

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

24

Report of Corporate Director for
Place

to
Cabinet

on
23 June 2015

Report prepared by: Ian Brown, Parks Management Officer

Parks and Green Spaces Strategy

**Executive Councillor: Councillor Graham Longley
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To represent the draft “Parks and Green Spaces Strategy” following its consideration by the Place Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That Members agree the draft “Parks and Green Spaces Strategy” in principle for public consultation.**
- 2.2 **That following consultation the Strategy is subject to amendment by the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, Tourism and Economic Development and the Corporate Director for Place and that this amendment will incorporate the detailed points raised by Place Scrutiny Committee as set out in 3.6.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The draft Strategy is intended to update and revise the existing Parks Strategy document and provide an overarching document which links to other existing policies.
- 3.2 The Strategy sets out to highlight the importance of good quality, well maintained parks and open spaces and street scene. It describes the many benefits of green spaces in terms of the economy, physical and mental wellbeing, social cohesion, and the environment.
- 3.3 The strategy sets out five main priorities:
- To provide and maintain good quality parks and open spaces.
 - To connect these spaces with a well maintained and attractive street scene.

- To provide recreation and sports facilities to encourage active, healthy lifestyles.
- To protect and promote our natural green heritage and biodiversity, preserving it for future generations.
- To encourage community involvement in the development and management of green spaces.

3.4 The strategy presents key standards for parks and green spaces in terms of their accessibility, quantity and quality:

- To ensure that all residents have easy access to a public open space of at least 0.2 hectares.
- To provide one hectare of public open space per 1000 people.
- To adopt the Green Flag quality criteria for its major destination parks and open spaces.

3.5 The Environmental Scrutiny Committee welcomed the draft Strategy and supported the principles within it, and that the draft report and Strategy be noted and endorsed for submission to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 23rd June 2015.

3.6 The Committee identified several points of detail that should be addressed:

- Add detail regarding dog bins;
- Add further data regarding:
 - accessibility of parks and open spaces to residents; and
 - crime in parks
- Identify links with other Council policies regarding parks, open space and verges, particularly planning policies.

4. Other Options

4.1 The Strategy considers a range of options for the future delivery of the Parks Service. Alternative options may arise from the consultation process and will be taken into consideration.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 To ensure Members' views and those of the public are reflected in the final Strategy document.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to the Council's Vision and Corporate Priorities.

- Safe - Continue to reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.
- Healthy - Support Southend to be active and alive with sport and culture
- Clean - Ensure a well-maintained and attractive street scene, parks and open spaces, minimise our impact on the natural environment.

- Prosperous - Reduce inequalities and increase the life chances of people living in Southend.
- Excellent – strive to achieve national accreditation such as Green Flags.

6.2 Financial Implications

6.2.1 The Strategy identifies a significant number of projects to deliver the Key Objectives. It recognises that these will need to be met within existing revenue budgets, through Capital budgets as well as S106 Planning funding agreement, CIL funding, through partnerships and greater involvement of the community.

6.3 Legal Implications

6.3.1 There are no legal implications.

6.4 People Implications

6.4.1 There are no people implications.

6.5 Property Implications

6.5.1 The Strategy identifies the proposal to encourage greater community management of some Council owned buildings.

6.6 Consultation

6.6.1 Following the agreement of Cabinet, this draft Strategy will enter into a 12 week period of consultation with residents, key partners and stakeholders. The consultation will be available via the Council's on-line consultation portal as well as hard copy. The report was considered at Place Scrutiny Committee on 13th April 2015 as part of Pre-Cabinet Scrutiny.

6.6.2 Any amendments to the draft strategy following this period of consultation will be agreed with the Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Director for Place.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.7.1 An equality Impact assessment has not been undertaken for this exercise. However, the Parks Service as a whole, has a current Equality Assessment (EA) that is regularly reviewed.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Risk	Impact/Likelihood High (H) Medium (M) Low (L)	Mitigation
Lack of strategic direction in service delivery and reduction in standards	H / H	Draft strategy agreed with resulting action plan implemented and monitored.

6.9 Value for Money

6.9.1 The strategy recognises that Value for Money is integral to service delivery.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

6.10.1 Community safety is recognised as central to service delivery.

6.11 Environmental Impact

6.11.1 The Strategy recognises the significant positive impact on the environment and the importance of sustainable working practises.

7. Background Papers

7.1 No background papers are included within this report.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Parks and Green Spaces Strategy 2015 – 2020 (draft)