council's Corporate Plan and existing planning documents. Continued and close working with the National Forest, including during this consultation to help shape the Greenprint will maximise opportunities to deliver the priorities and aims of both organisations

8.0 Background Papers

Appendix 1: Our 25 year vision for the National Forest. A Greenprint for the Nation.
Available at:

https://www.nationalforest.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/1693%20NFC%20Brand%20Vision%20Report%20AW_SCREEN%20%281%29.pdf