

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS)** will be held as a **REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM** on **THURSDAY, 8TH OCTOBER 2020** at **6:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

## **AGENDA**

### **APOLOGIES**

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) meeting held on 10th September 2020.

**Contact Officer: A Green 01223 752549**

**2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary and other interests in relation to any Agenda item.

**3. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS** (Pages 7 - 14)

A copy of the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**Contact Officer: H Peacey 01223 752548**

**4. HEALTHY OPEN SPACES STRATEGY** (Pages 15 - 142)

The Panel are to receive the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy.

**Contact Officer: H Lack 01480 388658**

**5. DIGITAL STRATEGY DISCUSSION**

The Executive Councillor for Corporate Services and the Assistant Director – Transformation will be in attendance for a discussion on the Digital Strategy. Members will receive a presentation prior to the discussion.

**Contact Officer: T Evans 07729 479446**

**6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 143 - 146)**

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is to be presented to the Panel.

**Contact Officer: A Green 01223 752549**

30th day of September 2020



Head of Paid Service

**Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests**

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non - Statutory Disclosable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

**Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings**

The District Council permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with people about what is happening at meetings.

Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with [guidelines](#) agreed by the Council.

**Please contact Mr Adam Green, Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), Tel No. 01223 752549/e-mail Adam.Green@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.**

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#), together with a link to the Broadcast of the meeting.

**Emergency Procedure**

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.



## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS) held as a the remote meeting via Zoom on Thursday, 10th September 2020

PRESENT: Councillor D M Tysoe – Chairman.

Councillors T D Alban, B S Banks, S J Criswell, J W Davies, Ms A Diaz, Mrs A Dickinson, D A Giles, Mrs J Tavener and Mrs S R Wilson.

APOLOGIES: None.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, S Bywater and D N Keane.

### **5 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 5th March 2020 and 17th June 2020 were approved as a correct record by the Panel.

### **6 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **7 NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st September 2020 to 31st December 2020.

The Chairman invited the Executive Councillor for Corporate Services to update the Panel on the Council's Digital Strategy. In doing so, the Executive Councillor informed Members that the Strategy focused on how the Council used digital technology to improve the efficiency of its back-office processes and customer interactions. It would cover elements of people and process to ensure that as an organisation Officers had the tools and skills to fully utilise digital approaches and solutions to improve efficient and effectiveness of operations. The Executive Councillor drew attention to the fact that full fibre broadband was not covered by the Digital Strategy but would be within the remit of the Economic Recovery and Place Strategies. Members were informed that the Digital Strategy would update and refine rather than radically change the current arrangements. A more detailed update would be presented at the Panel meeting in October.

### **8 CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

With the aid of a report by the Operational Manager (People) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency performance for 2019/20 was presented to the Panel. By way of background,

Members were informed that the three Councils had decided to extend the shared service agreement to 2022.

In 2019/20 there had been £2.2m spent on adaptation work in Huntingdonshire, £1.3m of which had been funded through the Better Care Fund. The average time to complete adaptation work, both small and large scale projects, had decreased since 2017/18. Currently a Business Case was being prepared for submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government seeking an increase in the amount the Council received in funding for statutory adaptation work. This was because there was a gap between what was received and what was required to be spent.

The Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency Manager added that a high percentage of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) work was related to bathing. In addition to this work the Agency was carrying out work on behalf of self-funders which had given the Agency an additional revenue stream. Members were informed that Cambridgeshire Homes Improvement Agency had been described by a Regional Advisor at Foundations as a dynamic and forward looking organisation.

In response to a question from Councillor Alban about the statutory adaptation work, the Panel was informed that the cost of the work carried out in Huntingdonshire had been in excess of the funding received therefore creating a funding gap. It was hoped the Business Case would mean the funding gap was reduced. It was highlighted that one of the issues for Huntingdonshire was its large aging population, which was more likely to need home adaptation work.

Councillor Alban then asked a question about self-funders and the service offered to them. In response Members were informed that DFGs were means tested, which meant that there were some residents who required adaptation work but who were not eligible for a DFG. This had led to a rise in self-funding adaptation work and in return the Agency had been able to offer advice and assistance and could source the appropriate contractors to carry out the work.

