

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2009/2010 REPORT NO. 236

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

CABINET: 24 March 2010

COUNCIL: 31 March 2010

Agenda – Part 1**Item: 8****Subject: Adoption of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for Enfield****Wards: All****Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Michael Lavender****REPORT OF:**

Director of Place Shaping & Enterprise

Contact Officer and telephone number: Lovelace Poku; Tel: 0208 379 3870

E-mail: lovelace.poku@enfield.gov.uk**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is to coordinate improvements in provision, quality, accessibility, management and promote the use and enjoyment of parks and open spaces to more individuals and groups in the community.
- 1.2 The Enfield Parks and Open Spaces Strategy sets out a shared vision for the network of open spaces across the Borough and aims to ensure they deliver their potential for cross-cutting place shaping benefits. The strategy has been developed through public consultation with the community. A 10-year Delivery Plan and three-year Rolling Action Plan accompany the Strategy to ensure that the objectives of the Strategy are delivered.
- 1.3 Copies of the Strategy, Rolling Action Plan and Consultation Statement will be placed in the Group offices and Members' library.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet recommends to Council the

- 2.1 Adoption of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy together with its Delivery Plan and Rolling Action Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Enfield Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is the result of a comprehensive review of open space across the Borough. It encompasses all public and private open spaces across the Borough including parks, housing open land, allotments, cemeteries and amenity space. This wide range of different types of open spaces makes a valuable contribution to the quality of life and the character of places where people want to live, work and visit. The open space network, the spaces and the links in between, provides a green infrastructure that fulfils a wide range of functions, including formal and informal recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat and flood catchment areas.
- 3.2 The purpose of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is to coordinate improvements in provision, quality, accessibility, management and promote the use and enjoyment of parks and open spaces to more individuals and groups in the community. Facilities will be improved in response to evidence of deficiency in certain areas identified in the 2006 Open Space and Sports Assessment and its accompanying residents' survey (2006) and also the extensive public consultation on the Strategy itself (2010).
- 3.3 The Strategy will be a key component of the Place Shaping Agenda for delivering with our partners and stakeholders the Council's vision of "**a healthy, prosperous, cohesive community living in a borough that is safe, clean and green**" that is envisaged in Enfield's Sustainable Community Strategy (2007 – 2017). Key Strategic objectives can be advanced through how we manage our open spaces especially:
- Catering for children and young people
 - Providing safer and stronger communities
 - Encouraging healthier communities
 - Providing services for older people
 - Promoting economic development and enterprise
- 3.4 Other Council strategies, including the Local Development Framework, Local Implementation Plan/Borough Spending Plan, Enfield Sport, Physical Activity and Physical Education Strategy, Heritage Strategy, Arts and Creativity Strategy and Youth Strategy have informed the production of this Strategy. The document will be essential for attracting external funding and ensuring that s.106 development contributions are used efficiently to improve the open spaces in the Borough.
- 3.5 The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will provide a framework for the delivery of services and future improvement action by the Council, our community partners and stakeholders involved in providing, managing and enjoying open spaces across the Borough. Fundamental to the Strategy is partnership working, both within the Council and with external partners and

stakeholders, including local residents, local groups and friends of parks groups. The Strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure we are working towards the vision set for the Strategy.

3.6 The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will:

- Sit below the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Place Shaping Strategy as a delivery tool for parks and open spaces;
- Make open spaces in Enfield places for everyone;
- Deliver high quality open spaces in partnership;
- Create sustainable open spaces for the future;
- Protect and manage the exceptional quality and diversity of Enfield's open spaces.
- Provide a 10-year Delivery Plan and three-year Rolling Action Plan to ensure that the objectives of the Strategy, including addressing the needs of the place shaping areas, are delivered;
- Investigate current funding options and arrangements (including s106 and the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy)
- Prioritise capital and maintenance expenditure consistent with the Strategy Vision.

3.7 This report presents the main elements of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and asks Cabinet to recommend to Council the adoption of the Parks and Open Space Strategy together with its 10-year Delivery Plan and three-year Rolling Action Plan.

4. DEFINITION, VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The focus of the Strategy is on green open spaces and includes the following:

- Parks
- Playing Pitches and Sports Facilities
- Allotments
- School Playing Fields
- Cemeteries and Churchyards
- Linear Open Space/Green Corridors
- Children's Play Areas
- Natural or Semi-Natural Urban Green Spaces

4.2 This list provides the backbone of identifying the function of each open space in the Borough and can be used in determining whether there is enough supply or a demand for a particular type of open space.

