

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 JUNE 2014

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES  
STRATEGY HIGH LEVEL ACTION PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- This report provides an update of plans and progress on the High Level Action Plan created as part of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2013 – 2018, reviewed and adopted by Council in October 2013.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**That:**

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| <b>(A)</b> | <b>The Committee scrutinise the detailed plans and projects to progress the High Level Action Plan.</b> |
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The original Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2007-2012 formed the policy framework under which Parks Management Plans for individual sites have been developed and consulted upon. Following an extensive consultation process it defined the key objectives relating to the management and development of the Council's open spaces.
- 1.2 The original strategy was first presented to the (former) Policy Development Scrutiny Committee for comment and consideration

on 20 March 2007. Subsequently, the Strategy was open to public consultation during July 2007 prior to its adoption.

- 1.3 Results and achievements against the previous strategy were reported to Environment Scrutiny on 13 September 2011 and it was agreed that it should be reviewed and an updated draft that was appropriate for the next 5 years brought forward.
  - 1.4 The original strategy was reviewed and revised in 2013. The draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2013-18 was presented to the Environment Scrutiny Committee for comment and consideration on 26 February 2013.
  - 1.5 The draft strategy was subsequently open to public consultation prior to submission to Executive on 1 October 2013 and subsequent adoption by Council on 16 October 2013.
  - 1.6 A High Level Action Plan was devised in conjunction with this to guide specific projects identified from the aims of the revised strategy.
- 2.0 Report
- 2.1 Green spaces represent one of the things that are best about East Herts and are consistently seen as important by our customers. The strategy sets out the policy framework for the parks and open spaces owned and managed by East Herts Council for the five years to 2018.
  - 2.2 The purpose of both the strategy and the High Level Action Plan is to ensure that parks and open spaces, as a valuable natural resource, are managed and developed in a responsible and effective way.
  - 2.3 The strategy identified that parks and open spaces serve different needs and groups, and aims to deliver quality and accessible services described in the context of:
    - Parks for people
    - Parks for recreation and enjoyment
    - Parks for wildlife, conservation and heritage
  - 2.4 The High Level Action Plan agreed by Council on 16 October 2013 described specific aims which were new and actionable arising

from the strategy in the context of these three principles. It was not a full list of activities undertaken in this service area but was intended to give a strategic view of direction that outlined any significant changes in provision.

2.5 This update of Plans and Progress provides Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the operational outline of work to be carried out to deliver the aims and objectives identified in the High Level Action Plan. It is presented within a framework of the seven agreed headings:

- Identify specific projects to support the Council's Health and Wellbeing and Ageing Well agendas
- Identify opportunities to improve formal sports provision on open spaces with the Council's Leisure Services Contractor
- Improve the integration of open space improvement plans with the Development Management process to determine how Section 106 contributions are allocated
- Deliver the plans to ensure that minor sites in towns fit with the management plans of the major parks in the context of green infrastructure planning
- Improve the play value of existing sites through innovative approaches that appeal to young people
- Work with partners and across directorates to identify needs and deliver projects to ensure sustainable drainage legislation and water framework directive requirements are incorporated into plans when developing open spaces
- Develop partnerships and encourage local groups and organisations to better utilise our open space resources

2.6 Individual projects have been devised under these headings and work continues to progress them within existing budgets and subject to successfully securing additional external funding where necessary.

2.7 This information is presented in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** - 'Environment Scrutiny Report – Update of Plans and Progress – May 2014'.

2.8 In addition to the projects identified in the detailed action plan, further small scale / ad hoc works are undertaken by the service. These are on-going improvements or particular issues identified from routine open space inspections. Some examples of these works for 2013/14 are included in **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** - "Parks & Open Spaces Projects reviews and achievements 2013/14".

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

### Background Papers

Report to Policy Development Scrutiny Committee - Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Green Flag Award accreditation - 20 March 2007  
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=3363> Item 8

Report to Executive - Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2007 and status report on current projects - 4 September 2007  
<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeeld=119&MeetingId=518&DF=04%2f09%2f2007&Ver=2> Item 8

Report to Environment Scrutiny Committee - Parks and Open Spaces Development Programme – Progress Report – 13 September 2011  
<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=154&MId=1404&Ver=4> - Item 282

Report to Environment Scrutiny Committee – Review of Parks and Open Spaces Strategy – 26 February 2013  
<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=154&MId=2080&Ver=4> - Item - 615

Report to Executive – Draft Parks & Open Spaces Strategy – 5 March 2013  
<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=119&MId=2121&Ver=4> - Item 645

Report to Executive – Review of Parks and Open Spaces Strategy - 1 October 2013  
<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=119>

[9&Mid=2125&Ver=4](#) - Item 260

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