Following a question from Councillor Giles about whether the Fire Service got involved and whether the Agency had volunteers working for it, the Panel was informed that whilst the Fire Service did identify vulnerable people, they did not have much involvement with Agency work. It was also confirmed that the Agency did not use volunteers.

The Chairman concluded the item by stating, on behalf of the Panel, that the good work of the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency should be publicised more widely.

## **9 STREET CLEANSING SERVICE REVIEW**

By means of a presentation by the Street Cleansing Manager the findings of the Street Cleansing Service Review were presented to the Panel. Members were provided with an overview of the service and key performance areas including internal performance inspections, number of service requests, the service request response rate, budget and cost per household. It was reported that Huntingdonshire District Council was currently the best performing benchmark

authority in relation to cost per household. A copy of slides is appended in the Minute Book.

Members were informed that the average age of the workforce was high as 22 operatives out of a total of 27 were over 55 years of age. There was a lack of people joining the industry but Officers were looking at apprenticeships as a way of addressing this issue.

The Panel was informed of a number of innovations being undertaken by the service, including the installation of bin sensors, which would mean bins were emptied when required rather than on a regular basis.

Following the presentation Councillor Giles asked whether the new recycling bins were effective in assisting the Council in meeting targets and reducing costs. In response, the Panel was informed that there had been positive feedback about the recycling bins and that after an initial bedding in period people were now using them appropriately. In addition, the Council was currently achieving a 60% recycling rate and contamination was low. The latter was important as a contamination rate over 7% meant financial penalties of up to £100k could be imposed on the Council.

Councillor Dickinson asked why Ramsey did not have a specially dedicated team but was informed that Ramsey did not require one. Councillor Dickinson also suggested that the Council should continue to provide written information to accompany the electronic information as not every resident had access to social media or the internet. The Street Cleansing Service Manager assured Members that the Council would continue to provide information in both formats.

The Street Cleansing Service Manager was asked by Councillor Wilson whether the roll out of recycling bins and bin sensors could be spread across the District. In response, the Panel was informed that the current situation was under review and that if successful and circumstances justified it, then it was something which could be implemented across the District.

A comment was made by Councillor Alban that communication could be improved if Refuse Operatives stuck messages on top of bins. Such a practise was already employed to convey the messages about Christmas bin collections. The reasoning for this was that a higher number of residents would be exposed to the communication if it was placed on top of the bin.

## **10 REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS, ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT 2019/20**

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the 2019/20 update on the representatives on external organisations was presented to the Panel.

Following a question by Councillor Giles, the Panel was informed that the report was key because it provided democratic accountability and transparency, as well as informing the Council of crucial updates from the external organisations. Given the importance of the report, Members stated that they would like representatives to be reminded of the role they had as well as the responsibilities

that went with it, including providing appropriate feedback to the Council via the report.

Councillor Alban expressed concern that some internal drainage boards (IDBs) intend to increase their levies, therefore placing an additional financial burden upon the residents of Huntingdonshire. In response, the Panel was informed that that the Council had no influence over IDB levies but that in some cases the increases were justified, such as for maintenance. However, Council representatives could work with IDBs and where possible identify alternative funding sources to a levy increase. When the Council had been informed that an IDB intended to increase its levy, the Council included appropriate provision in its financial planning as the precept collecting authority.

Councillor Wilson commented that whilst some representatives had stated they had attended a particular number of meetings some had simply said they attended 'all' meetings. She suggested that in future all representatives should specify how many meetings they had attended. In response, the Panel was informed that it was not always known how many meetings the external organisations held during the Municipal Year. Also an external organisation's intended number of meetings does not always reflect the number of meetings that actually take place.

## **11 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY APPOINTMENT TO THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs J Tavener be appointed as the Panel's representative to the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership and that Councillor Mrs S R Wilson is appointed as the substitute Member.

## **12 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Following a short introduction from the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), the Chairman stated that the purpose of the Work Programme was to enable Overview and Scrutiny to achieve a tangible benefit for the Council and provide added value. The Chairman asked Members to volunteer to contribute to at least one study topic.

