

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Update

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economy and Waste

28 March 2023

Exempt

None

Purpose

To give an update on the Open Spaces Assessment currently being undertaken by external leisure consultants Knight, Kavanagh & Page.

Recommendations

- 1) to endorse the approach outlined in the update.
- 2) To approve the timetable in bringing the strategies to Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee until the final drafts have been received and processed.

Executive Summary

The draft version of the Open Spaces Assessment has only just been received by officers, and after an initial appraisal there are some areas of the document that officers would like to see amended and some greater depth investigated in areas where there are perceived gaps. Amendments to the open spaces assessment include the inclusion of the multi-use play areas and outdoor gym provision and community spaces into the document.

The outcomes of these adaptations have the potential to change some of the recommendations stated in the current draft documents, so at this point it is felt that discussing the documents is premature and could lead to inaccurate information being fed back to members which could have a detrimental effect on the expectations of the final delivery plan associated with each strategy.

As of yet there have been no discussions of the strategy findings with any elected member, and officers are still analysing, digesting and processing the copious amounts of data held within the reports. The final drafts of the reports are expected at the end of April 2023, at which point all of the current proposed amendments will have been addressed, thus allowing for a more comprehensive detailed report in order to facilitate further discussion at H&WB Scrutiny.

Financial Implications

There are no expected financial implications due to recommended delay, amendments, and adaptations.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

N/A

Equalities Implications

N/A

Sustainability Implications

Consideration of the open spaces assessment and the other leisure strategy documents collectively at final draft stage will ensure that none are undertaken in isolation. In completing each area of work in this way it remains relevant, fit for purpose, future proof and as sustainable as possible at the current time.

Background Information

The Council needed to renew the Open Spaces Assessment as part of the data and evidence required for the local plan. The data produced from this document will also help enable the authority to make informed decisions on its future leisure offer. The production of the Open Spaces Assessment was procured via tender within the same specification as the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and the Indoor and Built Facilities strategy and the consultants Knight, Kavanagh and Page were the successful submission. These documents have a projected completion date of the end of April 2023.

The Open Spaces Assessment

The global Covid19 pandemic in March 2020 resulted in an unprecedented shift on the use of the Council's open spaces for personal exercise. It is therefore proposed that the Council's open spaces assessment is updated to both reflect this continued high demand and usage to support the evidence required for the local plan development. National planning policy requires that local plans should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and sports facilities. In order to appropriately plan to achieve this objective, the Council needs to be able to establish what existing and future needs are/will be, and whether the existing facilities are capable of meeting those needs. Having appropriate evidence will also support the council in seeking appropriate contributions from developments towards the provision of suitable facilities. Therefore, the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy and the Open Spaces assessment are required to be undertaken to provide the evidence for the local plan.

Report Author

Karen Moss – Sports Development Manager

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