

**Leading for Better Outcomes
Community Impact Assessment
Countryside Estate Review**

Community Impact assessments (CIAs) should be used whenever there is a policy or service change. The template will enable staff to record how they have taken account of the following essential areas within proposals;

- Strategic Priorities
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Health inequalities
- Rural issues
- Climate change

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a legal requirement and must be applied in all that we do, and in particular whenever there are changes.

See guidance note and frequently asked questions for further information.

<p>Name of proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Estate Review
<p>State here which of the County Council priorities the proposal will deliver against:</p> <p>The Review will contribute to the County Council's vision to create a Connected Staffordshire where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy. It seeks to deliver against the three priority outcomes of enabling SCC residents to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth; 2. be healthier and more independent; 3. feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community. <p>The Review has also agreed the following set of core objectives which reflect the county council's desire to change how it works with and on behalf of Staffordshire's people, make a difference to their lives and ensures that the service runs well:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To maintain and improve the condition and usability of the country parks; 2. To reduce the cost of delivering the Service; 3. To involve communities in decisions and delivery of the country parks; 4. To improve customer satisfaction in Staffordshire County Council and to enhance its reputation.
<p>Review lead: (s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian Wykes: Commissioner for the Rural County • Emma Beaman: Countryside Manager
<p>Names of other officers involved:</p> <p>The Project Team is made up of a range of officers both from Rural County and</p>

from specialist support services. The core team includes the Rural Access Manager, two Head Rangers, the Countryside Works Unit Manager and the Environmental Advice Manager, and is supported by officers from Public Health, the Legal services Unit, HR, OD, Finance, Procurement, Community Consultation and Customer insight.

Date: 3 February 2017

Executive summary of the assessment

This Review has been driven by a strong desire to secure a more sustainable future for the countryside estate and also deliver better outcomes for people at a time when the Service is facing many challenges such as funding pressures and growing public demand and expectation.

Many other landowning bodies face similar challenges and the Review aims to capitalise on the growing interest for partnership working, pooling resources or developing innovative arrangements to deliver efficiencies and economies of scale.

The Review of 18 of the 21 individual sites began by an initial engagement exercise with critical stakeholders to refine a broad list of potential options for managing the Estate. Part of this initial engagement was also to gauge in-principle interest for partnership working in the future. In addition to this initial engagement process, a benchmarking exercise has also been undertaken with other local authorities undertaking similar reviews.

Further customer and stakeholder insight was still required to make sure that any future management arrangements will meet the needs and expectations of Staffordshire's residents and visitors. At their meeting on 21 October 2015 Cabinet agreed a 12 week consultation from 2 November 2015 on four potential options:

A: Maintain council ownership and seek opportunities to increase income from existing sites by working with volunteers, community, third sector and private parties.

B: Transfer management on a site-by-site basis to local community or voluntary sector groups such as parish councils.

C: Establish a partnership of landowners to manage all green spaces in a particular area.

D: Establish a not for profit trading company to run and develop parts of the estate.

A consultation plan was subsequently developed and agencies working with protected groups were asked to promote the consultation to secure an inclusive response and as part of delivering our Public Sector Equality Duty.

A summary analytical report of the consultation findings has been produced by the Insight, Planning and Performance Team and these findings will be reported to Cabinet for consideration in any final decisions.

In June 2016 Cabinet agreed the following;

- a. The proposals to redefine and reshape the management of the Countryside

Estate based on the outcome of the full public consultation exercise and full Community Impact Assessment.

- b. The broad proposals/principles around how the authority will write the specific business cases for each site.
- c. The final decision on each site is delegated to the Cabinet Member on a site-by-site basis without the need to go back to Cabinet each time. The only exception to this is Cannock Chase Country Park and Chasewater Country Park. It was agreed that any decisions relating to these two larger parks would require Cabinet approval.

The review will be a major undertaking and is likely to take some time to complete because of the number of sites involved and the need to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and local communities to achieve the best result for each individual site. A Community Impact Assessment will be completed for each individual site where significant changes to the management arrangements are proposed. This will ensure that any decisions made on the future management of sites are clearly informed and, where appropriate, action is taken to mitigate any negative impacts.

