

# **CHARNWOOD FOREST REGIONAL PARK STAKEHOLDER UPDATE July 2009**

## **Draft Vision Statement**

The Charnwood Forest Regional Park Draft Vision Statement was launched for consultation at the Future of Charnwood Forest Stakeholder Update meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008. It was also publicised via the County Council's Charnwood Forest and Have Your Say webpages, the County Council's intranet, North West Leicestershire District Council's website, the Leicestershire Villages website and a County Council press release.

The Draft Vision Statement was open for consultation from 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008 to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009. A total of 37 responses were received from the following organisations and members of the public :

British Geological Survey  
Country Land and Business Association  
East Midlands Geodiversity Partnership  
Forestry Commission  
FPCR for Wm Davis Ltd, Loughborough  
Friends of Charnwood Forest  
GVA Grimley for Jelson Ltd  
Lafarge Aggregates Ltd  
Leicestershire & Rutland WI  
Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust  
Leicestershire Industrial History Society  
Loughborough Naturalists' Club  
Loughborough Regeneration  
National Farmers' Union  
Natural England, East Midlands Region  
Ramblers' Association  
Shepshed Town Council  
Swithland Parish Meeting  
The Garendon Park and Countryside Protection Group  
The National Trust  
The Woodland Trust  
Woodhouse Parish Council

Twelve individual responses were received, representing the views of thirteen people in total, from residents of Quorn, Glenfield, Loughborough, Whitwick, Coalville, Stoney Stanton and British Columbia. Three individual responses were received from employees of Leicestershire County Council. Many responses raised similar issues which are discussed briefly below.

The Regional Park concept is a relatively new one and one that is not well defined. This has potential benefits in allowing individual Regional Parks to develop in ways appropriate to their own area. However, a Regional Park is not a protective landscape designation and built development is not necessarily incompatible with a Regional Park.

Many organisations have a remit to represent a single interest and their comments quite rightly reflect this. However, the role of the County Council and the rest of the Steering Group is to develop an holistic vision for the future of Charnwood Forest, which attempts to resolve the sometimes conflicting views of different interest groups.

In taking the Regional Park proposal forward one of the next steps will be to commission the preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan. This will deal with issues of governance and funding, as well as developing in more detail many of the areas set out in the Vision Statement. It is not the place of the Vision Statement to deal with how these issues are handled, but, where appropriate, comments made through this consultation will be taken forward to the Strategy stage.

The agreement of a boundary is fraught with difficulty. This is one of the reasons why the proposed boundary is referred to as a working boundary. This working boundary is landscape character based and it must be recognised that landscape character areas very often do not have clear cut boundaries but include areas of transition from one character to the next. It is proposed that the Regional Park should have a flexible or 'fuzzy' boundary in order to maximise funding opportunities and the range of projects which can come under its umbrella. This may need to differ slightly from the Charnwood Forest policy area boundary which will be defined in District Council Local Development Frameworks.

Detailed replies have been given to all responses received. Responses and replies have been sent to everyone who commented and to everyone on the Future of Charnwood Forest stakeholder database, and posted on the County Council's website.

## **Revised Vision Statement**

The consultation responses have been used to inform the preparation of a revised Vision Statement which will now need to be formally endorsed by Leicestershire County Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council prior to publication. Once the Revised Vision Statement is available it will also be sent to everyone who commented and to everyone on the Future of Charnwood Forest stakeholder database, and posted on the County Council's website.

## **Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust report**

The Trust has now published *Charnwood Forest : A Living Landscape – An integrated wildlife and geological conservation implementation plan* which reviews and builds on the 1975 report *Wildlife Conservation in Charnwood Forest*. Hard copies of the report are available from the Trust at a cost of £7.00, plus £1.00 p+p. Copies on CD are available free of charge. The Trust may be contacted at Brocks Hill Environment Centre, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, LE2 5JJ, tel 0116 272 0444 or via their website [www.lrwt.org.uk](http://www.lrwt.org.uk).

## **Next steps**

It is anticipated that a further stakeholder meeting will be arranged towards the end of 2009, once consultants for the Strategy have been appointed.