Chairman

## NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Prepared by: Councillor R Fuller, Executive Leader of the Council  
 Date of Publication: 23 September 2020  
 For Period: 1 October 2020 to 31 January 2021

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor Details		Councillor Contact Details
Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell	Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment	Care of Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon PE29 3TN  Tel: 01480 388388 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Marge.Beuttell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Marge.Beuttell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor S Bywater	Executive Councillor for Community Resilience and Well-Being	9 Crabapple Close Sawtry Huntingdon PE28 5QG  Tel: 07984 637553 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Simon.Bywater@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Simon.Bywater@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor R Fuller	Executive Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development	8 Sarah Grace Court New Road St Ives Huntingdon PE27 5DS  Tel: 01480 388311 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Ryan.Fuller@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Ryan.Fuller@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>

Councillor J A Gray	Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources	Vine Cottage 2 Station Road Catworth Huntingdon PE28 OPE  Tel: 01832 710799 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
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Councillor K Prentice	Executive Councillor for Leisure and Regulatory Services	2 Ushers Court 89 Great North Road Eaton Socon St Neots PE19 8EL  Tel: 01480 214838 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Keith.Prentice@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Keith.Prentice@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>

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Notice is hereby given of:

- Key decisions that will be taken by the Cabinet (or other decision maker)
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part).

A notice/agenda together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restrictions on their disclosure, copies may be requested by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 01480 388169 or E-mail [Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk).

Agendas may be accessed electronically at the [District Council's website](#).

Formal notice is hereby given under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that, where indicated part of the meetings listed in this notice will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See the relevant paragraphs below.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made or wishes to object to an item being considered in private may do so by emailing [Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) or by contacting the Democratic Services Team. If representations are received at least eight working days before the date of the meeting, they will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the District Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be verbally reported and considered at the meeting.

**Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) (Reason for the report to be considered in private)**

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1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the Financial and Business Affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations that are arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of or office holders under the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes:-
  - (a) To give under any announcement a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) To make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Huntingdonshire District Council  
Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

- Notes:-
- (i) Additions changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated \*\*\*
  - (ii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ## and shown in italic.

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Community Chest Grant Aid Awards 2020/21	Grants Panel	2, 14 & 28 Oct 2020  11 & 25 Nov 2020  9 & 23 Dec 2020		Claudia Deeth, Community Resilience Manager Tel No: 01480 388233 or email: Claudia.Deeth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller & S Bywater	Customers and Partnerships
Community Infrastructure Levy Governance***	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Neish	Performance and Growth

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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
"Planning for the Future" Consultation Response***	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Neish	Performance and Growth
Free Strategy***	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		Tamsin Miles, Arboricultural Officer Tel No: 01480 388679 or email: Tamsin.Miles@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Neish	Customer and Partnerships
Housing Strategy to 2025	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		David Edwards, Corporate Director (Interim) Tel No: 01480 388832 or email: David.Edwards@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Performance and Growth

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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Housing Development on Council Owned Sites##	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020	Report available but the Appendices will be exempt.	Adrian Davey, Housing Delivery Consultant Tel No: 07947 816050 or email: Adrian.Davey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	3	R Fuller	Performance and Growth
Healthy Open Spaces and Play Strategy	Cabinet	22 Oct 2020		Helen Lack, Development Manager Tel No: 01480 388658 / email Helen.Lack@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		M L Beuttell	Customers and Partnerships
Approval of Council Tax Base 2021/22	Chairman of Corporate Governance and Section 151 Officer	8 Dec 2020		Amanda Burns, Revenues and Benefits Manager Tel No: 01480 388122 or email: Anmanda.Burns@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Performance and Growth

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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Waste Minimisation Strategy***	Cabinet	10 Dec 2020		Neil Sloper, Head of Operations Tel No: 01480 388635 or email: Neil.Sloper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		Mrs M L Beuttell	Customer and Partnerships
Wickden Neighbourhood Plan	Cabinet	10 Dec 2020		Clare Bond, Planning Policy Team Leader Tel No: 01480 388435 or email: Clare.Bond@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Neish	Performance and Growth
Lettings Policy Review	Cabinet	10 Dec 2020		Jon Collen, Housing Needs and Resource Manager Tel No: 01480 388220 or email Jon.Collen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Customers and Partnerships

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**Public**  
**Key Decision - Yes**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Healthy Open Spaces Strategy

**Meeting/Date:** Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) – 8th October 2020

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment, Councillor Marge Beuttell

**Report by:** Development Manager

**Wards affected:** All

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to review and comment on the Cabinet report attached at Appendix A.



