

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

24 MARCH 2021

OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Committee on progress towards the production of an Open Space Assessment and Strategy and to seek approval for consultation to be undertaken on a draft of the document.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Council's existing open space evidence base and strategy is being updated. Knight Kavanagh & Page ('KKP') have been appointed to undertake an assessment of the existing and future open space needs of communities and prepare an open space strategy. The Strategy will be used to set open space standards in new development, determine where Section 106 monies should be spent to improve existing facilities and inform the direction on the future provision of accessible, high quality, sustainable provision of open spaces in the District.
- 2.2 As part of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency, KKP have also investigated potential opportunities for reducing carbon and mitigating the impact of climate change in the District's Open Spaces.
- 2.3 At the time of writing officers are carrying out initial consultation with relevant ward Members and Parish Councils to 'sense check' the results of the draft assessment and proposed strategy. The assessment and strategy cover hundreds of locations in the District and this is intended to ensure that the document and its recommendations accurately reflect facts on the ground.

3.0 Open Space Assessment and Strategy

Assessment of Open Space Provision

- 3.1 The strategy is based on a comprehensive assessment of open space in the 14 larger settlements in the District. Open Spaces (over 0.1ha) in these settlements have been assigned one of the following typologies based on its primary function:

1. Parks and Gardens
2. Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace
3. Amenity Greenspace
4. Provision for Children and Young People
5. Allotments
6. Cemeteries / Churchyards

It should be noted that sports pitches are covered by a separate Playing Pitch Strategy, however a number of the open spaces within the assessment are multifunctional and will contain sports pitches along with other open space provision (e.g. Sconce & Devon Park) and this is acknowledged within the report.

3.2 The key stages of the methodology to assess existing open space in the District are:

- Auditing existing local provision;
- Assigning a quality and value score to each site based on a number of criteria;
- Identifying quality and value thresholds to determine whether sites are high or low quality with primary aim of identifying where investment and / or improvements are required.

3.3 In order to understand what future open space provision is required provision standards have been developed. These standards will be used to influence future investment in open space by the District/Town/Parish Council's and other landowners and through open space secured as part of new development. The provision standards are also used to understand the extent to which current provision adequately meets current need. Catchment mapping for each open space typology has also been developed to understand the spread of provision within and between settlements. It is intended that all open space information is captured spatially and kept up to date in order to monitor delivery of the Strategy.

Proposed Open Space Strategy

3.4 Using the results of the baseline study, a strategy for the assessment of future need has been developed.

Strategic Recommendations

3.5 The report makes a number of strategic recommendations on what the Council should be seeking to achieve in order to address the issues highlighted as well as the priorities for meeting demand from future growth.

- **Recommendation 1:** Sites helping or with the potential to help serve areas identified as having gaps in catchment mapping should be prioritised as opportunities for enhancement
- **Recommendation 2:** Ensure low quality/value sites helping to serve potential gaps in accessibility catchments are prioritised for enhancement
- **Recommendation 3:** Recognise low quality and value sites and how they may be able to meet other needs
- **Recommendation 4:** Keeping data, report and supporting evidence base up to date in order to reflect changes over time

Identifying Anticipated Deficiencies in Open Space Provision

3.6 The strategy identifies anticipated future deficiencies in open space provision at the District and Settlement level. There are a number of known and anticipated developments across the District which will impact on the provision of open space. This being either through some known losses of provision and/or creation of new open space. From this it is possible to identify where additional intervention beyond that which can be reasonably secured from new development may be needed. Or alternatively, where the loss of any further open space needs to be resisted due to there being an insufficient supply.

Climate Change

- 3.7 The report also highlights areas of the District vulnerable to climate change and the open spaces located in these areas in order to inform appropriate policy responses and actions for the future. It can be used as a starting point for new projects or innovative ideas to support this agenda.

4.0 Next Steps: Stakeholder and Public Consultation

- 4.1 Once the results of the initial 'sense check' consultation with local Councillors and Parish Council's has been completed a finalised Draft Open Space Assessment and Strategy will be produced for wider consultation with stakeholders and the public. It is proposed that the Council engage with stakeholders including Friends Groups, RSPB, Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission, Nottinghamshire County Council and the public. Given the pandemic it is proposed that the consultation is undertaken virtually.
- 4.2 Following this process a finalised document will be presented to the Economic Development Committee for adoption.

5.0 Equalities Implications

- 5.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) (which incorporates an Equalities Impact Assessment into the Plan Review) has been undertaken on the Amended Core Strategy including Spatial Policy 8 – Promoting and Protecting Leisure and Community Facilities which concluded that the protection, enhancement and provision of community and leisure facilities can help ensure that there is a supply of locally accessible provision available to all communities.

6.0 Financial Implications (FIN20-21/2318)

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of consulting on this Open Space Strategy draft document. However consideration will need to be given once the report is adopted to how the Council implements the Strategy's recommendations.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

- 7.1 The Community Plan Objective "*Continue to maintain the high standard of cleanliness and appearance of the local environment*" is supported by the production of the Open Space Strategy as this Strategy seeks to identify areas of open space with a need for enhancement. This, in turn, supports this Objective by potentially improving the appearance of the environment and managing green spaces within the public realm.
- 7.2 The Community Plan Objective "*Enhance and protect the District's natural environment*" is supported by the production of the Open Space Strategy by contributing to the Emergency Tree Plan for the UK by identifying some potential locations for tree planting. The Strategy also identifies sites in need of enhancements which would assist in the aim of maintaining sites with Green Flag status.

7.3 The Community Plan Objective *“Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents”* is supported by the production of the Open Space Strategy by providing more opportunities for inactive people to increase levels of physical activity and sport through additional provision.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- a) progress toward the development of an Open Space Strategy be noted; and
- b) consultation be undertaken on the Draft Open Space Assessment and Strategy as set out in Section 4 above.

Reason for Recommendations

To allow the Draft Open Space Assessment and Strategy be subject to consultation with stakeholders and the public.

Background Papers

None

For further information please contact Matthew Norton on Ext 5852 or Phil Hadfield on Ext 5568.

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