4.3 In addition to the list above, the management regimes for particular types of open space are categorised by taking into account the size, function and use of each particular open space. A management framework for Council-managed spaces, therefore, has been categorised in the following way:

1. Premier Parks – these parks may have Green Flag status and be regularly used by visitors to the Borough. They may host a number of events throughout the year.
2. Country Parks – large parks which are characteristic of the wider countryside, containing areas of natural habitats such as woodlands and wildflower meadows.
3. Recreation Grounds – predominantly areas for formal and informal sport and physical play.
4. Local Parks – these are generally small to medium size and are found within short walks of residential areas. They might be places for walking the dog, jogging, children’s play, or private contemplation.
5. Allotments.
6. Cemeteries.
7. Informal spaces – includes areas of incidental open space outside residential development, wide verges and small areas with unclear boundaries.

4.4 A vision with 16 objectives have been developed with the aid of a Residents’ Working Group and the results of the public consultation that took place earlier this year. The vision and objectives are outlined below:

By 2020 Enfield will be successful in:

A. Making open spaces in Enfield places for everyone

- *Start with the open space*
- *Protect existing parks and open space of value and create additional open space in areas of deficiency as part of a master planned approach.*
- *Create safe places*
- *Accessible open spaces*
- *Deliver activities for everyone promoting health and well being*
- *Deliver a programme of public arts and events*
- *Amenities for everyone*

B. Delivering high quality open spaces in partnership

- *Develop Local Involvement*

C. Creating sustainable open spaces in the future

- *Respond to climate change*
- *Seek energy efficient buildings and facilities*
- *Deliver economic prosperity*

D. Protecting and managing the exceptional quality and diversity of Enfield's open spaces

- *Enhance and maintain biodiversity*
- *Protect Heritage*
- *Create well maintained open spaces*
- *The use of open space as an educational resource*
- *Building on success*

5. DELIVERY PLAN AND ROLLING ACTION PLAN

- 5.1 The strategic objectives have been translated into a number of actions to be achieved within the 10-year lifespan of the Strategy. The Delivery Plan sets out in general terms how the actions will be resourced, which partners will lead each project, the anticipated timescale and how the projects will be monitored to ensure successful delivery.
- 5.2 The Delivery Plan is comprised of actions that relate to both physical and non-physical improvements. These include:
- Provision of new open space
 - Improvements to the quality, quantity and accessibility of existing open space
 - The adoption of specific strategies to focus on particular demands for facilities and services
 - The adoption of standards to alleviate deficiencies
 - Supporting Central Government initiatives
 - Being proactive in seeking external sources of funding
 - Empowering the local community to take positive action on parks and open space issues
 - Researching and seeking new ways to minimise our carbon footprint
 - Conservation and management of habitats and open spaces
- 5.3 The Delivery Plan will be instrumental in joining up cross-partnership working between services to ensure resources are prudently allocated towards delivering joint benefit. Successful delivery will depend both on adherence to the framework outlined in the Strategy and the implementation of the Rolling Action Plan.
- 5.4 The function of the Rolling Action Plan is to coordinate specific projects from inception to completion over a three year cycle. Furthermore, The Rolling Action Plan distils the Delivery Plan into detailed physical entities, which are based on Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time based (SMART) objectives.

- 5.5 Each project will be aligned to achieve one or more of the actions stated in the Delivery Plan. The Action Plan will also provide the basis for monitoring the success of the Strategy, as well as identifying the funding source, cost and timescale. All projects across the Council and external partners that have an open space element will be listed and their progress monitored. Implementation of the Rolling Action Plan is an iterative process, which will require annual changes.
- 5.6 To ensure cross-partnership working, a Parks and Open Spaces Steering Group with a membership of key officers will be formed and led by the Place Shaping & Enterprise Directorate.

6. MONITORING

- 6.1 Monitoring and review of the Strategy throughout its implementation will be essential to its success as a focussed and responsive tool for improving the Borough's environment and the lives of local residents. The Delivery Plan monitors a range of national indicators to ensure that service to the Council's customers is in line with national standards.
- 6.2 The recently formed Place Shaping and Enterprise Performance Board will oversee the implementation and assess the effectiveness of each project. Its principal role is to provide a strategic overview of the development, delivery and monitoring of significant projects within the Directorate, review delivery milestones and budget status, advise on the necessary actions required to mitigate risk and provide guidance on potential partnering and funding opportunities.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Following recommendations from the Environment, Parks & Leisure Scrutiny Panel (EPLSP) on 8 May 2009, the Strategy has been developed with the help of a working group comprised of residents with an interest in parks and open spaces. Several meetings have taken place with a number of issues being carried forward into priorities and subsequent actions. This contribution from informed members of the community has helped to influence the content of the Strategy and ensure that it remains 'Enfield specific'.
- 7.2 In the lead up to the public consultation period, a draft copy of the Strategy was presented to the EPLSP on 6 October 2009 for pre-consultation comments. More than 50 residents, local organisations and friends of parks groups attended to raise questions, comments and issues, which have fed into this finalised Strategy.
- 7.3 A full programme of consultation took place over 12 weeks (December 2009 – March 2010). This involved:
- An initial letter and email to 850 residents, local groups, stakeholders, businesses and organisations.

