

	<h2>Environment Committee</h2> <h3>28 November 2018</h3>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>Implementation of the Council’s Parks and Open Spaces Strategy</b></p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Chairman of Environment Committee</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Urgent</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Key</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p>None</p>
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<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>In May 2016 Committee adopted the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (POSS) which sets a clear and ambitious vision and action plan for the future management and improvement of the approximately 200 green spaces owned and managed by the Council: including a set of priorities for investment in and alternative uses for sites, based on a social value/quality analysis:-</p> <p>“Barnet’s green spaces will be amongst the best in London and LBB is seen as a national leader in the provision of suburban parks. It is committed to ensuring that its green spaces deliver a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits for all who live, work in or visit the Borough.”</p> <p>This is the second annual progress report on the implementation of the POSS. It reflects significant achievement and updates members of the Committee on initiatives already agreed for implementation, additional actions embarked upon to achieve MTFs savings requirements and demonstrates success in partnership working and attracting partnership funding.</p>

## Recommendations

1. That the Environment Committee notes the progress made in 2017/2018 on the delivery of the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy.
2. That the Committee agrees the implementation of charging for the use of car parks in Greenspaces sites as proposed in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 of this report and authorises the Strategic Director: Environment to develop and consult on proposals on an individual site basis and report the outcome of that work to a future meeting of the Committee.

### 1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 This report updates members of the Committee on progress on the delivery of the POSS. Whilst the report relates principally to the delivery of agreed capital schemes, it should be noted that the Council's green spaces are being managed and maintained in the context of decreasing revenue funding required by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Priority Spending Review (PSR) processes.

### 2. GREENSPACES REVENUE POSITION

- 2.1 There are continuing challenges to public sector budgets which remain through the MTFS period. The financial pressure in Barnet requires the organisation to identify those activities which have business and social value and, where appropriate, examine opportunities for introducing solutions. This is particularly relevant for Greenspaces which, whilst not a statutory service, can provide a relevant and cost effective service through a range of alternative uses and opportunities.
- 2.2 Revenue savings required by previous MTFS rounds are being delivered but it should be recognised that, if not appropriately managed, the delivery of the POSS may result in increased net revenue costs in the future; thus compromising the MTFS. To ensure future MTFS delivery, additional cost reductions are being delivered by:-
  - reducing maintenance of low quality/low value sites pending the identification of alternative uses;
  - reducing floral bedding to a small number of key sites; including the Hendon Town Hall and memorials;
  - ceasing the overnight locking of parks, following consultation with the Police and the Community Safety Team.
- 2.3 A review of opportunities to generate income and deliver parks improvements has been considered. This includes car park charging in parks and open spaces. Indicative modelling suggests a net revenue in the order of £150,000 per annum is achievable, commencing in 2019/2020.
- 2.4 A charging model for parking currently applies at Hendon Park and it is proposed that this is extended, with statutory consultation conducted on an individual site

basis. Implementation of a Greenspaces car park charging programme will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for noting prior to being considered for adoption by the Policy and Resource Committee.

- 2.5 In addition Greenspaces officers have identified and are exploring additional sources of income in the longer term from the use of the Borough's green spaces. These include:-
- Marketing and establishing suitable sites as venues for appropriate events on a commercial hire basis;
  - Use of appropriate sites for the generation of renewable energy and securing/smoothing existing electricity supplies;
  - Reviewing Greenspaces tenancies to ensure the maximisation of income from commercial uses.
- 2.6 A number of significant capital schemes have either been commenced or are proposed within the POSS. Given the MTFs and PSR requirements these schemes are being developed on the basis of their future operation and management, once completed, delivering, at worst, revenue cost neutrality and, wherever possible, delivering revenue surpluses. The Natural Capital Account for Barnet's Greenspaces developed and adopted in 2017 will be applied to prioritise and identify rates of return on investment in sites.
- 2.7 Taken together, these initiatives will result in further and sustainable reductions in the revenue cost of the Greenspaces Service and contribute to the delivery of MTFs and PSR savings targets.
- 2.8 The proposals set out within the POSS and Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) outline the effect of increasing demand as a result of an increasing local population. Subsequently highlighting how improvement and investment in existing open space can positively contribute towards; economic development, physical and mental wellbeing, social cohesion and community benefit.
- 2.9 The POSS Annual Update outlines in further detail work conducted in this area and the interdependency between management arrangements, capital investment required and the projected revenue position to deliver the POSS aspiration and a cost neutral service within the PSR period.

