

## For publication

### Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2022 – 2030 (L000)

<b>Meeting:</b>	Council
<b>Date:</b>	23 February 2022
<b>Cabinet portfolio:</b>	Health and Wellbeing
<b>Directorate:</b>	Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing
<b>For publication</b>	

#### 1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To seek Council approval of the Chesterfield Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, 2022 – 2030.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That a new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy be approved and adopted for the period 2022 through 2030.
- 2.2 That the Service Director for Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing be invited to develop a five-year costed delivery plan, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, to give effect to the Strategy's aims and objectives and for this delivery plan to be presented for approval at future meetings of the Cabinet and full Council.

#### 3.0 Reason for recommendations

- 3.1 The Council requires a robust needs assessment and evidence base relating to green space to meet statutory planning requirements within the Local Plan Framework, and the parks and open spaces strategy supports this.

- 3.2 Having a modern and relevant Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will enable the Council to strategically plan and prioritise resources across the Borough, and to work appropriately with developers and other stakeholders.
- 3.3 The effective management of our parks and open spaces will continue to support the Borough in being a great destination; and a healthy and active place to live and work.

#### **4.0 Report details**

##### **Background**

- 4.1 The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy establishes an understanding and ambition for the borough until 2030. A robust evidence base has been drawn from national policies and initiatives, local consultation and analysis of existing parks and open space provision. This has enabled the development of local standards and policies, which provide a framework for this strategy. The updated strategy, following consultation, is attached at Appendix A, parts 1 and 2.
- 4.2 The draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was considered at the Cabinet meeting on 6 July 2021 where it was resolved that the draft strategy be approved for wider consultation.

##### **Consultation on the Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2022 - 2030**

- 4.3 The consultation programme for the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy took place between August and October 2021. This programme, in addition to ongoing internal officer engagement, included:
- An online survey for members of the public to respond.
  - A session with the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
  - An online survey for stakeholder groups such as 'Friends' groups and Sports Clubs to respond.
  - A presentation and online survey for the Councils Equalities and Diversity Group.

- 4.4 Initially the consultation was held over a four-week period; this was subsequently extended to six weeks to enable further engagement of stakeholders in the consultation process.
- 4.5 Fifty responses to the online consultation were received. The comments and responses are set out in Appendix B.
- 4.6 The consultation with Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee enabled further discussion and consideration of key issues, the feedback is set out in Appendix C.
- 4.7 Feedback from the consultation was positive and supportive of the strategy including its key themes and direction of travel.
- 4.8 Due to the overall positive and supportive nature of the feedback there have been no significant changes to the strategy following the consultation.
- 4.9 The vision has been simplified and the aims have been updated to more overtly set out the priority to reduce inequality in areas of highest deprivation. Clarity has also been provided over the development and use of local standards and policies to provide a framework for prioritisation and resource allocation for management and improvement.
- 4.10 Other amendments in relation to the structure of document have been made in response to the feedback received. This includes for example, the inclusion of an executive summary to help capture for the reader the key areas of the strategy.

### **Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2022 - 2030**

- 4.11 The updated vision, aims and themes for the strategy, that will set the framework for the development of the five-year costed delivery plan, are set out in the paragraphs below. The final version of the strategy is attached at Appendix A, parts 1 and 2.
- 4.12 The vision for the parks and open spaces across the borough is:  
  
'For every park and open space to offer a high quality and fulfilling experience; supporting biodiversity, promoting health, well-being and enjoyment, and improving the quality of life for residents and visitors to the borough.'

4.13 The aims of the strategy are:

- To provide clear and transparent guidance and priorities for improving parks and open spaces.
- To reduce inequality in those areas of highest deprivation according to the index multiple deprivation by providing good quality and accessible parks and open spaces.
- To enhance local leadership and commitment to improving and investing in parks and open spaces.
- To provide high quality evidence to underpin and support funding bids to improve parks and open spaces including community engagement opportunities.
- To feed into and maximise visibility within the Council's key strategy documents the Council Plan and Local Plan.
- To enhance our contribution to key agenda's including the climate emergency, nature recovery, improving accessibility and responding the borough's challenging health and wellbeing profile.
- To support negotiation with developers for 'planning gain and support' for open space investment / provision across the Borough.
- To develop parks and open spaces using local standards, evidence base and policies to provide a framework for prioritisation and resource allocation for management and improvement.

4.14 The key themes that set the delivery context for the strategy are focussed on:

- Using a clear approach for investment in parks and open spaces
- Using our resources effectively and sustainably
- Increasing the use of our parks and open spaces
- Engaging with our community and partners effectively

4.15 The updated and refreshed strategy will become the key document guiding the Council's management of and investment in its parks and open spaces until 2030. By adopting this strategy, the Council will have:

- Clear and transparent guidance and priorities for improving its parks and open spaces, to meet the needs of community in providing open space in the borough, setting the context for the development of a five-year costed delivery plan.
- Evidence of local leadership on and commitment to parks and open spaces, to underpin bids for funding their development.

- Clear co-ordination with the Council Plan and the adopted Local Plan.
- An evidence base and local standards to underpin the negotiation of 'planning gain' for open space investment / provision across the Borough.

4.16 This report is due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 22 February, 2022 where it is recommended that the report be supported and referred to Council for approval.

## **5.0 Alternative options**

5.1 The alternative option would have been to not develop a parks and open spaces strategy and subsequent 5-year costed delivery plan and continue with current arrangements whereby the Council Plan provides the broad strategic framework and activities are guided by different team service plans.

