

Report To:	CABINET	Date:	20 SEPTEMBER 2021
Heading:	PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY UPDATES		
Portfolio Holder:	CLLR SAMANTHA DEAKIN - PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PARKS, TOWN CENTRES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES		
Ward/s:	ALL WARDS		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	YES		

Purpose of Report

To provide a summary of progress on the action plan of the Public Open Space Strategy 2016 – 2026 and to provide a revised action plan.

To update on the timeframe for the Playing Pitch Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

- Cabinet to note progress on the delivery of the Public Open Space Strategy action plan from 2016 onwards.
- Cabinet to note the programme for the Playing Pitch Strategy
- Council to approve the mid-point review and update of the Public Open Space Strategy action plan.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Public Open Space Action Plan update

It is five years since the strategy was completed and an update to the action plan is required to ensure that the plan remains fit for purpose and considered sound, as it is used for negotiating with developers for open space provision and financial contributions.

Playing Pitch Strategy update

To make Cabinet aware of the timeframe for the replacement strategy.

Alternative Options Considered

Not to accept the action plan update to the Public Open Space Strategy – **not recommended**, the strategy needs to be reviewed in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose and considered sound as it is used for negotiating with developers for open space provision and financial contributions.

Detailed Information

Public Open Space Action Plan Update

The Public Open Space Strategy provides a robust guidance and structure for the continued development and management of public open space including parks, cemeteries and allotments.

The three key areas of focus are:

- Sustainable long-term management of public open spaces.
- Continued improvement of public spaces.
- Provision of new public open space and associated facilities through the development process.

Public open space makes an important contribution to quality of life by providing free, accessible provision at a local level making a significant contribution to health and wellbeing, social inclusion and physical regeneration. Public open space also contributes to vibrant neighbourhoods which attract people to want to live, work, visit and invest.

The Public Open Space Strategy provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of public open space. The strategy is part of the evidence base for the Council's emerging Local Plan and supports negotiations with housing developers for securing on-site open space on new developments and contributions towards off-site provision including sports pitches and facilities.

Action Plan update

- **Investment of over £4.3 million with 32 projects completed and 30 sites upgraded between 2016 and 2021:** These include play areas, skate parks and fitness areas across Jacksdale, Selston and Underwood / play areas, fitness areas, flood defence and art projects in Hucknall / play areas, footpath and habitat improvements in Sutton / play area and footpath and cycle network and ecology improvements in Kirkby.
- **Over 4.8km of footpath and cycle route improvements** including: Middle Lane to Lindrick Road and West Park, Kirkby, Ashfields Estate and Kings Mill to the A38, Sutton
- Retention of the **Green Flag Award at six sites** - the international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces. Work is ongoing to achieve an award for a seventh site for 2022
- Occupancy rates have increased and as of August 2021 vacant plots have reduced to **13 from 19**.
- Rolling events programme for public spaces – although the events programme is now focussed on supporting town centres, a number of events have been held on green spaces and include the cinema events being held at Titchfield Park, Hucknall, Sutton Lawn and Selston Country Park during September.
- Weekly Parkrun events take place at Brierley, Titchfield Park Hucknall and Sutton Lawn, Feel Good Family trails are provided at Brierley, Titchfield Park Hucknall, Kingsway and Sutton Lawn, with learn to cycle sessions at the three main town parks and the Leamington Goalz football project is due to start on Sutton Lawn during the October half-term.
- **Ashfield Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP)** produced by the Football Association (FA) which identifies priority projects for the District which includes projects at Kingsway Park,

Kirkby and Sutton Lawn. This supported the success in securing funding from the Towns Fund for these projects which will see **c.£4m invested in sports facilities**.

- Improvement and cemetery extension project completed at Sutton Cemetery increasing capacity by circa 800 burial plots

Updated Action Plan Key Points:

Parks and Open Space

- To update catchment areas of parks and open spaces including new and decommissioned sites (walking distance to a green space from residential areas)
- Develop and deliver projects included in the LFFP including Sutton Lawn and Kingsway Park.
- Update management plans for Green Flag award sites.

Allotments and Cemeteries

- Undertake quality assessment of cemetery and allotment sites.
- Develop accessible management plans for allotment and cemetery sites.

Playing Pitch Strategy

Work is underway on a replacement playing pitch strategy which forms part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Plan. The process includes:

- Engaging with the National Governing Bodies for outdoor sports, such as the Football Association and England Rugby;
- Undertaking a consultation with sports clubs and local leagues;
- Assessing the condition of outdoor sports provision across the District;
- Assessing survey results and calculating current and future demand for pitches;
- Developing an action plan to address the key issues identified.

Work on the strategy is due to be completed by spring 2022 and is being coordinated with the planned Park Buildings & Sports Pitches review which is starting in September.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Public Open Space Strategy contributes to realising the Council's vision for the Cleaner Greener priority of the Corporate Plan, through the following Key Projects, Programmes and Initiatives-

1. Continue to review, improve and rationalise green space facilities
2. Work towards a seventh Green Flag Award for parks for Kings Mill Reservoir
3. Continue to deliver a rolling programme of restoration and adopt a community protocol to protect war memorials
4. Refresh the Council's Cemetery Strategy to include the wider approach to bereavement services and memorials.

Legal: [RLD 02/09/2021]

There are no significant legal issues identified in the report. The report sets out the strategic links with the emerging Local Plan.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	No implications
General Fund – Capital Programme	No implications
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	No implications
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	No implications

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Not updating the public open space strategy to support negotiations with developers for open space provision and external funding strategies to secure third party grants.	The updated action plan and catchment areas for parks and open spaces provide the evidence base for future development and investment in parks, green space, sports pitches, cemeteries, and allotment sites.

Human Resources:

No implications identified.

Environmental/Sustainability

The Public Open Space Strategy underpins the vision and method for monitoring and evaluation, investment and continuous improvement leading to improved management and delivery processes.

Equalities:

No implications

Other Implications:

No implications

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

- *Public Open Space Strategy 2016-2026*
- *Action Plan Update 2021.*

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