

Agenda Item No. 4(c)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

11 March 2021

Report of the Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**GRASSMOOR COUNTRY PARK – NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT
SCHEME**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To update the Cabinet Member on proposed developments at Grassmoor Country Park, to request approval to allow the Don Catchment Rivers Trust to deliver a natural flood management (NFM) and habitat creation scheme within Grassmoor Country Park, and to give delegated authority to the Director of Environment, Economy and Transport, in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to negotiate the terms of and enter into a collaboration agreement with the Don Catchment Rivers Trust (DCRT) to enable delivery of the scheme.

(2) **Information and Analysis** Grassmoor Country Park is a very well-used countryside asset to the south of Chesterfield, managed by the Countryside Service. It was created following the restoration of the former Grassmoor Colliery and the adjacent Grassmoor Lagoons site, which received industrial effluent waste from the nearby Avenue Coking Works at Wingerworth. It is one of the less-developed country parks due to the need for the restoration of the Lagoons area, which is now nearing completion and will soon be opened for public recreation as part of the country park. The opening up of this significant area of the country park will allow for a masterplan for the whole site to be developed and improvements for the users of the site to be made.

As part of early improvements to the publicly accessible parts of the country park, the DCRT, supported by the Countryside Service and the Flood Risk Management Team, has developed an NFM scheme which proposes the creation of a sustainable drainage system formed by a series of bunds and shallow depressions that will restrict surface water and create permanent and semi-permanent water storage areas. These pools are connected by small channels that allow passage of water and will support valuable wet grassland and wet woodland habitat.

DCRT is the lead organisation of the NFM scheme and is the sole applicant on all funding applications. Contractors will be appointed and managed by

DCRT to deliver the works. The Council will provide land to deliver the scheme and will maintain the newly formed habitat.

The Grassmoor Country Park NFM scheme would be a key piece in a wider programme of NFM activities throughout the catchment, aiming to reduce flood risk in downstream Chesterfield. The NFM features will reduce flood risk by slowing flows and increasing the time it takes for run-off to enter the river network. In the locality, the scheme will help reduce flood risk along Calow Brook and Spital Brook and thus, reducing flood risk at Hornsbridge, Chesterfield.

The NFM scheme will have many benefits to the country park. The features will create important wildlife habitat, increase carbon storage and introduce more varied landscapes within the park. Delivery will also create opportunities to engage with visitors and local communities. In light of these benefits and enhancements, the Countryside Service, as the land portfolio holder, is proposing the scheme is supported. Due to funding criteria, the timescales for delivery are tight and the scheme must commence by July 2021.

Development of the scheme has been managed by a project board consisting of Chesterfield Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, the Environment Agency, Derbyshire County Council's Flood Risk Management Team and DCRT. The Board provides engineering and hydro ecology expertise and employs an objective and strategic approach to natural flood management. The Board has identified the Grassmoor scheme as a priority project.

Consultation has taken place with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and the Friends of Grassmoor Country Park, who are both supportive of the NFM scheme. A community engagement event will be arranged should the scheme be given approval to proceed.

DCRT is awaiting confirmation from North East Derbyshire District Council's Planning Team as to whether the scheme may progress as permitted development, or if planning consent is required.

(3) Financial Considerations DCRT has secured £140,900 of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Environment Agency which will cover professional and planning fees, contractor delivery of the scheme and a contingency sum. A total of £11,013 has already been spent by DCRT on feasibility work and an outline design (see Appendix 1). An in-kind contribution from DCRT will provide project management, community engagement and trustee expert advice and support to deliver the scheme. There is no match or Capital funding contribution required from the Council.

Construction of the scheme's features is predominantly by the creation of earth bunds. There will be an addition of four small culverts envisaged to remain functional for a minimum of 40 years. After this duration there may be a requirement to replace the culverts. A cost estimate for this work based on current prices is £3,000.

The Countryside Service will contribute maintenance costs, estimated at £1,500 per annum to manage the grassland and woodland habitat. This sum is approximately the same as current grassland maintenance costs of the land in question and therefore there is no net increase in cost to the Service.

