



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

8 October 2024

Declaration of John Shennan Field as a Local Nature Reserve

Report by:

Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

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Purpose

To help meet the objectives and targets set in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan and the Green Infrastructure Plan, it is intended to make a Local Nature Reserve declaration for John Shennan Field.

This report invites Chelmsford City Council to declare John Shennan Field a Local Nature Reserve [LNR] and register the LNR with Natural England.

Options

1. Declare John Shennan Field a Local Nature Reserve and register the LNR with Natural England on the national register of LNR's.
2. Not make such a declaration.

Preferred Option and Reasons

The preferred option is to make the declaration and complete the registration process in pursuit of the City Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan and the Green Infrastructure Plan adopted as part of the Local Plan. This also accords with the Our Chelmsford Our Plan priority to implement measures to protect and expand natural green spaces, improve habitat value and increase biodiversity.

Recommendations

That Cabinet support the declaration of John Shennan Field as a Local Nature Reserve and request that this site is listed on the Natural England register of Local Nature Reserves.

1. Background

- 1.1 In accordance with the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan and the Policy for Creating and Managing Species-Rich Grassland, the City Council has prepared and made an application to Natural England to make an LNR declaration for John Shennan Field.
- 1.2 John Shennan Field has been managed and maintained in accordance with an appropriate management plan since 2016 and this plan was approved and validated by Natural England in May 2024 to support this declaration. Appendix 1 shows the defined area for the proposed LNR outlined in red.
- 1.3 The site is 6.5 hectares in area and consists of a patchwork of habitats falling into 2 broad categories; woodland/scrubland habitat and species rich grassland [part fenced off to protect the habitat for ground nesting birds]. Access is available from Gloucester Avenue and Princes Road with hard surfaced access and car parking located near the Gloucester Road entrance. A network of regular mown walkways and informal recreation areas are also provided.
- 1.4 In accordance with the Natural England's validation process, a public consultation was arranged from the 8 July 2024 to the 26 July 2024. The consultation was published using informational signage within JSF at all pedestrian entrances and on the City Council's 'Love Your Chelmsford' website.
- 1.5 In addition, all City Council Councillors, interested bodies such as Essex Wildlife Trust & Essex Bird Watching Association, the adjacent allotment site association and parks volunteers who participated in past volunteering activities, were contacted and consulted.
- 1.6 The reasons for the designation were set out and explained, inviting the public, park visitors and local residents to make their comments via a designated email address.

- 1.7 A total of 27 responses were received and all were all positive and supportive of the proposed LNR designation.
- 1.8 On 22 May 2024, Natural England confirmed that it has been consulted on the City Council's proposal to declare John Shennan Field a nature reserve under the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). The requirements for consultation contained in Section 21(6) of that Act have therefore been met. Natural England's West Anglia Area Team have formally welcomed these proposals on behalf of Natural England. [see Appendix 2].
- 1.9 There are no additional financial implications to this declaration in that the current management and maintenance standards, processes and procedures are already adopted in preparation of the LNR declaration.
- 1.10 Subject to approval by Cabinet to make the proposed declaration, a Mayoral dedication ceremony will be arranged to publicly mark the new status for the area.

[List of appendices:](#)

Appendix 1 – Map of defined area for the proposed John Shennan Field LNR shown outlined in red

Appendix 2 – Letter from Natural England dated 22nd May 2024 inviting the City Council to make a declaration of a Local Nature Reserve

[Corporate Implications:](#)

Legal/Constitutional:

As part of the City Council's Climate and Ecological Action Plan and the Green Infrastructure Plan, approval is sought to make a Local Nature Reserve Declaration for John Shennan Field. This decision falls to Cabinet to determine.

The Council's legal power to establish a nature reserve by way of a declaration is set out in the report. All other legal requirements relating to the making and publication of an LNR will be met should the declaration be approved.

Financial:

There are no additional financial implications to this declaration in that the current management and maintenance standards, processes and procedures are already adopted in preparation of the LNR declaration

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

The current management and maintenance arrangements and the declaration confirm the positive impact on the local environment and habitats and seek to enhance and preserve these for the future.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

Declaring John Shennan Field as a Local nature Reserve does not make a direct contribution to achieving a net zero carbon position for the Council's activities and operations, but the site will continue to provide a 'carbon sink' for the local area.

Personnel:

None

Risk Management:

None

Equality and Diversity:

None

Health and Safety:

None

Digital:

None

Other:

None

Consultees:

