

ENVIRONMENT & HIGHWAYS CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING, NICOLA PEARCE

29TH JANUARY 2015

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: PONTARDAWE

DECLARATION OF CWM DU GLEN & GLANRHYD PLANTATION AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)

Purpose of Report

To consider Cwm Du Glen & Glanrhyd Plantation for declaration as a Local Nature Reserve, and to seek authorisation in principle to enter into a management agreement for part of the land in the ownership of Pontardawe Town Council

Background

Cwm Du Glen & Glanrhyd Plantation, as shown edged in black on the attached plan, is located immediately to the North West of Pontardawe, within easy reach of the town centre. As its name suggests, this site is a combination of two fairly distinctive sites; the wooded valley following the Clydach river south towards Pontardawe is known as ‘Cwm Du’, whilst Glanrhyd Plantation is the remains of the old Glanrhyd Estate, which belonged to the Gilbertson family, who were very influential in the area, managing the tinplate works.

The Upper Clydach River flows south through Cwm Du Glen; a narrow valley with steep craggy sides that supports a mixture of mature and semi-mature, deciduous woodland. The Glanrhyd Estate was situated up on a plateau on the western edge of the gorge; the remains of the estate are still visible beneath the specimen trees of the plantation and the shrubs and trees that have grown since the estate was abandoned. Both are a combination of historical features and natural habitat supporting a species rich flora and fauna.

The site is both important for biodiversity, supporting several LBAP (Local Biodiversity Action Plan) habitats and species, and as a community resource; accessible to local residents and an attraction for visitors from further afield.

Part of the site, as shown hatched black, is owned by Pontardawe Town Council, with the remainder under Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council ownership. The area owned by Pontardawe Town Council forms a contiguous area of native woodland along the eastern bank of the Upper Clydach, northwards of the pedestrian bridge towards Rhydyfro.

The proposal is for the Authority to enter into a management agreement with Pontardawe Town Council in order to assist them with the management of the woodland. Pontardawe Town Council will retain responsibility for the land, whilst additional requirements to manage the site as a Local Nature Reserve will be supported by NPTCBC.

Pontardawe Town Council are supportive of the proposal and have indicated that they would be willing to enter into the management agreement on a nil rental basis. Streetcare Services, who are responsible for the NPTCBC land, are also in favour of the proposal.

A management plan, written in support of its proposed declaration as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), has been put together by the Countryside & Wildlife team, through discussion with Property and Regeneration, Streetcare Services and NRW (Natural Resources Wales). The plan clearly identifies the work needed to maintain and enhance the value of the site. At the same time, it identifies the opportunities for further partnership work and development of the educational use of the site.

Local Nature Reserves are designated by local authorities under the powers of Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. LNR status is a very flexible designation, allowing sites to be declared because of their high value for biodiversity or because they have local wildlife or geological interest and are of particular value for community enjoyment, involvement and education. Cwm Du Glen & Glanrhyd Plantation clearly fulfils all these criteria.

Declaration as a LNR, means its status will be formally acknowledged by Natural Resources Wales. Candidate LNR status has enabled the Countryside & Wildlife team to attract funding from sources including Welsh Government and NRW in order to bring the site up to the required standard and to involve the local community in site enhancement activities and biodiversity awareness raising/skills building. Full LNR status will attract further investment.

This designation supports targets within the Community Plan, the Planning Section's Business Plan, and the LBAP, to increase the number of sites being managed for biodiversity within NPT.

Financial Implications

There would be no additional costs to the Authority in declaring both NPTCBC and Town Council owned land as a LNR and for entering into and implementing the Management Plan. The Countryside & Wildlife Team has already successfully attracted grant funding from a number of sources, which has been spent on a range of activities including public events, practical management, and improvements to site infrastructure. External grant funding would be sought to carry out additional works and potential sources have been identified within the management plan. LNR status would support grant applications.

Sustainability Appraisal

Declaration of Cwm Du Glen & Glanrhyd Plantation as a LNR will raise its profile in the community and encourage visitors from further afield. Partnership work and community involvement, as identified by the Management Plan, will encourage use of the site by all members of the local community. Utilisation of such sites has a positive benefit on health and well-being and provides opportunities to learn about Neath Port Talbot's natural environment. The site is accessible via public transport, and the National Cycle Network (route 43) passes nearby.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cwm Du Glen & Glanrhyd Plantation be declared a Local Nature Reserve and that authorisation be given for the associated Management Plan to be implemented.

It is also recommended that authorisation be granted to enter into a management agreement with Pontardawe Town Council on terms and conditions to be agreed by Property and Regeneration Section.

Reasons for Proposed Decision(s)

Cwm Du Glen & Glanrhyd Plantation is of significant value for biodiversity and also as a community facility. Declaration as a Local Nature Reserve will secure the long term protection of the site whilst demonstrating to the general public the quality and value of the natural environment in Neath Port Talbot.