### **3. INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES**

3.1 Progress to date on individual initiatives is as follows.

#### **3.2 Former NIMR Site, Mill Hill**

- i. The section 106 Agreement attached to the development of the former NIMR site includes a requirement for the freehold of the former sports field to the northwest of the wider site to be transferred by the developer to the Council at nil consideration.
- ii. The former sports field had initially been considered for the relocation of

the Gaelic Football pitch displaced by the development of the new Leisure Centre at Copthall. However, it has not proved possible to identify appropriate means of access to the site and it is now proposed to accommodate Gaelic Football at the King George V playing field as part of the wider masterplanning process for that site. Officers are engaged with St Kiernan's Gaelic Football who are supportive of this option.

- iii. The transfer of the freehold of the former sports field site is underway. Following completion, the site will be used to provide additional sports pitches in accordance with the Playing Pitch Strategy. Discussions have commenced with the adjacent Mill Hill Village Sports Club relative to the club's lease being extended to include the former sports field site.

### **3.3 Barnet Playing Fields and King George V Playing Field Sports Hub Masterplan**

- i. The development of this masterplan was also agreed at the July 2017 meeting of the Committee.
- ii. An initial concept proposal, which includes a replacement for the Gaelic Football pitch displaced by the development of the new Leisure Centre at Copthall, has been developed following partner and stakeholder consultation. This proposal is currently subject to stakeholder and public engagement; with the outcome informing the development of the draft masterplan for the site.
- iii. The draft masterplan will be submitted to a future meeting of the Environment Committee, outlining the proposed design, capital investment considerations and seeking agreement to carry out a public consultation.

### **3.4 West Hendon Playing Fields Sports Hub Masterplan**

- i. The development of this masterplan was agreed at the July 2017 meeting of the Committee.
- ii. An initial concept proposal has been developed following partner and stakeholder consultation. This proposal is currently subject to stakeholder and public engagement; with the outcome informing the development of the draft masterplan for the site.
- iii. The draft masterplan will be submitted to a future meeting of the Environment Committee, outlining the proposed design, capital investment considerations and seeking agreement to carry out a public consultation.

### **3.5 Victoria Park Masterplan.**

- i. The development of this masterplan was agreed at the July 2017 meeting of the Committee. The master plan is reported as a separate item on this agenda to this meeting

### **3.6 North West Green Belt Sites Masterplan**

- i. This masterplanning exercise relates to the Scratchwood and Moat Mount Open Spaces, Barnet Woods and Stoneyfields Park. Its development was agreed at the July 2017 meeting of the Committee.
- ii. It was originally anticipated that the study would be undertaken in 2018 but the work has been deferred pending the completion of a review of Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land as part of the wider Local Plan review.
- iii. It is now anticipated that the masterplanning work will be undertaken in 2019, with the outcome being reported to a future meeting of the Environment Committee.

