

# Cabinet Paper

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**Date of Meeting: 12 April 2016**

**Report of: Peter Bates, Chief Operating Officer**

**Subject/Title: Parks Strategy**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sam Gardner, Open Spaces Portfolio**

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## **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with the background, and strategic context to the delivery of the “Cheshire East Parks Strategy” which supports the Greenspace Strategy and the Stronger Communities element of the Cheshire East Local Plan and contribute where appropriate to the determination of future planning applications.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. That Cabinet approves the adoption of the “Cheshire East Parks Strategy” attached Appendix 1
- 2.2. That the Parks Strategy be used to protect our heritage and guide policy and investment in our parks and public open spaces to meet the future needs of the residents of Cheshire East.

## **3. Other Options Considered**

- 3.1. The parks strategy provides the guiding principles for managing and developing our parks in the future to ensure they meet user needs and aspirations for delivering quality parks and open spaces.
- 3.2. The Council has the option to proceed with out adopting a parks strategy however this is advised against as it would put at risk the Councils ability to target policy and investment in line with the Councils six key strategic objectives.

## **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1. The primary purpose of the Parks Strategy is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of Parks and Public Open Spaces meet the local needs of existing and future residents within Cheshire East.
- 4.2. The document considers all public open space including our valuable Countryside sites and sets policy objects to underpin the Council’s approach to these valuable community assets..

- 4.3. A Public Consultation process was undertaken and generated significant support towards all policy objectives..

## **5. Background/Chronology**

- 5.1. Cheshire East Council has a good record of investing in Park Development Projects. This Strategy outlines why parks and open spaces are so important to the residents of the Borough and will support the Council in justifying future investment whether by the Council or from external funding partners.

## **6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members**

- 6.1. All Cheshire East Council Wards

## **7. Implications of Recommendation**

### **7.1. Policy Implications**

#### 7.1.1. Supporting the following Corporate Outcomes 1 to 6

Outcome 1 – Our local communities are strong and Supportive

Outcome 2 – Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy

Outcome 3 – People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive

Outcome 4 – Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place

Outcome 5 – People live well and for longer

Outcome 6 – A responsible effective and efficient Organisation

#### 7.1.2. Strategic Context

The Cheshire East Park Strategy is being developed to support corporate, planning, operational, environmental and recreational development areas as outlined:

#### **Corporate & Planning:**

- Ensures a strategic approach to investment in Parks and Open spaces;
- Provides robust evidence for capital funding; and Planning;
- Support strategic policies on green infrastructure, leisure, outdoor sports facilities and health and well-being in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan.
- Supporting evidence for Community Infrastructure Levy and Developer Contributions.

- Specific policies in the Local Plan Strategy refer to sport and recreation.
- Policy SC1 seeks to protect and enhance existing leisure and recreational facilities; promotes the provision of better new facilities; and aims to ensure facilities are appropriately located and serve the needs and demands of local communities. The Policy also recognises the contributions other developments (such as housing) can make to providing new and improved leisure and recreation facilities.
- Policy SC2 specifically applies this approach to outdoor sports facilities.
- Policy SE6 ties in the protection and new provision of sports playing fields and other open recreational spaces with their value as part of the Green Infrastructure network.

**Operational:**

- Help improve current asset management
- The site specific Action Plan (to be developed in association with local Members and communities will identify sites where quality of provision can be enhanced to meet current and future demand.

## **7.2. Legal Implications**

7.2.1. The Council's powers to to hold land (parks and open spaces), provide services, promote community wellbeing and enforce bylaws are set out in a range of legislation including but not limited to Open Spaces Act 1906, Highways Act 1980, Town and Country Plannign Act 1990, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Local Government Act 2000 and the Clean neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

7.2.2. A parks strategy is a means to set out the framework in which the Council intends to prioritise its resources to provide and protect Parks and Public Open Spaces in the context of its legal obligations and existing policies, such as the Green Spaces Strategy 2013 and the development of the Local Plan.

### **7.3. Financial Implications**

7.3.1. All investment required to deliver any actions identified in these documents will be subject to the standard project feasibility / business case protocols and to sufficient approved capital budget available in the capital programme..

### **7.4. Equality Implications**

7.4.1. The development of facilities to standard that meets modern regulation under the Equalities Act

### **7.5. Rural Community Implications**

7.5.1. To meet requirement to provide recreational facilities in close proximity to all communities.

### **7.6. Human Resources Implications**

7.6.1. The Parks Strategy does not currently require additional resourcing. However, each element of the action plan will need to be considered on merit and weighed against the business case.

### **7.7. Public Health Implications**

7.7.1. The provision of quality Parks and Public Open spaces will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the Cheshire East Community.

### **7.8. Other Implications (Please Specify)**

7.8.1. Provision of good Parks and Public Open Spaces should increase physical activity and provide attractive local venues for communities to enjoy their leisure, seek relaxation and hold events and celebrations that enhance social cohesion.

## 8. Risk Management

### 8.1. Risk Register

Risk	Reason	Action
Partnership working	CEC needs to work with partner organisations to raise necessary resources.	Build partnerships at a local (Friends Groups & communities) & Town & Parish Councils to secure local involvement in management & resources.
Planning	The Park Strategy will help the Council to secure investment from developer contribution in building and maintaining public open space / playing fields.	Ongoing discussions with planning to respond to opportunities as they arise.
Finance	The need to work in partnership with external bodies to match funds raised from Developer Contribution.	CEC will build specific business cases and partnerships in search of external funding opportunities
Asset Management	To provide support to ANSA Environmental Services and the Councils Facilities Management to maintain these facilities.	To help find innovative and partnership based solutions to the problem of funding maintenance of the facilities.

## 9. Access to Information/Bibliography

9.1. The following reports are referenced in the production of this report:

- Park Strategy

## 10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:-

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