

REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	01 FEBRUARY 2024	CATEGORY:
		RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	SEAN MCBURNEY – HEAD OF CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES	DOC:
SUBJECT:	REVITALISING ROSLISTON FORESTRY CENTRE	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 That members approve the current operating model for Rosliston Forestry Centre.
- 1.2 That members approve the Revitalising Rosliston project plan as outlined within this report.

2.0 Purpose of the report

- 2.1 To inform members of the Revitalising Rosliston Project and proposed operating model.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 This report highlights the progression of the Revitalising Rosliston Project and seeks members approval for the project plan and operating model.

4.0 Public Consultation

- 4.1 On the 19th of August 2021 Committee agreed to the principle of the Council entering into a 30-year lease for land at Rosliston Forestry Centre owned by Forestry England. These negotiations concluded and a new 30 year lease for Forestry England land around Rosliston Forestry Centre commenced on 1st April 2023.

- 4.2 Members also supported the principle of the revitalising project and a public consultation exercise which was undertaken between June 12th – July 21st.

The main conclusions of the consultation are as follows;

There were 564 completed forms.

The 4 main reasons for visiting Rosliston were:

Going for a walk

To be outside

Explore Nature

Meeting friends and family

The main thing people liked:

Nature

The trees

Being quiet

Space to relax

Space to exercise

The main areas suggested for improvements were;

Footpaths / access

Signage

Refurbished Visitor centre facilities

Play area

More events

The average time spent on site is between 1-4hrs

72% of respondents were female

15% classed themselves as disabled

Other general comments included:

Leave space for wildlife

Better DDA access to the visitor centre

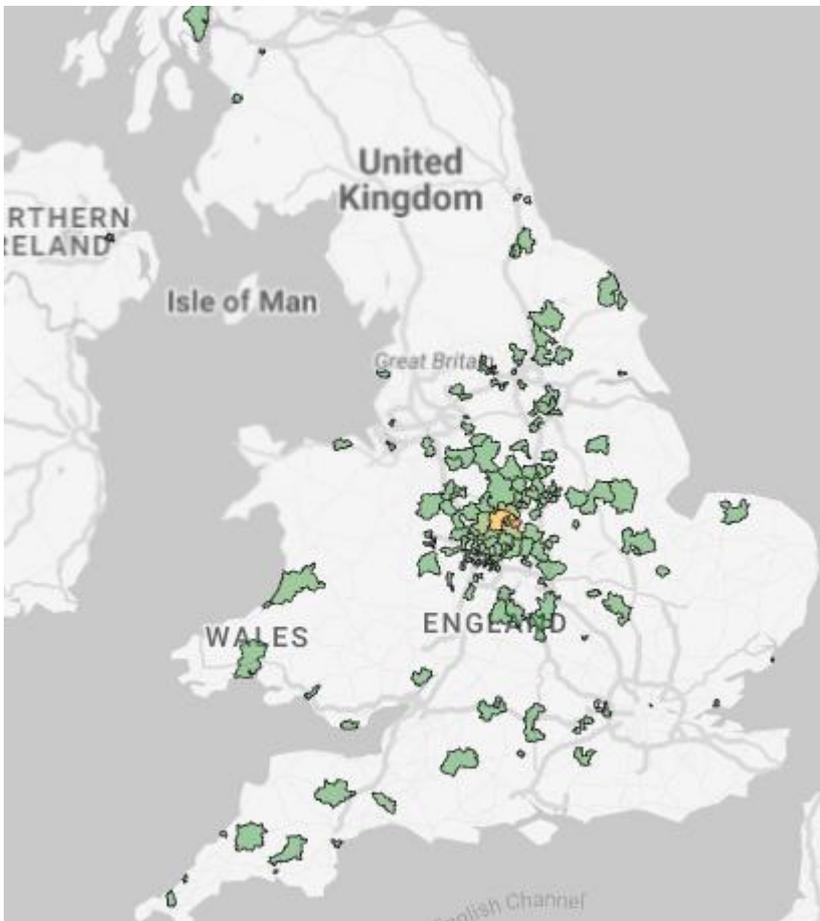
Better cycle tracks / paths to the Forestry centre

Increased shop offer

Provide more information on events and activities

4.3. In addition to the public consultation, we are also capturing user information by mobile phone data. This data gives a daily average over the last 12 months of 468 visitors a day and an annual visitor total of 170,911. This does not include those without a mobile phone, or children attending environmental education events, so the actual number is likely to be closer to 200,000.