5.2 The preferred option, as covered in this report, supports both the strategic need and operational delivery requirements to maintain high standards by investing in key parks, open spaces and play facilities including increasing biodiversity and carbon capture whilst maintaining resident satisfaction with parks and open spaces.

5.3 The preferred option will support the Council to target resources effectively and efficiently through using the clear framework that the parks and open spaces strategy provides.

## **6.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money**

6.1 No specific financial implications have been identified from the consultation on the strategy.

6.2 To maintain the quality and the desired levels of positive customer experience across our parks and open space, the Council, in addition to its general fund resource support, will continue its highly successful approach to securing additional external funding to enable the progressive development of the Councils parks and open spaces through the strategy. This includes:

- Council funding: capital and revenue funding allocated to deliver facilities and improvements within the Council's ownership
- CIL and Section 106 developer contributions
- Grant funding for example - Landfill Tax Credits

6.3 In the last five years the Council has enabled the investment of £1.6m in parks and open space infrastructure, in addition to the services core general fund resource allocation which is currently £2.1m per annum.

## **7.0 Implications for consideration – Legal**

7.1 The Council is required to meet statutory planning requirements including compliance with the NPPF as part of its Local Plan. A robust parks and open space evidence base has been used in the development of the strategy and as a result will support such compliance.

7.2 Planning development for the borough and associated decisions require robust strategic needs and evidence being in place in event of challenge this strategy will support this.

## **8.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources**

8.1 The Environmental Services section has recently completed a service redesign which has considered at its heart how the alignment of the street scene and green spaces teams can become more focussed on service delivery through the priorities as outlined in the strategy.

## **9.0 Implications for consideration – Council plan**

9.1 The parks and open spaces strategy positively contributes to the following council plan objectives:

- Improving quality of life for local people.
- Improving our environment and enhancing community safety for all our communities and future generations.
- Helping our communities to improve their health and wellbeing.

9.2 Access to good quality, well-maintained public spaces can help to improve both physical and mental health by encouraging people to walk more, play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment. We will, through this strategy encourage the use of parks and green spaces by all sections of our community. Open space, as we have seen through the

Covid-19 pandemic, has played and continues to play an integral role in supporting the wellbeing of communities.

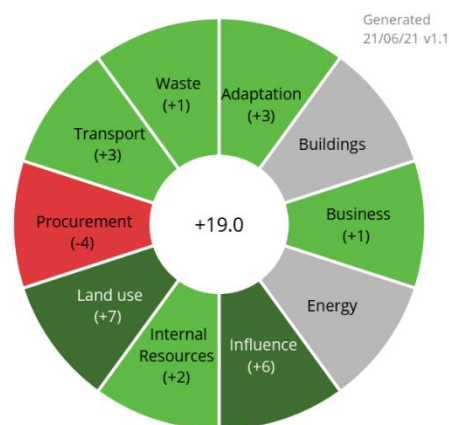
9.3 We will through the strategy continue to work with partners to maximise the benefits to physical and mental health conditions as part of a 'natural environment health service'. The council through working with valued partners, will continue to develop opportunities for using green social prescribing to better support and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing.

9.4 Providing good quality open space also supports the Councils wider ambitions regarding making Chesterfield a thriving borough by actively contributing to making Chesterfield a great place to live, work and visit.

### 10.0 Implications for consideration - Climate change

10.1 The impact of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is defined by the Council's Climate Change Impact Assessment Decision Making Tool and a summary image of the assessment is included below at 10.2.

10.2



CBC has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 (8 years and 6 months away).

10.3 Our parks and open spaces make a significant contribution to our commitment to become a net carbon neutral council by 2030 and borough by 2050. This includes maximising sustainable principles at all our facilities and in the way we manage and maintain our parks and open spaces; but also, in seeking to enhance biodiversity. We have an overarching duty to consider the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment. In the management,

maintenance and development of open space biodiversity is a key theme that this strategy supports.

10.4 Through the strategy and the operational delivery plans that will support it, the service will build climate adaptability into the maintenance of Chesterfields parks and open spaces thus enabling these areas to play an important role in reducing the borough’s carbon and environmental footprint.

10.5 A full Climate Change Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix D.

**11.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity**

11.1 The Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix E. No negative impacts for groups with protected characteristics have been identified.

**12.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management**

12.1 Risk matrix

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Strategy not adopted	High	Low	The strategy has been developed to fully reflect the challenges of land use and open space development. It has been informed by a varied evidence base and as such it supports the Council vision and council plan objectives. A full consultation programme has been undertaken to ensure local input and engagement to reflect local need.	Medium	Low
Insufficient resources available to deliver the Parks	High	Medium	The Council will continue to maximise its use of internal resource and will compliment this by	Medium	Low



and Open Spaces Strategy 2022 – 2030.			continuing its highly successful approach of attracting external funding, in parallel with council funding sources, where appropriate, to support the delivery of the strategy. Following adoption of the strategy a five-year costed delivery plan will be produced.		
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### Decision information

<b>Key decision number</b>	<b>1033</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>ALL</b>

### Document information

<b>Report author</b>	
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<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix A Part 1	Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2022 – 2030
Appendix A part 2	Evidence Base
Appendix B	General Online Consultation Comments
Appendix C	Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel Comments
Appendix D	Climate Change Impact Assessment
Appendix E	Equalities Impact Assessment