

MEETING : CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
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GREENSPACE POSITION STATEMENT AND ANNUAL REPORT

Summary: This paper outlines the new structure for Greenspace and how the developing Greenspace strategy will contribute to the Council's Corporate Themes and in turn influence public rights of way (PROW) legal orders.

1.0 THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 1.1** The new structure for Greenspace and the proposed Strategy aim to achieve best practice and value for money and concentrate on putting customers first. It will also facilitate the delivery of objectives which contribute to all of the Council's Corporate Themes, most notably the Health and Well Being, Environmental Sustainability and Jobs and Enterprises imperatives.

2.0 GREENSPACE STRUCTURE

- 2.1** After a long period of consultation and recruitment the new structure is now in place, with the last two members joining the team in the next month.
- 2.2** The structure reflects the recent drive for transformation and creates a flexible and skilled team structure to develop and deliver a new strategy for Greenspace.
- 2.3** The Greenspace Team is responsible for maximising the quality, opportunity and benefits if the Greenspace network within the wider Green Infrastructure. The Greenspace Network encompasses urban parks, country parks, PROW and allotments.
- 2.4** An illustration of the structure can be found in Appendix 1.

3.0 GREENSPACE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1** A strategic framework for the effective management, development and care of our Greenspace Network will be set out in a Greenspace Strategy to ensure that all physical resources are accessible and

managed to enhance the many social, economic and environmental benefits of greenspace.

- 3.2** It will be developed under the direction of the Senior Greenspace Officer (Strategy) and will set out a vision and an action plan based on an assessment of community needs and aspirations for maximum cultural and recreational activity within the natural environment.
- 3.3** The strategy will be developed over the coming 12 months, starting with a thorough qualitative and quantitative assessment of all accessible greenspace in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17).
- 3.4** A separate assessment of the accessibility and quality of the PROW network is due for completion in June and will inform future investment programmes.
- 3.5** The data and policies emerging from the strategy will shape and inform corporate priorities for Greenspace and the Green Infrastructure (e.g. through the developmental framework).
- 3.6** It is anticipated that a draft strategy will be available for public consultation in December 2010.

4.0 ENGAGEMENT GROUPS

- 4.1** Effective community engagement and an understanding of community needs and expectation is essential to the management of a Greenspace Network and will inform the development of the Greenspace Strategy.
- 4.2** A review of the most efficient ways to engage is required to ensure the most efficient use of office time and tangible benefits to both user groups and the Council.
- 4.3** Information on the relative accessibility of the entire network will be available for users wishing to plan new routes via the internet later in the summer.

5.0 NETWORK MAINTENANCE

- 5.1** The Senior Greenspace Officer (Network and Operations) manages the site management and operational issues of the entire greenspace resource, including the maintenance of PROW.
- 5.2** Two Team Leaders manage a team of Greenspace Rangers and Greenspace Network Officers across a geographical area divided approximately on an east / west split.
- 5.3** Over the past 12 months the PROW network has seen the improvement and replacement of:

- 273 finger posts
 - 43 stiles
 - 23 bridges
 - 8 gateways
- 5.4** Ditching, resurfacing and civil engineering works were undertaken on a Restricted Byway in the parish of Barrow and a Bridleway running through the parishes of Cotton Edmunds and Christleton.

6.0 DEFINITIVE MAP AND LEGAL ORDERS

- 6.1** A temporary reduction in capacity of the Greenspace Team means the inherited backlog of legal work (DMMOs and PPOs) has been reduced but not as quickly as would have been expected. A list of outstanding DMMO applications is published on the website . It is expected that those that have a high priority marking will be resolved or completed by April 2011. Work on PPO applications has been ongoing.

- 3 are completed
- 2 have been referred to the Planning Inspectorate
- 2 have been confirmed
- 2 to be determined
- 2 with outstanding objections

There are at present over 300 anomalies identified with respect to the Definitive Map, some may be resolved through orders or other legal processes and these will be investigated and concluded in sequential order depending on the anomaly, easiest to resolve first.

- 6.2** The restoration to four Greenspace Technical Officers in the next month will see an increase in the processing of legal orders.
- 6.3** Initial priority will be given to areas that contribute to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan or promoted route.
- 6.4** It is acknowledged however, that in respect of DMMOs, an applicant has the right to apply to the Secretary of State for the Council to be directed to determine the outcome of the application if this has not been done within 12 months of it being registered. Where directions are made, a strict time limit is imposed necessitating such applications to be dealt with out of turn.
- 6.5** In this respect, further options, where necessary, for the expedient reduction of this backlog are being explored.

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