The data also shows that whilst the highest numbers of visitors come from postcode DE11, DE12, DE13, DE14, DE15 the site also attracts visitors from across the Midlands and beyond.



Starting and finishing post codes for journeys to Rosliston Forestry Centre

5.0 Revitalising Rosliston Forestry Centre, vision and project Plan

5.1 With all the information received via the public consultation, along with information from condition surveys and partner organisations, a Revitalising Rosliston Forestry Centre, vision and project Plan has been produced. See appendix 1.

6.0 Operating Model

6.1 Since April 2018 the Council has successfully and sustainably managed the site directly and increased both visitor numbers and income for the site. In addition the Council has committed £832K of capital investment to make the site more attractive to visitors. At the September 2022 members also agreed for the Manager and Assistant Manager roles to be made permanent positions.

6.2 The Covid pandemic demonstrated the importance of green spaces to our communities and fundamentally changed how people feel about access to nature. In addition, the declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency presents us with an opportunity to think differently on how the site could be used to support this.

6.3 Managing the site in-house enables us to be flexible in how the site is used and managed and has potential to significantly increase income to off set the management costs.

6.4 The Council has long considered Rosliston Forestry Centre as the “Jewel in its Crown” as a visitor attraction and environmental education exemplar and has a vision to see the site thrive and develop. The management of the site in-house helps to secure this vision for the future.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Following the Councils Capital Bidding round in October 2020 a bid for the investment to revitalise Rosliston Forestry Centre was approved. Currently £205,563k has been spent with a total of £863,484 funding remaining. (including S106)

7.2 The current approved management and maintenance net budget for 2023/24 is £310,653.

7.3 Budgets have been maintained at the same level as the previous years adjusted only for known changes, price increases and variations due to contractual conditions. With the capital investment it is anticipated that the maintenance costs will reduce. In addition, the site has potential to significantly increase income with targets being set to offset more operating costs. A business plan will be produced to explore the income opportunities further.

7.4 Below is the anticipated increased income from the centre.

	21/22*	22/23*	23/24**	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	29/30	
Car Parking	74,823	78,054.00	78,334.00	80,000	82,500	85,000	87,000	88,500	
Shop	7264	18,676	20,059	21,000	22,000	23,000	24,000	26,000	
Log cabins	104,162	124,601	120,000	128,000	130,000	132,000	135,000	137,500	
Other ***	62,250	80,770	78,657	83,000	86,000	89,000	93,000	97,000	
Totals	248,499	302,101.00	297,050.00	312,000	320,500	329,000	339,000	349,000	
* Actuals									
** Budget									
*** Soft play, room hire, weddings and activities									
Note 21/22 figures affected by covid restrictions									

8.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

8.1 None directly stemming from this report.

Legal Implications

8.2 The new 30 year lease came into effect on 1st April 2023 and expires on 31st March 2053. The new lease will be under a landlord / tenant agreement.

Corporate Plan Implications

8.3 Rosliston Forestry Centre continues to support delivery of the Corporate Plan. It helps in improving the environment of the District and enhancing the attractiveness of South Derbyshire and will play an important part in the reduction of the Council's carbon footprint. The site is also a vehicle for engaging with our communities and has a track record of delivering excellent services.

9.0 Community Impact

Consultations

9.1 A large public consultation with stakeholders and the public has been undertaken to seek their views on the vision for the site. The headlines are contained within this report. A further breakdown is contained in appendix 2

Equality and Diversity Impact

9.2 Green Spaces support community cohesion and the improvements at Rosliston Forestry Centre allows access for all members of our community. 15% of responses to the public consultation classed themselves as having a disability.

Social Value Impact

9.3 Green spaces are used by all members of our communities and are a key element of supporting healthy, sustainable and liveable communities.

Environmental Sustainability

9.4 Rosliston Forestry Centre is a key nature site within the district, hosts the Council's Environmental Education Project and will look to become an exemplar of environmental sustainability.

10.0 Conclusions

10.1 Rosliston Forestry Centre remains a key asset within South Derbyshire and with the approval of the Revitalising Rosliston Project it is hoped to further enhance the site supporting the environment, local economy and the national forest whilst also reducing costs.

11.0 Background Papers

Appendix 1 - Revitalising Rosliston Forestry Centre vision and project Plan 2023- 2028

Appendix 2 – Detailed community consultation response