

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 April 2016

Report of: Peter Bates, Chief Operating Officer

Subject/Title: Municipal Parks Strategy 2030

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sam Gardner, Open Spaces Portfolio

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with the background and strategic context to the “Municipal Parks Strategy 2030”. The strategy provides the guiding principles for the future management and development of our municipal parks to ensure they meet the needs and aspirations of our residents.
- 1.2. The strategy will guide investment, facilitate applications for external grant funding streams and increase community involvement in our urban parks. The strategy recognises the massive contribution of volunteers and friends groups in our parks which forms a key objective of the strategy.
- 1.3. The objectives seek to increase the use of parks by all ages to contribute to social cohesion, intergenerational activity and the health and well being of residents. They also recognise the role of our parks as a refuge and habitat for wildlife seeking to enhance biodiversity through wild flower meadows restoring wet lands and protection wildlife habitats.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That Cabinet approves the adoption of the “Municipal Parks Strategy 2030” attached Appendix 1
- 2.2. That the strategy be used to guide policy and investment in our parks 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.

- 3.2. The Council has the option to proceed without adopting a Municipal Parks Strategy however this is advised against as it would put at risk the Council's ability to target policy and investment in line with the Council's six key strategic objectives.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The primary purpose of the Municipal Parks Strategy is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of Municipal Parks meet the local needs of existing and future residents within Cheshire East.
- 4.2. 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. The Strategy supports the Sustainable Community Strategy (2010 – 2025), the Green Space Strategy (2013) and the Stronger Communities element of the Cheshire East Local Plan in addition to our 6 corporate outcomes.

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

7.2. Strategic Context

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

Corporate & Planning:

7.2.2. It ensures a strategic approach to investment in parks providing robust evidence for capital funding through the community Infrastructure levy and developer contributions.

- The strategy supports strategic policies on green infrastructure, leisure, outdoor sports facilities and health and well-being in the Local Plan. In particular: **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:

7.2.3. The strategy will prioritise investment in our municipal parks to deliver the Council's outcomes for all. Site specific action plans will be developed in association with local members and communities to identify needs and utilise opportunities for investment to address current and future demand.

7.3. Legal Implications

7.3.1. The Council's powers 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 Planning Act 1990, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Local Government Act 2000 and the Clean neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

- 7.3.2. A Municipal Parks Strategy is a means to set out the framework in which the Council intends to prioritise its resources to provide and protect our municipal parks in the context of its legal obligations and existing policies, such as the Green Spaces Strategy 2013 and the Local Plan.

7.4. Financial Implications

- 7.4.1. 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.

7.5. Equality Implications

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

7.6. Rural Community Implications

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

7.7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.7.1. The Municipal 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.

7.8. Public Health Implications

- 7.8.1. The provision of quality Municipal Parks will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents.

7.9. Other Implications (Please Specify)

- 7.9.1. Provision of good Municipal Parks 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	Cheshire East Council needs to work with partner organisations to build community involvement, use and pride in their local park.	Build partnerships at a local (Friends Groups & communities) & Town & Parish Councils.
Planning	The strategy will help 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 from developer contribution and external grant bodies.	The Council will build specific business cases and partnerships in search of external funding opportunities
Asset Management	To provide support to ANSA Environmental Services and the Council's 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:

Municipal Parks Strategy 2030

10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:-

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