### 3.7 Colindale Parks Improvements Programme

- i. These three projects will create high quality green spaces to support the Colindale Regeneration Programme as the majority of the new housing being created has no private green space:-
  - A major refurbishment of Montrose Recreation Ground and Silkstream Park; linking the two sites to create a single new Park;
  - Refurbishment of Colindale Park;
  - Refurbishment of Rushgrove Park;
- ii. Suitably qualified and experienced contractors have been appointed, following an open tender process and subsequent value engineering exercise to bring the scope of the works within budget to undertake the landscaping works at Montrose/Silkstream. Site works commenced in mid November with an estimated 60 week duration, allowing completion in January 2020;
- iii. An allocation of £5M was included in the current capital programme to fund the refurbishment of Montrose/Silkstream. Successful bids for external funding to a total of £507,000 for the scheme have been made to the Greater London Authority (£324,000), The London Marathon Charitable Trust (£103,000) and the Environment Agency (£80,000) respectively. The Policy and Resources Committee has been requested to include these additional sums in the capital allocation: increasing the total funding for the scheme to £5.507M, allowing some of the value engineering scheme reductions to be re-instated. The outcome of further applications for external funding are awaited.
- iv. In addition, specialist contractors have been appointed following a further open tender process to design and construct the new skate park to be provided in the refurbished park. The development of the new skate park will be fully co-ordinated with the undertaking of the landscape contract;
- v. Detailed designs are being developed for a new park hub building, including a cafeteria, changing rooms and public toilets, the development of which will be fully co-ordinated with the landscaping works with completion scheduled for early 2020;
- vi. An open tender exercise has been undertaken and a suitably experienced and qualified landscape architecture practice has been appointed to develop detailed designs for Colindale and Rushgrove Parks, support the construction tender process and oversee the contractors once

appointed. Refurbishment works are scheduled for completion in early 2020.

### **3.8 Heybourne Park Improvements**

- i. Heybourne Park is a key green space within the Grahame Park Regeneration Area which will be refurbished as part of the wider redevelopment scheme.
- ii. Whilst the wider scheme is currently under review, the Greenspaces Team has been closely involved in the development of a detailed design for the park to be included within the development following the review.

### **3.9 Individual Park Improvements**

- i. In addition to the major refurbishment schemes described above, the Greenspaces Development Team has completed a number of site specific improvements and enhancements: typically funded from Section 106 contributions and Area Committee allocations:-
  - Play area improvements at Stonegrove Park, Watling Park, Swan Lane Open Space, Deansbrook Playground;
  - A new trim trail at Copthall;
  - Replacement surface to the play area at Hollickwood Park;
  - Design and installation of Active Trails at Friary Park and Oak Hill Park as the commencement of a wider programme funded by the Chipping Barnet Area Committee;
  - Design and installation of the Memorial Garden for Sir Nicholas Winton in Princes Park;
  - Design and implementation of sustainable shrub schemes and planting of over 140,000 spring bulbs.

### **3.10 Tree Policy**

- i. In September 2017 the Committee approved Tree Policy and the Council agreed total investment of £2.25M with the target of planting 900 trees per year over the 5 year life of the policy as a response to the urban heat island effect and atmospheric pollution; in addition to supporting the POSS delivery.
- ii. Work has commenced on the planting of the first 900 trees. In addition, a review of baseline data has been undertaken to understand the Borough's tree canopy cover and inform the future development and implementation of the policy.
- iii. Greenspaces Officers are currently exploring an Urban Tree Research Programme linked to the Tree Policy in partnership with the University of Reading.

### **3.11 Greenspaces Policy Work**

- i. Greenspaces Officers are working closely with Planning on the Greenbelt and Metropolitan Open Land Review as part of the evidence base for the

forthcoming Local Plan Review to assist in delivering the POSS and associated strategies.

- ii. Greenspaces Officers are also involved in the development of the Local Implementation Plan Review (LIP3) with specific reference to the contribution that greenspaces make to the development and delivery of a Borough wide network of cycleways and footpaths to contribute to a strategy for alternative means of travel to help reduce reliance on cars.

### **3.12 Cophall Sports Hub and Mill Hill Open Spaces Masterplan**

- i Discussions are ongoing with representatives of the sports that are accommodated at the site and other key stakeholders and partners. The outcome of these discussions will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

## **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 **Recommendations 1 and 2** – to ensure appropriate delivery of the POSS on a financially sustainable basis.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMEND**

- 5.1 No alternative options have been considered as the above recommendations will contribute to the delivery of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

## **6. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 6.1 If the Committee is minded to agree the above recommendations:-

- Detailed proposals for West Hendon and Barnet/King George V Playing Field will be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee, seeking agreement to undertake public consultation on these;
- The Greenspaces Development Team will continue to work on strategies for net revenue cost reduction and alternative uses for low priority sites as described in this report;
- Regular progress reports on implementation of the wider POSS and the specific initiatives will be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

## **7. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **7.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 7.1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan says:-

- Barnet's Parks and Greenspaces will be amongst the best in London;
- Resident feedback consistently shows that Barnet's Park and Greenspaces are amongst its biggest assets and a strong influence for people deciding to live here;
- The Council recognises this and will continue to ensure that the Borough's Parks and Greenspaces are looked after;

- The Council will develop more innovative ways of maintaining its Parks and Greenspaces; including through greater partnerships with community groups and focus on using parks to achieve wider public health priorities for the Borough.