On December 2nd 2016 the EOI forms were put onto an online portal, enabling organisations to register an interest. The deadline for EOI submission is March 17th 2017.

Signature

Preparing the Executive Summary

1. Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcomes.

1.1 The countryside estate is a popular and well-used resource. However, on some sites increasing visitor numbers, growing public expectation and the demand for a wider range of recreational opportunities is putting pressure on the sites and the Service managing them. While this rising demand is positive, it leads to increasing costs to maintain the estate, which is unsustainable in the future. Without a sustainable funding model, there is a danger that the sites, and their use, could deteriorate, thereby impacting on the health, social and economic outcomes that they contribute to.

1.2 Many other landowning bodies face similar challenges and there is a growing interest in the potential for partnership working, pooling resources or developing innovative arrangements to deliver efficiencies and economies of scale. Local communities and volunteers have always been closely involved with the management of the Estate and this local interest is increasing with 'Friends of' Groups developing and some parish councils taking an increasing role in managing their local sites. There has also been some interest from the private sector; for example the maintenance of the countryside estate was included in scope for Infrastructure +.

1.3 Given the growing appetite among partners and communities to be more engaged, the main aim of the Review is to find the most sustainable way to manage the countryside estate and maximise its contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of Staffordshire’s residents and beyond.

1.4 The Review’s core objectives are to

- Maintain and improve the condition and usability of the country parks;
- Reduce the cost of delivering the Service;
- Involve communities in decisions and delivery of the country parks;
- Improve customer satisfaction in Staffordshire County Council and enhance its reputation.

1.5 A set of **Critical Success Factors (CSFs)** have been developed which outline the key things the Review must deliver. These CSFs have formed the basis for evaluating the potential Strategic Options for the future management of the Estate to date and will continue to form the basis for evaluating any future arrangements going forward.

1.6 The CSFs and their sub-factors are:

Increased value and prosperity for Staffordshire through a positive impact on local communities and wildlife	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to people’s quality of life by realising the health, social and economic benefits associated with the countryside estate. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the biodiversity, heritage and landscape value of the countryside estate. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to maintain and develop the range of volunteering opportunities and number of volunteers. 	
A customer focussed service which enhances customer satisfaction and people’s experience of the countryside	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an appropriate level of quality as defined by customers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service accessible to all. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of communication and engagement with customers. 	
Financially sustainable and resilient services	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable to implement and run 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable and efficient going forward, able to attract investment and demonstrate value for money 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to manage future financial pressures 	
The flexibility to meet changing future demands through innovation and development	10%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide flexibility to meet changes in visitor demand and environmental pressures. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment of appropriately skilled people for management and development of sites. 	

1.5 The Review began with a broad list of potential options for managing the estate being developed by the Project Team for initial engagement with a range of critical stakeholders. These stakeholders included landowning organisations (e.g. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, National Trust, etc.), parish councils with a site in their area, tenants, user groups, bodies with a key interest (Joint Local Access Forum, AONB Partnership), staff involved in managing the estate and Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee Members. The purpose of this engagement was to gain initial views on the ten options, to test their viability and consider how they might apply to the sites. The opportunity was also taken to gauge in-principle interest for partnership working in the future.

1.6 In addition to this initial engagement process, a benchmarking exercise was also undertaken with other local authorities undertaking similar reviews. The purpose was to identify any lessons learned and to look for examples of successful models that are working elsewhere.

1.7 Following feedback and analysis from the early engagement exercise, a number of options were discounted. At their meeting on 21 October 2015 Cabinet agreed a 12 week full consultation from 2 November 2015 until 24 January 2016 on four potential options:

A: Maintain council ownership and seek opportunities to increase income from existing sites by working with volunteers, community, third sector and private parties.

B: Transfer management on a site-by-site basis to local community or voluntary sector groups such as parish councils.

C: Establish a partnership of landowners to manage all green spaces in a particular area.

D: Establish a not for profit trading company to run and develop parts of the estate.

1.8 Following Cabinet's decision a consultation plan was developed and implemented which included online and paper surveys, emails to existing community groups and stakeholders, drop in sessions, establishment of a dedicated Inbox for emails etc. face to face briefings, social media and a dedicated website. Specific people or organisations working with protected groups were asked to promote the consultation amongst their networks to ensure inclusivity of response. These organisations included Staffordshire Buddies, VAST, Outdoor Education Centre Managers and groups representing young people.