List of Background Papers

Cwm Du Glen & Glanrhyd Plantation Management Plan

Wards Affected

Pontardawe

Officer Contact

Catrin Evans
Countryside and Wildlife Team Leader
Tel. 01639 686056
E-Mail: c.a.evans@npt.gov.uk

Elen Richards
Coed Cymru Officer
Tel. 01639 686782
E-Mail: e.richards1@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

DECLARATION OF CWM DU GLEN & GLANRHYD PLANTATION AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)

(a) Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period

(b) Sustainability Appraisal

Community Plan Impacts

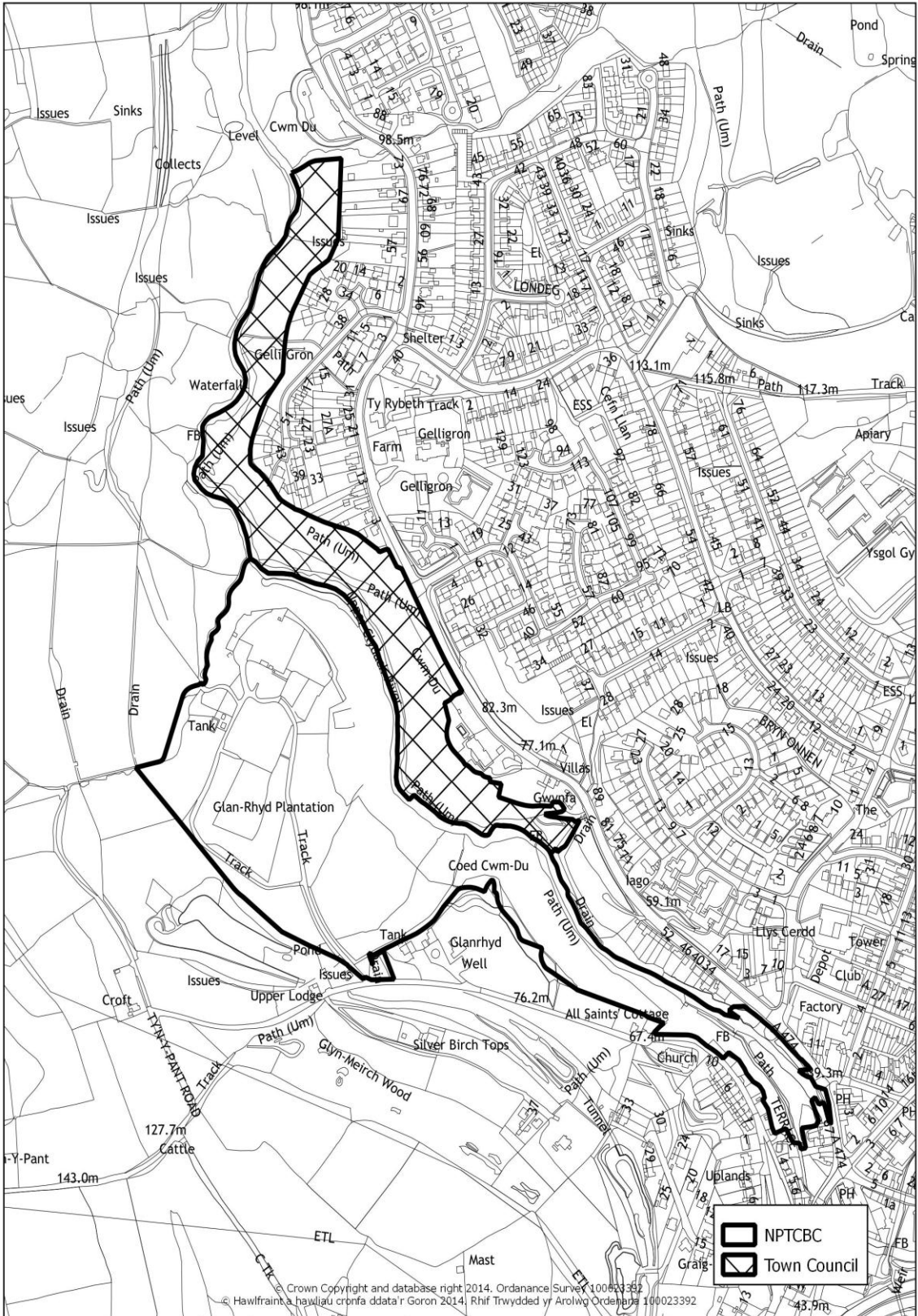
| | | |
|-------------------------------|----|----------|
| Economic Prosperity | .. | Positive |
| Education & Lifelong Learning | .. | Positive |
| Better Health & Wellbeing | .. | Positive |
| Environment & Transport | .. | Positive |
| Crime & Disorder | .. | Positive |

Other Impacts


| | | |
|-------------------------|----|-----------|
| Welsh Language | .. | No Impact |
| Sustainable Development | .. | Positive |
| Equalities | .. | No Impact |
| Social Inclusion | .. | Positive |

(c) Consultation

There has been no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.



© Crown Copyright and database right 2014. Ordnance Survey 100043332
 © Hawlfraint a hawlau cronfa ddata'r Goron 2014. Rhif Twydded y'r Arolwg Ordnance 100023392

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Project Cwm Du Glen & Glanrhyd Plantation LNR</p> <p>Land Ownership</p> | <p>Scales A4 @ 1:5000</p> <p>Drawing No. 14-1052</p> | <p>PROPERTY & REGENERATION Gareth Nutt B.Sc (hons), M.Sc., DMS, FRICS Corporate Director of Environment THE QUAYS, BRUNEL WAY, BAGLAN ENERGY PARK NEATH SA11 2GG www.npt.gov.uk</p> |  <p>Neath Port Talbot Castell-nedd Port Talbot County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol</p> |
|--|--|--|--|