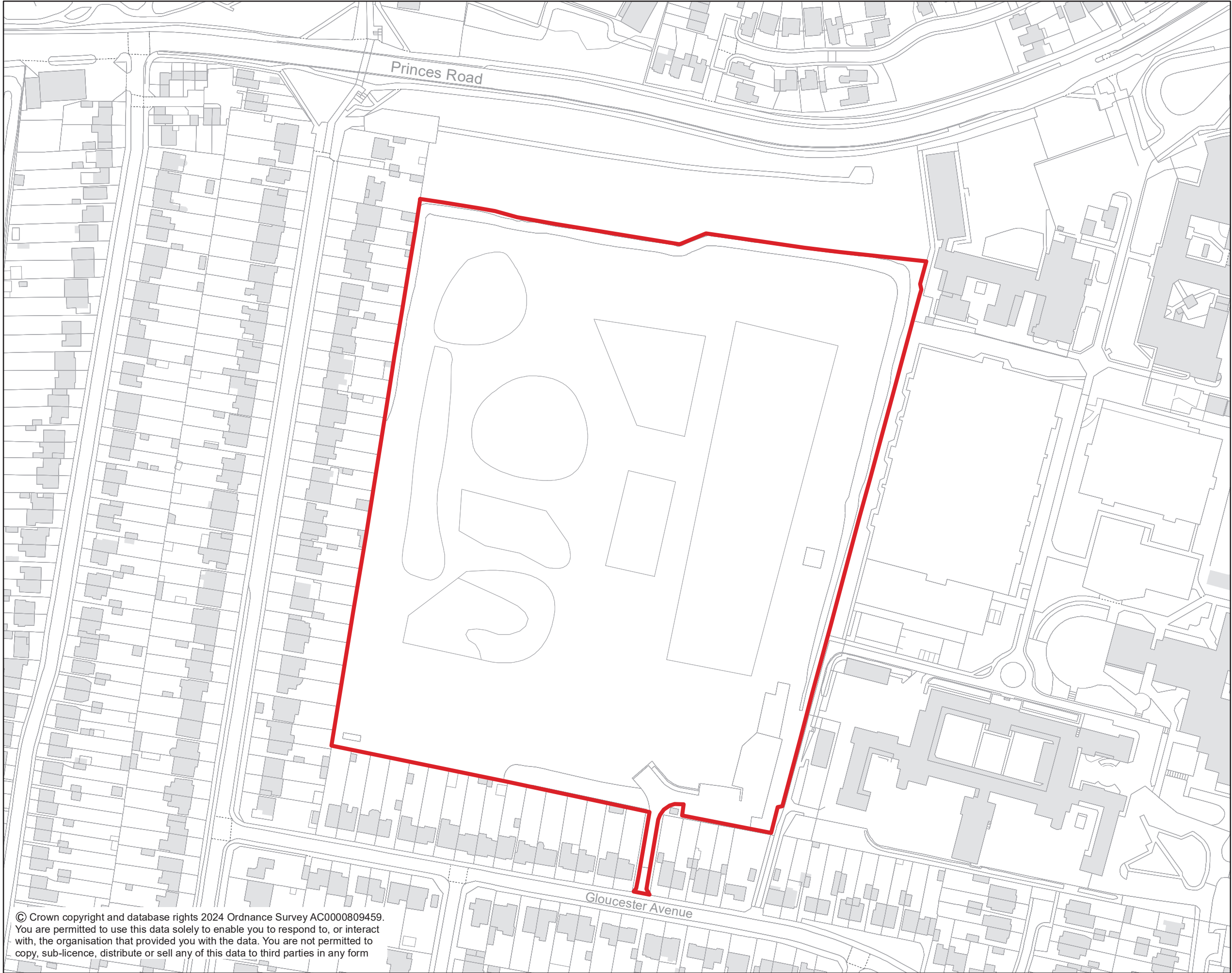
Natural England

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

The declaration of a Local Nature Reserve for John Shennan Field is included in the City Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan and the Green Infrastructure Plan adopted as part of the Local Plan. The declaration will also contribute to achieving the Our Chelmsford Our Plan priority to implement measures to protect and expand natural green spaces, improve habitat value and increase biodiversity.

John Shennan Field
Proposed Local
Nature Reserve

 Area of Draft Local
Nature Reserve



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Date: 22nd May 2024

Your ref: John Shennan Field LNR Designation



Lyn McLay Kidd
Senior Parks Officer
Parks and Green Spaces
Chelmsford City Council

West Anglia Area
Team
Eastbrook
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8DR
Tel:0300 060 3900

Dear Lyn,

PROPOSAL TO DECLARE JOHN SHENNAN FIELD AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

I am writing regarding the proposal to declare John Shennan Field a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended).

Natural England's purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings. John Shennan Field, managed according to the management plan is of value to both local wildlife and the local community. As such, Natural England is delighted to support the declaration of the site as a Local Nature Reserve. Protecting this site and its habitats will allow it to continue to be used and valued by local people for recreation and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Natural England confirms that it has been consulted on your proposal to declare John Shennan Field a nature reserve under the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). The requirements for consultation contained in Section 21(6) of that Act have therefore been met. As a member of the West Anglia Area Team, I would like to formally welcome these proposals on behalf of Natural England.

The next step is for Chelmsford City Council to make the necessary arrangements for the formal declaration of the reserve. This can be limited to the issuing of public notices or can be extended to include an event to celebrate the declaration.

Once the declaration is complete, we will need confirmation of the declaration date, and a copy of the declaration papers and a map showing the exact boundaries of the declared area. The site will also be promoted through Natural England's internet site finder.

If you are unsure about any part of the declaration process, please refer to the guidance booklet from our website (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31039?category=15005>) or contact me using the details below.

Yours sincerely

Phil Holton
Team Leader West Anglia Area Team (Essex)
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