

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Milton Country Park Advisory Group 9 October 2006  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director/Senior Ranger/Head of Community Services

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### WORK LINKS WITH COLLEGE OF WEST ANGLIA

#### Purpose

1. To bring Members up to date with talks held with staff from the College of West Anglia (COWA).

#### Background

2. As Members are aware, we are exploring the possibility of students from the COWA carrying out work at the park as part of their curriculum requirements. This stems from the interest shown by the college in managing the park as a whole in the future.
3. A first meeting was held between staff from COWA in August to open up lines of communication, and some brief notes of this meeting are attached as an **Appendix**. A second brief meeting took place on the 26 September between Peter Bone the senior countryside tutor and Malcolm Busby senior ranger to look at some work areas identified by COWA so far. The meeting followed a short introductory talk given to countryside students about the park and how it is managed.
4. At the recent Cabinet meeting it was also agreed that the park should work with the college for three months to see what links exist to both train students and carry out management of the park.

#### Considerations

5. Since the meeting in August relevant COWA staff have been identifying curriculum requirements that may be achieved through use of the park instead of more distant sites as has happened in previous years. There are nineteen students on the countryside course who could work in the park. It is important to realise that practical work sessions are only scheduled to take place on Tuesday mornings, which constrains what is possible.
6. A number of curriculum areas where the park could be used for specific tasks have been identified so far, as follows:  
  
Ditch clearance,  
Tree planting,  
Hedge laying,  
Cross cutting felled trees as part of training for basic chainsaw certification.
7. Other opportunities may exist that are yet to be identified; in addition there may be interest from other college tutors who are so far unaware of the opportunities that may be available at the park.
8. The most important task now is to work out which of the curriculum areas can be accommodated at the park and to then fix dates for when they can take place. It is anticipated that dates could start from late October (unless an earlier start can be

arranged). There are two or three other work related areas that need to be resolved before work can be finalised; these are insurance, risk assessments and provision of tools.

9. It has been recommended that the members of staff in both organisations who deal with insurance should communicate to identify the anticipated risks and existing insurance cover. The college have risk assessments for work tasks which they will modify as required, in addition they will be getting any students who work at the park involved in writing their own where possible. On the subject of tools, the park does not usually possess enough hand tools to equip a group of workers this large. It is therefore anticipated that both the college and the park will supply tools.

### Implications

10. Financial	None in the short term; longer term effects to be assessed and reported to cabinet.
Legal	None
Staffing	None at this stage.
Risk Management	Risk assessments will be undertaken to manage any risks to the public, students or staff
Equal Opportunities	None

### Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

11. Affordable Homes	None
Customer Service	None
Northstowe and other growth areas	None
Quality, Accessible Services	The work is aimed to maintain the quality of the park's service
Village Life	None
Sustainability	None
Partnership	Developing this proposal will enhance partnership working at the park and forge stronger links with COWA

### Conclusions/Summary

12. Talks between staff at the COWA and park staff are progressing well, a number of areas where work that is of value to both sides has been identified. There are a small number of work related areas such as insurance that need to be resolved before work can commence in earnest. When work on site commences we can begin to assess the contribution that working with COWA students could offer to future management of the park.

### Recommendations

13. Members are asked to:
- (a) note the progress in this area as described in the contents of the report, and
  - (b) Members views are sought on the arrangement so far and how it should develop.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

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