1.9 A summary analytical report of the consultation findings has been produced by the Insight, Planning and Performance Team. The conclusions from these findings have been incorporated into the tables below.

1.10 In June 2016 Cabinet agreed the following:

- d. The proposals to redefine and reshape the management of the Countryside Estate based on the outcome of the full public consultation exercise and full Community Impact Assessment.
- e. The broad proposals/principles around how the authority will write the specific business cases for each site.

The final decision on each site is delegated to the Cabinet Member on a site-by-site basis without the need to go back to Cabinet each time. The only exception to this is Cannock Chase Country Park and Chasewater Country Park. It was agreed that any decisions relating to these two larger parks would require Cabinet approval.

This will be a major undertaking and is likely to take some time to complete because of the number of sites involved and the need to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and local communities to achieve the best result for each individual site. A Community Impact Assessment will be completed for each individual site where significant changes to the management arrangements are proposed. This will ensure that any decisions made on the future management of sites are clearly informed and, where appropriate, action is taken to mitigate any negative impacts.

2. Who are the main people that will be affected?

The main groups of people that could be affected include:

1. Existing and future visitors
2. Tenants, leaseholders and licensees
3. Staff directly involved with the management of the Estate
4. Volunteers and local Friends of groups
5. Sporting clubs and user organisations
6. Special interest groups
7. District Councils and other landowners
8. Entrust/ Chartwells

3. Who is currently using the service?

The table below shows the different groups likely to be affected by changes in the management arrangements of sites and explains why. The Service area does not capture data about service users against the protected characteristics.

Those Affected	Why?
Existing and future Visitors	<p>The Review aims to secure a sustainable future for the countryside estate which delivers better outcomes, customer satisfaction and more public involvement in the management of the estate. Although, it is likely that the management of some sites could transfer to new providers or involve new ways of working or delivering on site services the intention is to have a positive impact on the visitor experience.</p> <p>Nevertheless the detailed proposals for each site will be subject to further engagement and consultation as appropriate as they are developed before any final decisions are made. This will give visitors an opportunity to have a say in the proposals. Also, final proposals for each site will be designed to ensure that it continues to be inclusive with equality of access being maintained for all groups and with no one protected</p>

	<p>characteristic being penalised.</p>
Staff	<p>All staff involved, directly or indirectly, with the management of the countryside estate will be affected to some degree as a result of this Review.</p> <p>Some of the options mean that the management of some sites could transfer to new providers which would have an impact on staffing levels or job roles. It is still premature at this stage to predict the extent of the impact because the management arrangements for particular sites have not been established but it is recognised that such ambiguity will affect staff.</p> <p>We will continue to brief, engage and consult staff and Trade Union Representatives as the detailed proposals for each site are developed. This will give staff an opportunity to shape the future management of the sites. Also a selection and evaluation process has been drawn up for approval by Cabinet to identify the best fit organisation for the site.</p>
Volunteers	<p>Some of the proposals under consideration could mean that the management of some sites could transfer to new providers which could have an impact on individuals or groups who volunteer on those sites. It is still premature at this stage to predict the extent of the impact because the management arrangements for particular sites have not been identified but it is recognised that such ambiguity will affect volunteers.</p> <p>We will continue to brief, engage and consult with volunteers as the proposals for the management of each site are developed so that action can be taken, where appropriate to mitigate any negative impact should it arise. This will also give volunteers an opportunity to shape the future management of the sites. Also a selection and evaluation process has been drawn up for approval by Cabinet to identify the best fit organisation for the site.</p> <p>Also, one of the desired outcomes of the Review is that more people will have an opportunity to play a key role in shaping and managing countryside sites.</p>
Tenants, leaseholders and licensees	<p>Most of the main country parks support a network of businesses or concessions under licensing or leased arrangements which may be affected in the longer term by transferring sites to new providers. At this stage no new</p>

