

Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	7 th February 2023
Report Subject	Wepre Park Management Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer for Planning, Environment and Economy
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wepre Park is one of Flintshire's finest parks and contains some of the most beautiful, culturally rich park land in the region, important to thousands of visitors each year. This management plan sets the strategic direction and associated action plan for the next 5 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members endorse the new 5 year management plan for Wepre Park.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WEPRE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN
1.01	The purpose of this Management Plan is to present a management framework and associated actions for the successful collaborative management and development of Wepre Park.
1.02	This revised Management Plan for Wepre Park supersedes the 2016-21 plan and sets the strategic direction for the park in line with current policy and legislation. The new format places the site information and annual maintenance work programmes into appendices.

1.02	The work at Wepre Park is supported by and contributes to a number of National and local plans, policies and strategies which highlight the importance of green space, green infrastructure and recreational areas and seek to both protect and enhance them.
1.03	<p>Community Involvement</p> <p>The Friends of Wepre Park are an active community group who have been in existence for approx. 10 years. The group are keen to take an active interest in many aspects of the parks management and development. From practical tasks around the park to fundraising the group are a valuable resource</p>
1.04	The site currently provides community groups and individuals an opportunity for volunteering. This is an invaluable resource and has a significant contribution to the sites management and maintenance. Currently contributing to an additional c.240 days per year, equating to £12,000 of benefit
1.05	<p>Consultation</p> <p>Over the summer of 2021 a public consultation was undertaken to inform the development of the Wepre Park management plan. It showed the importance of the park to local people with over 85% of those responding living within a 5 mile radius. It also clearly demonstrated the contribution the park makes to the health and well-being of the local community through regular outdoor activity with over 50% of people using the park at least once a week.</p> <p>The survey found that a high proportion of people ranked the current management of the Park as a multifunctional facility which is safe, clean and able to be enjoyed by everyone, with the special wildlife qualities protected, enhanced and maintained and its heritage is protected, conserved and celebrated as excellent or good</p>
1.06	<p>Vision for the management plan</p> <p>The Wepre Park management plan will present a park that is welcoming, valued and enjoyed whilst protecting its heritage and allowing the wildlife of the site to flourish, whilst contributing towards the county's climate change strategy.</p> <p>The plan will promote activity which enhances peoples understanding of Wepre Park and create a resource which is valued by the local community and attracts people from the communities living and working around the park making a positive contribution to their physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as attracting visitors from across the region</p>
1.07	<p>Strategic Aims and Objectives</p> <p>Protect our natural environment</p> <p>We aim to ensure the special wildlife qualities are protected, enhanced and maintained and that we balance the needs of the environment with that of the public</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards SAC/SSSI favourable status through the Sect.16 Management agreement and deliver woodland management plan in partnership with Natural Resources Wales. • Support Flintshire's Climate change and carbon reduction strategy by becoming net carbon zero by 2030 • Contribute to Flintshire's target to achieve biodiversity net gain. 			
1.08	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Protect our Natural Environment	Phase 2 extension tree planting	TL	Mar 2024
		Renew the Management Agreement with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to deliver positive improvements to the Special Site of Scientific Interest.	ANEM	April 2023
		Develop and agree new woodland plan with NRW whilst tackling ash dieback	WO	June 2023
		Complete pilot Hydro-Electric project at the dam, test and evaluate	Energy Team	Feb 2023
		Establish maintenance regime for phase 1 extension area and old golf course	CR	June 2023
		Wepre Brook bank stabilisation	CR	Sept 2023
1.09	<p>Value our heritage We aim to protect, conserve and celebrate the rich heritage of Wepre Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with Cadw to safeguard Ewloe Castle • Maintain Old Hall Garden improvements • Raise awareness of the unique historic features of the site 			
1.10	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Value our heritage	Work in partnership with Cadw to maintain and protect Ewloe Castle	TL	Ongoing
		Repair Old Hall Garden wall and path repairs	CR	June 2025

		Re-instate the grills for the arches	CR	July 2023
		Establish a working fountain.	CR	2023
		Work with the Friends of Wepre Park to establish a Garden Maintenance Fund.	TL/CR	2024
1.11	<p>Supporting recreation and access We aim to be a multifunctional facility which is safe, clean and able to be enjoyed by everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Green Flag status • Ensure access is free from obstructions and work towards improving standards across the site • Supporting access for all 			
1.12	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Supporting recreation and access	Secure Greenflag award	CR	Annual
		Path improvement project/main trail and new golf course path	CR	2026
		Step replacement project – waterfall and castle steps	CR	2024
		parkrun waymarking	SL	2023
		Modernise the orienteering course and maps	CR	2024
		Review the provision of benches in the park to identify gaps.	CR	2025
1.13	<p>Benefit for people Using Wepre Park’s natural assets we aim to provide quality leisure, health and well-being and educational experiences for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise public awareness of the important natural and cultural heritage of the site through a rich variety of events, education, and interpretation • Maximise community involvement through working with the Friends and other volunteers and community groups • Contribute to the green health initiative by providing a facility of choice for people to use to improve their mental and physical health and wellbeing 			

1.14	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Benefit for people	Agree fishing lease	V&E/CQ Anglers	Mar 2023
		Volunteer development project	TL	Sept 2023
		Develop a programme of large events through external providers	CAO	Jul 2023
		Changing Places toilet facilities	TL	Mar 2023
		Signage review and consolidation	CAO	Apr 2023
		Establish a formal waymarked trail network and tree booklet	CR/Tree Team	Mar 2023
		Investigate resources for park app development, to incorporate route maps of varying difficulties.	CAO	2023
		Install visitor counter across the park	TL	Apr 2024
		Review education provision in light of the new curriculum	CAO	Sept 2023
		Explore a programme of Nordic walking with Aura	TL	2025
		Stakeholder terms of reference	TL	Apr 2023
		Liaise with the Police, CCTV and other partners to manage anti-social behaviour in the Park	CR	Dec 2023
1.15	<p>Resource confidence</p> <p>We aim to provide a stable financial footing to achieve the vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise income over and above Flintshire core budget • Maintain appropriate staffing level to deliver the plan 			

1.16	Aim	Action	Lead	Target completion
	Resource confidence	Explore street food vendors	CAO	Mar 2023
		Pilot motorhomes overnight	TL	Mar 2023
		Explore the potential for the introduction of car parking charges	ANEM/SS&T	June 2023
		Finalise Café lease	CAO	Dec 2022
		Define additional hire and fee opportunities eg education area and firewood	CAO	Sept 2023
		Explore and implement QR code donation opportunities throughout the park	TL	June 2023
		Run a charitable fun run to support the plan actions	CR	2024
		Investigate the potential of memorial donations to fund park infrastructure / management	ANEM	2024

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The ongoing core funded FCC staff and revenue resource to deliver the plan is detailed in Appendix 2, and is expected to remain constant over the term of the plan.</p> <p>Additional funding to progress development projects will be sourced externally.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Over the summer of 2021 a public consultation was undertaken to inform the development of the Wepre Park management plan. The full responses are detailed in Appendix 3</p>

3.02	A number of workshop style sessions have been held with Local Members, The Friends of Wepre Park and other park stakeholders to inform and shape the plan.
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	There is a low risk that the usage of the park increases to such a degree that the current resource levels are inadequate to deliver the vision. The Access & Natural Environment Service does monitor visitor impact on the site and can respond accordingly around re-prioritisation of wider Service actions.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	Appendix 1 – Wepre Park Site Information Appendix 2 – Wepre Park Maintenance programme and resources Appendix 3 – Wepre Park Public consultation survey response.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager Telephone: 01352 703902 E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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