In addition, the Countryside Service envisages that there will be strong potential to monetise this habitat since it would be expected to be included in the portfolio of sites submitted by the Countryside Service to a forthcoming Countryside Stewardship programme. Further income streams may also be achieved by the potential this new habitat has to offer biodiversity net gain opportunities.

(4) Legal Considerations The Director of Legal and Democratic Services has advised that a collaboration agreement should be used to determine key principles of the project that will best minimise any risk to the Council throughout and after project delivery. This type of agreement spells out the specific terms and conditions of the parties' working relationship including the allocation of responsibilities. As a minimum, these would include the specific objectives of the project, the project timescales, identifiable and tested contractors, requirements for insurance, reinstatement following unsatisfactory works and what DCRT agree to in the event that funding for the works is withdrawn or any other unforeseen circumstance occurs.

Upon instruction from the Director - Economy, Transport and Environment, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services shall arrange to agree and enter into the agreement required to document the delivery of the NFM scheme.

(5) Property Considerations Delivery of the scheme will require utilising land previously identified by the Countryside Service for review by PSP Derbyshire LLP. This Partnership was created by the Corporate Property Division with Public Sector Plc to assess a variety of Council assets with the potential for development of income-generating development schemes. This particular review aims to identify specific Countryside Service assets that can be improved, enhanced with other facilities or are no longer required to support the Service. The scheme has been discussed with PSP Derbyshire LLP who is supportive of the scheme and sees no detriment to assessing the site asset once the NFM scheme has been delivered.

No capital costs will be attributed to the Council and maintenance costs are expected to remain static for the land in question for a number of decades at

the very least. In light of the scheme's benefits and site enhancement opportunities, the Countryside Service considers that the scheme offers a good opportunity to maximise the asset.

(6) Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, social value and transport considerations.

(7) Key Decision No.

(8) Call-In Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(9) Background Papers Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officers contact details – Gemma Gregory, extension 38.

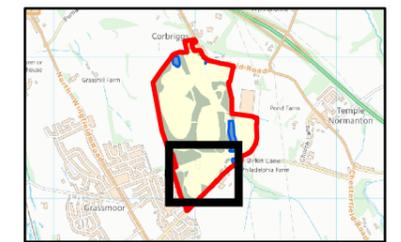
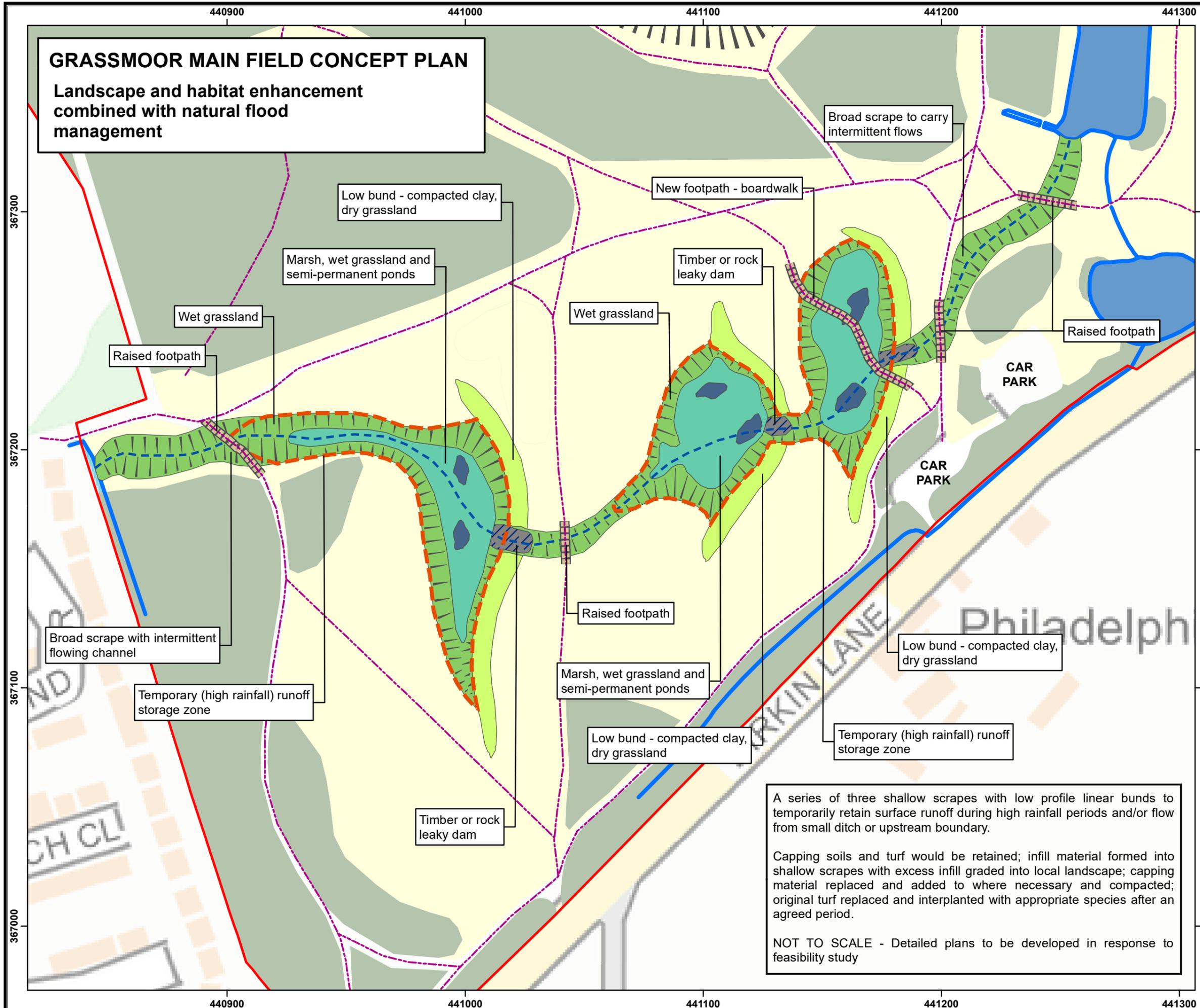
(10) OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS That the Cabinet Member:

- 10.1 Notes the proposed developments at Grassmoor Country Park.
- 10.2 Approves Don Catchment Rivers Trust to deliver a natural flood management (NFM) and habitat creation scheme within Grassmoor Country Park as detailed in the report.
- 10.3 Gives delegated authority to the Director - Economy, Transport and Environment, in conjunction with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to agree the terms of and enter into an agreement that documents the delivery of the NFM scheme as detailed in this report.

Tim Gregory
Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

GRASSMOOR MAIN FIELD CONCEPT PLAN

Landscape and habitat enhancement combined with natural flood management



Legend

- Grassmoor Country Park
- Proposed flood storage zones
- Natural Flood Management Scheme Features
 - Low grassland bund
 - Wet grassland slope
 - Marsh/wet grassland
 - Semi-permanent pools
 - Timber or rock leaky dam
 - Channel - intermittent flow
 - Footpaths
 - Raised footpath/boardwalk
- Existing habitats
 - Waterbody
 - Grassland
 - Woodland

British National Grid
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 False Easting: 400000.000000
 False Northing: 100000.000000
 Central Meridian: 2.000000
 Scale Factor: 0.999601
 Latitude Of Origin: 49.000000

ISO A3

Metres

0 5 10 20 30 40 50



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Project Name
Pouring More into Grassmoor

Discipline
 Ecology

Title:
GRASSMOOR MAIN FIELD CONCEPT PLAN
DRAFT

Scale	1:1,500	Drawing No.	Figure 2a
Drawn By	CC	Originator	PW
PA Ref.		Date	12/02/2020
		Revision	1.0

A series of three shallow scrapes with low profile linear bunds to temporarily retain surface runoff during high rainfall periods and/or flow from small ditch or upstream boundary.

Capping soils and turf would be retained; infill material formed into shallow scrapes with excess infill graded into local landscape; capping material replaced and added to where necessary and compacted; original turf replaced and interplanted with appropriate species after an agreed period.

NOT TO SCALE - Detailed plans to be developed in response to feasibility study