	<p>providers and the future management arrangements for particular sites have not been formalised. However, it is recognised that such ambiguity could affect these tenants and business interests.</p> <p>We recognise that this group could play a key role in the future management of some sites. We will continue to involve and consult with these stakeholders as the detailed proposals for each site are developed. Action will also be taken, where appropriate to mitigate any negative impact on existing businesses and tenants and to ensure the continuity of their tenancies and business interests.</p>
<p>External Stakeholders including Sporting Clubs, User Organisations and Special Interest Groups eg wildlife groups.</p>	<p>External stakeholders who use the countryside sites to hold events etc. and to pursue their interests could be affected to some degree by changes in the management of sites.</p> <p>A database of all these stakeholders has been developed and categorized according to the level of impact the proposals may have on them.</p> <p>These stakeholders have been involved in the Review to date and will continue to be involved as the detailed proposals are developed.</p>
<p>District Councils and other landowning bodies e.g. RSPB and Wildlife Trust</p>	<p>Many District Councils and organisations own green space sites and are interested in partnership working, pooling resources or developing arrangements to deliver efficiencies and economies of scale.</p> <p>These stakeholders have been involved in the Review to date and will continue to be involved as the detailed proposals are developed.</p>
<p>Entrust</p>	<p>Entrust is responsible for the maintenance of all the buildings on the Estate such as Visitor Centres, toilet blocks and staff accommodation. Some of the proposals under consideration could mean that the management of some sites could transfer to new providers.</p> <p>Entrust will continue to be involved in any discussions about the future of sites where they have an interest.</p>
<p>Chartwells</p>	<p>Chartwells is responsible for operating the cafes at Cannock Chase and Chasewater Country Parks and for cleaning all the</p>

	<p>buildings on the Estate such as Visitor Centres, toilet blocks and staff accommodation. Some of the proposals under consideration could mean that the management of some sites could transfer to new providers.</p> <p>Chartwells will continue to be involved in any discussions about the future of sites where they have an interest.</p>
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4. Will the proposal have an impact on staff and what does this mean for the workforce?

The countryside estate is managed by staff within The Countryside Team supported by members of the Environmental Advice team and the Rural Access Team. The management of the countryside estate is closely co-ordinated with the management of the public rights of way network. The table below shows the staff directly and indirectly involved.

Staff directly affected by Review of Existing Arrangements	
Head Rangers	2 fte
Rangers	12.2 ftes
Works Unit Manager	1fte
Estate Workers	16 ftes
Biodiversity Officers	1.6 ftes
Chasewater Development Officer	1fte
Country Park Warden	1fte
Information Assistants	2.6 ftes
Staff indirectly affected by Review of Existing Arrangements	
Environmental Advice Team	5.65 ftes
Rights of Way Team	5 ftes

Any changes to the existing management arrangements could have a potential impact on these staff. However, it is too premature at this stage to predict the extent of the impact on staffing levels or on job roles but we will continue to engage and consult with them as the detailed proposals are developed.

5. Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), requires authorities to pay “due regard” to, eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations between people.

5.1 Potential Impact on Protected Characteristics

The Service area has attempted to ensure by working with other organisations that countryside sites are inclusive but does not capture data on the protected characteristics. It has been working with organisations including Staffordshire Buddies, VAST and BME groups.

The table below shows impact on protected groups:

Protected groups/characteristics	Is there any potential for positive or negative impact	Could the proposal create better opportunities or minimise disadvantage?	Please detail what measures or changes will be put in place to mitigate adverse implications
Race	Yes	While it is not possible to analyse visits to the Estate by minority ethnic groups, anecdotal evidence shows that visits are increasing. The consultation responses yielded insufficient data for analysis. In the longer term many of the barriers to access by this group could be reduced by joint working with other organisations.	More stakeholder engagement with organisations representing this group will be carried out as the detailed proposals for each site are developed.
Disability	Yes	The number of people with a disability who responded to the consultation was significantly lower than the number of people in Staffordshire as a whole. In the longer term, many of the opportunities and facilities enjoyed by this group could be enhanced by joint working with other organisations.	Accessibility to trails etc. was a common theme amongst the consultation responses. More stakeholder engagement with organisations representing this group will be carried out as the detailed proposals for each site are developed, to understand their needs and improve accessibility for people with disabilities wherever possible.
Age	Yes	The responses to the consultation were representative of 25-44 year olds and over-representative of 45-74 year olds. However, it was under representative of the youngest and oldest age groups. In the longer term, many of the opportunities and facilities enjoyed by these groups could be enhanced by joint	Accessibility and poor public transport links were common themes amongst the consultation responses. More stakeholder engagement with organisations representing these under-represented groups will be carried out as the detailed proposals for each site are developed, to