#### 7.1.2 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWB) says:-

- Barnet is now the largest Borough in London by population (367,265 at the end of 2015) and is continuing to grow. The highest rates of population growth are forecast to occur around the planned development works in the west of the Borough; with over 113% growth in Golders Green and 56% in Colindale by 2030;
- Barnet Sport and Physical Activity Needs Assessment (2012) highlighted that whilst health behaviours and outcomes are more favourable in Barnet than in England as a whole, sport and physical activity rates and the use of outdoor spaces are below the national average;
- A breadth of evidence demonstrates that a more active lifestyle is essential for physical and mental wellbeing. Regular physical activity helps reduce the risk of stroke, type II diabetes, development of dementia, incidences of heart disease, cancers and high blood pressure. Physical activity supports the prevention and management of long term conditions as well as being a component of achieving and maintaining a healthy weight;
- Physical inactivity currently costs the UK economy £7.2 billion. Additional costs are incurred via the wider economy through increased sickness absence, premature death of productive individuals and increased costs for individuals and their carers;
- Within Barnet the health costs of physical inactivity currently amount to £6.7 million. This is approximately £1.9 million per 100,000 of the Borough's population. However, as measured by the Sport England Active People Survey Data (APS9 Quarter 2) 43.8% of the Borough are currently inactive and would like to do more;
- The number of people with mental health conditions is predicted to increase as the population grows. In November 2014, the Health and Wellbeing Board identified prevention of and early intervention in mental health problems as a priority. Mental health is our key priority of the JHWB Strategy with partners coming together to make a positive impact for all of our residents;
- Maximise the potential of improvements to and changes in the management of open spaces where this could support improved mental wellbeing.

#### 7.1.3 Local Plan Policy CS7 says the Council will create a greener Borough by:-

- Enhancing open spaces to provide improvements in overall quality and accessibility;
- Meeting increased demand for access to open space and opportunities for physical activity;

- By tackling deficiencies and underprovision.

7.1.4 Investment in and improvement of Barnet's greenspaces to support growth and wellbeing in Barnet will also result in the delivery of a range of outcomes linked to other Council strategies:-

- Growth Strategy: creating the environment for growth;
- Regeneration Strategy;
- Fit and Active Barnet Strategy;
- Community Safety Strategy;
- Entrepreneurial Barnet Strategy.

7.1.5 The residents' perception survey for Barnet shows a decline in satisfaction parks and open spaces: from 70% in 2013 to 66% in 2016. Consultation with residents undertaken as part of the development of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy shows a decline in Barnet's parks and open spaces rated 'good' or 'excellent' from 28% to 14% from 2009 to 2015.

7.1.6 It is probable that failure to address the decline in residents' satisfaction with parks and open spaces will result in a reduction in the numbers of individuals, families and groups that visit and use parks for informal physical activity and/or organised sport. Such a reduction would have an adverse effect on the delivery of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy outcomes.

## **7.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

7.2.1 **Finance, Value for Money and Procurement** – The proposals in this report are compatible with the Greenspaces Capital Investment Programme agreed by Environment Committee at its November 2016 meeting and the majority of expenditure to date is funded by Section 106 contributions already agreed with developers, the ring fenced capital receipt from the sale of the Victoria Park Lodge and the approved Regeneration capital programme.

7.2.2 The capital financing required to fund the design, outline business case and Capital funding package development work to take implementation of the draft masterplans to the next stage are estimated to total £150,000. This will be subject to a formal request and approval by the Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion in the capital programme.

7.2.3 Capital costs necessary for the implementation of charging in park car parks, will be subject to approval by the Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion in the capital programme.