- An article in 'Our Enfield' ('Our Enfield' is posted to every household in the Borough).
- Hard copies of the Strategy and consultation details at every library and Council building, this includes Leisure Centres and every civic building.
- Seven drop-in sessions at selected libraries across the Borough.
- Follow up articles in 'Our Enfield', North London Journal, Enfield Advertiser and the 'Enfield Independent'.
- Presentations to the Youth Engagement Panel and Environment Thematic Action Group.
- A consultation workshop, to which all the friends of parks and local environmental groups were invited.
- Focus group meetings with a Primary School, Youth Forum, Enfield Community Empowerment Network, a group of disabled people set up by the Integrated Disabilities Team and Southgate College.

7.4 In total 409 responses were received from 179 respondents made up of individuals, organisations, Local groups and Friends of Parks. 142 of the comments received were via a questionnaire and 7 were received via a young people's questionnaire. 30 respondents sent in detailed comments which totalled 260 comments.

7.5 In general, most respondents were supportive of the Strategy as a whole. A number of comments were made in relation to particular issues in their local park or open space. Some of the overriding issue to emerge were;

- Security and feeling safer in parks
- Staff levels
- Maintenance (regimes and funding)
- The role of Friends Groups
- The effectiveness of policing in the parks
- Community involvement between schools, youths and the Council

7.6 All comments made about the Strategy have been addressed in the consultation report (available in the Members' Library and Group Offices) and have been reflected in the Strategy.

8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 All alternative options have been considered as part of the Strategy's development and refined through the consultation process. Details of this can

be found in the attached Parks and Open Spaces Strategy consultation report.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is proposed that Enfield's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will have a 10-year lifespan and will be the central document for integrating Council and community open space objectives. It is noted that the Council has developed, or is intending to prepare separate strategies for cemeteries, allotments and sport and leisure facilities. It is recommended that the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy should be the integrated Strategy, below which dedicated sub-strategies and action plans will address each of these specific areas.

10. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

10.1 Financial Implications

- 10.1.1 The Strategy includes Delivery Plan Options (Annex 1), which set out the anticipated sources of funding, required to achieve each of the actions identified. Each specific proposal within the Delivery Plan will be subject to an appraisal of the resource requirement prior to its implementation and correct processes will be followed to ensure that the required funding is in place. As indicated in Annex 1, where possible the plan will be delivered within existing budgetary resources. However, it does indicate that external funding will be sought to deliver the ambitions of the Strategy.

10.2 Legal Implications

- 10.2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 imposes a duty on Local Authorities to prepare a Local Development Framework with Local Development Documents setting out the Local Authority's vision for spatial planning. Specifically, the London Plan places an obligation on Local Authorities to develop an Open Space Strategy setting out the Authority's objectives on Open Spaces within its area. In formulating its Strategy, the Authority needs to consult with the public and its local strategic partners. The formulation of a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy as described in this report is in accordance with the Council's duty.

11. KEY RISKS

- 11.1 Failure to adopt the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy would leave the Borough without an up to date Strategy since 2005. A revised Strategy must be flexible to cope with the challenges that are faced in the next 10 years and still provide excellent services in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy and Place Shaping Strategy. Lack of an adopted Parks and Open Spaces Strategy would hamper efforts to secure external funding for initiatives

and projects aimed at improving the local environment and enhancing public facilities and services.

12. COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 It is the intention of this Strategy to increase public use of parks and open spaces for the benefit of everyone, particularly young people and the black and minority ethnic community.

13. PUTTING ENFIELD FIRST

- 13.1 The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy meets all the aims of the Council's Business Plan:

Aim 1: Build prosperous, sustainable communities – This will be achieved through the Place Shaping Priority Areas and the significant contribution of open spaces to making any community sustainable.

Aim 2: A cleaner, greener, sustainable Enfield – The Strategy describes how the Council will protect and enhance the 2,005 hectares of open space in the Borough.

Aim 3: Ensure every child matters and provide high quality education for all – The Strategy will recognise and target particular areas that need play spaces for young and older children. The Strategy will identify certain areas that have a wealth of wildlife and/or cultural heritage and use these as the means of allowing people of all ages to experience these educational opportunities.

Aim 4: A safer Enfield – The Strategy will put in place measures to ensure all residents feel safe to enjoy their local park without the fear of crime.

Aim 5: A healthier Enfield where people are able to live independent lives – The Strategy will promote the use of parks and open spaces for outdoor recreation and sport. It will endeavour to move with the times and be innovative in how the Borough's open spaces are used.

Aim 6: Provide high quality and efficient services – The Strategy will address management and maintenance of the Borough's parks and open spaces to ensure every park is managed efficiently and effectively.

Background papers

Final Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment

Parks and Open Spaces Consultation report

(The above documents have been placed in the Members' Library and Group Offices for reference)