		working with other organisations.	understand their needs and encourage greater use.
Gender	No.	The consultation responses were representative of the Staffordshire population by gender. Changes to the management of sites are unlikely to have any specific impact on any of these protected characteristics. However, a full Community Impact Assessment will be completed following full public consultation.	A Community Impact Assessment will need to be completed for each site as the detailed proposals are developed.
Religion/belief			
Gender reassignment			
Sexual orientation			
Pregnancy/maternity			
Impact on staff	Yes	The proposal could result in protecting employment or in opening additional opportunities for staff depending on the future management arrangements.	Ongoing engagement and consultation with staff will continue as the detailed proposals for each site are developed.

6. Are there any gaps in your evidence or conclusions that makes it difficult for you to quantify potential adverse impact?

In some cases the response numbers for some respondent types to the consultation was relatively low and also, may not be representative of the wider population they seek to represent.

7. If so, please explain how you will explore the proposal in greater depth

More stakeholder engagement with organisations representing the protected groups will be carried out as the detailed proposals for each site are developed to create better opportunities and mitigate any potential adverse impacts. Also a Community Impact Assessment will be completed for each individual site where significant changes to the management arrangements are proposed.

8. Please provide details of all consultation undertaken specific to the proposal you are making, either prior to the CIA or as part of it and the results of this.

A full public consultation exercise ran for 12 weeks from 2 November 2015 to 24 January 2016. A report on the results from the consultation has been produced by the Insight, Planning and Performance Team. The results from the consultation have been incorporated into the tables above.

9. Consultation with customers & stakeholders

There has been a range of engagement and consultation with customers and a wide range of stakeholders and potential partners throughout the Review which is referred to elsewhere in this Community Impact Assessment.

This engagement and consultation will continue as the detailed proposals for sites are developed.

9. Consultation with staff

We will continue to brief, engage and consult staff and volunteers as the detailed proposals for each site are developed. This will give staff an opportunity to shape the future management of the sites. Also a selection and evaluation process has been drawn up for approval by Cabinet to identify the best fit organisation for the site.

The Trade Union Consultative Forum has been briefed on the County Council's proposals on several occasions. We will continue to consult the Forum on an on-going basis as the detailed proposals develop.

11. Making a decision

After 17 March, a panel will assess EOIs, conduct detailed dialogue with interested organisations (if needed), carry out due diligence on the organisations and finally put together a business case for each site. This will then lead to a process of informing councillors during May / June 2017.

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee to be provided with the opportunity to advise on the business case supporting significant change to the six large country parks prior to consideration by Cabinet or delegated decision

A business case will be produced for each of the six larger sites and presented to Cabinet in August 2017 for a decision. Further decisions on individual sites will be required once the detailed proposals have been formulated.

12. Monitoring and review

Until such time as the detailed proposals for sites have been formulated, it is not possible to fully quantify potential adverse impacts. A Community Impact Assessment will be completed for each individual site where significant changes to the management arrangements are proposed. This will ensure that any decisions made on the future management of sites are clearly informed and, where appropriate, action is taken to mitigate any negative impacts. Where appropriate, the Assessment will contain arrangements for monitoring and reviewing any proposed changes including an Actions Log.

13. Rural Considerations

The smaller countryside sites are important local recreational resources and some local communities play a key role in their management. Any reshaping of the management arrangements will build on, and not impair, any of these existing relationships and arrangements.

The views of these local communities have been sought and taken into account as part of the public consultation exercise.

14. Health Considerations

The role that the natural environment and also volunteering play in supporting people's health and well-being is understood. The main aim of the Review is to develop new ways of managing the Estate to secure its future and deliver better health and social outcomes.

15. Climate Change Considerations

There are no climate change implications.

