



Title of meeting: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 6 February 2024
Subject: Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
Report by: Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
Wards affected: All
Key decision: No
Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1. To seek Cabinet approval to formally adopt the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Cabinet is recommended to formally adopt the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

3. Background

3.1. The purpose of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is to consider how parks and open spaces in the city are planned, designed, managed, protected and maintained.

3.2. The strategy sets out several principles grouped around appropriate themes, to ensure that the parks and open spaces of the city are of a consistent standard. These principles will guide future work.

3.3. The strategy includes a review of up to date policy at a national, regional and local level.

3.4. Detailed studies are included regarding key sites in the city including a standalone chapter focussed on the seafront.

3.5. Whilst an up to date parks and open spaces strategy for the city does not provide any guarantee of securing external funding, the strategy will support the Council's relationship with external bodies such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in demonstrating the Council's commitment towards protecting and enhancing our parks and open spaces.

- 3.6. The strategy links strongly with other strategies including the Portsmouth Local Plan, Greening Development Plan and Climate Change Strategy. Review of relevant overlapping strategies is contained at Appendix 5.2 to the strategy.
- 3.7. The production of the Parks and Open Spaces strategy meets the following priorities under the City Vision 2040:
- 3.7.1. A green city: protect and enhance our green spaces for future generations;
 - 3.7.2. A healthy and happy city: enhance wellbeing for everyone in the city by offering support for physical and mental health, enabling people to thrive.
- The strategy delivers against the Council Plan Mission to improve the lives of residents.
- 3.8. The draft strategy was approved for public consultation by the Cabinet in February 2023 and thereafter was distributed widely to interested parties locally, regionally and nationally. A list of the groups and organisations consulted is included at Appendix 2.
- 3.9. The draft strategy was also promoted widely on the Council's social media channels and website with an invitation to the public to respond.
- 3.10. The director of culture, leisure and regulatory services is grateful to the 698 people and organisations who responded to the consultation during Spring 2023. The responses showed clear support for the principles identified.
- 3.11. The changes made as a result of the consultation were minor and included emphasising links with other plans (such as the Council's Climate Strategy 2022, the Greening Development Plan, Transport Strategy and Langstone Harbour Plan). External respondents included Hampshire Countryside Access Forum and Natural England. Several of the issues raised were already covered in the document, but further clarity has been added. For example, whilst the Brent Geese are fully discussed, reference was missing to the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy in the policy appendix. Other amendments made included seeking ornithological advice when appropriate and amending wording to incorporate sustainable drainage designs.
- 3.12. The consultation report is included at Appendix 3. There was a high proportion of agreement to the themes of the strategy, together with the priorities arising from those themes. The management summary to the report shows the key improvements requested under each principle. A response to the requested improvements is included at Appendix 4. Key changes made to the strategy in response to the consultation include: a proposed revision of the Parks webpage to provide clearer signposting regarding voluntary opportunities and activities, further information added regarding walking trails and consideration of online giving or mobile contactless donation technology.



4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1. An adopted Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will complement the green infrastructure policy of the Portsmouth Local Plan, the Portsmouth Climate Change Strategy, the Portsmouth Greening Infrastructure Delivery Plan, will meet the green and healthy City Vision objectives referenced above and will support bids for external funding.

5. Integrated impact assessment

5.1. An Integrated Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 1. Subsequent IIAs will be produced for each specific scheme or policy change arising from the strategy, at such time as they are planned for implementation.

6. Legal implications

6.1. Members are advised that the key elements of an effective and fair consultation process in relation to a proposed decision are that:

- the consultation is conducted at a time when the proposals are at a sufficiently formative stage;
- adequate information is provided to enable consultees to consider the proposal;
- adequate time is afforded to consultees to allow them to make a proper and informed response; and
- the decision maker must consider the consultation responses in an open minded way and have due regard to them in making a decision on the proposal.

6.2. Beyond the above, there are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendation in this report.

7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1. The activities proposed within the Parks Strategy are expected to be funded from existing service portfolio budgets, as approved by Full Council. Where there are any activities which have additional financial requirements, funding will need to be identified prior to their commencement.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services



Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Integrated Impact Assessment
- Appendix 2: List of consulted groups and organisations
- Appendix 3: Consultation report summary
- Appendix 4: Response to Consultation report
- Appendix 5: Parks and Open Spaces Strategy:

- Appendix 5.1: National and Regional Policy
- Appendix 5.2: Local Policy
- Appendix 5.3: Operational Plans
- Appendix 5.4: Sites Quality Audit results
- Appendix 5.5: Quality Audit criteria
- Appendix 5.6: Quantity and Accessibility
- Appendix 5.7: Open Space Assessment
- Appendix 5.8: Play Value Scores
- Appendix 5.9: Parks Survey results

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Open Space Assessment 2018	development-and-planning-open-spaces-assessment.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development