7.2.4 Value for money will be achieved by use of competitive tendering for the appointment of consultants to develop the next stages of the masterplans and proposed improvements to the sites, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

7.2.5 Once developed, the capital costs and outline business cases for the masterplans and proposed improvements will be submitted to future meetings of the Committee for consideration and approval as part of the project approval process. It is intended that schemes, once completed, will be revenue neutral, taking alternative delivery and funding mechanisms into account. The operation and management of the improved sites will be undertaken within approved revenue budgets.

7.2.6 **Staffing** – Delivery of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will require appropriate capacity and capability in the organisation; including within the commissioning arrangements.

7.2.7 **IT** – None at this time

7.2.8 **Sustainability** – The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and associated initiatives detailed in this report seek to protect, improve and enhance the natural environment of Barnet. The individual projects to be delivered during implementation of the strategy will be developed and delivered in accordance with both environmental and financial principles.

### 7.3 Social Value

7.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. The key themes within the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy are:-

- Social outcomes and benefits;
- Environmental Outcomes and Benefits;
- Economic Outcomes and Benefits.

### 7.4 Legal and Constitutional References

7.4.1 Local authorities have a number of different statutory powers in relation to parks and open spaces, including the Public Health Act 1875 which permits the purchase and maintenance of public walks or pleasure grounds and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, which gives wide powers to provide recreational facilities. The Open Spaces Act 1906 provides that local authorities shall hold and administer open space in trust to allow the enjoyment of it by the public and shall maintain and keep the open space in a good and decent state.

7.4.2 The Council's Constitution (Article 7 – Committees, Forums and Partnerships) sets out the terms of reference for the Environment Committee :-

- “ 1) Responsibility for all borough-wide or cross-constituency matters relating to the street-scene including parking, road safety, lighting, street cleaning, transport, waste, waterways, refuse, recycling, allotments, parks, trees, crematoria and mortuary, trading standards and environmental health;

- 2) To submit to the Policy and Resources Committee proposals relating to the Committee's budget for the following year in accordance with the budget timetable;
- 3) To make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee on issues relating to the budget for the Committee, including virements or underspends and overspends on the budget. No decisions which result in amendments to the agreed budget may be made by the Committee unless and until the amendment has been agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee;
- 4) To receive reports on relevant performance information and risk on the services under the remit of the Committee."

7.4.3 The procurements will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Article 18 - Contract Procedure Rules)

## 7.5 Risk Management

7.5.1 The management of risk is undertaken on a continual basis and reported as part of the Council's Quarterly Performance regime and considered as part of the Performance and Contract Management Committee quarterly monitoring report.

7.5.2 Risks are managed through the project boards and are reviewed and revised at board meetings. The current key risk areas are:-

	Rating Criteria	1: Low	2: Medium	3: High
1.	Total investment required			X
2.	Potential benefits	X		
3.	Return on investment	X		
4.	Planning		X	
5.	Political sensitivity	X		
6.	Fit with corporate objectives	X		
7.	Users/DU's impacted	X		
	Total score	10		

## 7.6 Equalities and Diversity

7.6.1 The Equalities and Diversity Act, 2010 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act, 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups;
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

7.6.2 Relevant protected characteristics are:- age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual

orientation.

7.6.3 The purpose of the initiatives described in this report is to ensure that the broad diversity of Barnet's residents and communities continue to the benefits of these community assets and that their needs and aspirations are reflected in the provision that the Council makes.

7.6.4 Equalities Impact Assessments will be developed on a scheme by scheme basis so as to ensure compliance with the requirements of the 2010 Act and that the needs of the communities and groups are fully taken into account in the development of schemes.

## 7.7 **Consultation and Engagement**

7.7.1 This report includes the outcome of consultation already undertaken. Further consultation and engagement with site users, no-users and stakeholders will be undertaken as part of the development of the next stages in the development of proposals.

## 8 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 Environment Committee 12 May and 16 November 2016 Papers

8.2 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for Barnet: 2016 to 2026.

8.3 Playing Pitch Strategy for Barnet

8.4 Greenspaces Capital Investment Programme

8.5 Open Barnet Data Portal