**Public  
Key Decision - Yes**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Healthy Open Spaces Strategy

**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 22nd October 2020

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment, Councillor Marge Beuttell

**Report by:** Development Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### Executive Summary:

What is the report about?

To document the journey undertaken to develop a Healthy Open Spaces Strategy for Huntingdonshire. The report will set out the evidence base and subsequent 10-year action plan which will ensure HDC is focussed on delivering healthy open spaces for our communities to enjoy, to include play, nature, access and provision.

Why is it important?

The Strategy sets the direction of focus, development and investment in the Open Spaces in Huntingdonshire. It will demonstrate through an evidence-based approach how Open Spaces support local people to live healthier lives, improve their mental health and wellbeing contribute to the fight against climate change and address social isolation

Since August 2019 a targeted Public and Stakeholder consultation has taken place to inform the themes and Vision of the strategy. Each theme identifying new and innovative way to connect with our communities and shout about our amazing Open Spaces

Vision – Embrace Your Space

Themes; Shape you Space; Create your Space; Celebrate your Space; and Reinvigorate your Space

The Vision and Themes were tested through a second round of stakeholder consultation and drove the comprehensive and collaborative Action Plan

The Cabinet/Committee is

**RECOMMENDED**

to endorse the 'Healthy Open Spaces Strategy' and the proposed 10-year action plan.



## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek endorsement of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and its vision of 'Embrace Your Space'
- 1.2 Endorse the proposed Action plan.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY**

- 2.2 Twelve months ago we embarked upon a journey to acknowledge and develop the role of our park and open spaces in our communities. We hoped to connect the more traditional approaches to outdoor play to our desire to encourage and nurture our green environment.
- 2.3 Parks and Open spaces are an essential part of what makes Huntingdonshire a special place to live and work, with 96% of our population live within a 10-minute walk of a park or Open Space. When asked, 96% of our Open Space users said they thought Open Spaces made them and others happier.
- 2.4 The Strategy both qualitatively and quantitatively explores the 500+ open space network in Huntingdonshire, whilst acknowledging that this is not a statutory service. It is hoped that the Strategy will be able to springboard a 10 year Action Plan of innovative projects and schemes to look after our spaces for the benefit of the community now and in the future.
- 2.5 The Strategy clearly demonstrates an evidence driven and tested Vision and Strategic Themes. Each theme is designed to support the vision and benefit our populations health and well being.

### **Vision – Embrace Your Space**

#### **Shape your Space**

Shaping the future of parks, open spaces and play through a community asset based approach to development = local people embracing and shaping space

#### **Create your Space**

Creating Communities through parks, open spaces and play – tackling social isolation, improving physical health and supporting wellbeing.

#### **Celebrate your Space**

Celebrate parks, open spaces and play – shout about their hidden values and increase usage by enabling people to have a life long relationship with these spaces.

#### **Reinvigorate you Space**

Think differently about the delivery of parks, open spaces and play both operationally and strategically.

- 2.6 In support of the Vision and identified themes the Strategy includes a 10 year Action Plan to be reviewed on an annual basis, alongside a Year 5 evidence base refresh. The recent Pandemic has shown how important it

is to keep the Action Plan realistic and relevant to our communities. Open Space user priorities can very quickly change and the demand to use Open Space can fluctuate immensely based on social and economic factors. The Action Plan will form part of the Open Spaces Service Plan to ensure accountability and recognised progress.

- 2.7 In support of the Strategy delivery a 'Strategy on a Page' (SOAP) has been developed to quickly and concisely illustrate the development and implementation. To underpin the SOAP a 'Pledge' approach similar to the 'Wigan Deal' has been used to articulate the main parts of the action plan along with a 'Your Pledge' section to incubate community driven change.

### **3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 3.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

### **4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

- 4.1 Failure to endorse the evidence-based strategy presented will impact the development and direction of the strategic management of Huntingdonshire's Open Spaces in their support for local communities health and wellbeing.

- 4.2 Based on Fields in Trust's Revaluing Parks and Open Spaces Report in 2018 to demonstrate the importance of our Open Spaces,

- The Total Economic Value of the Parks and Open Spaces in Huntingdonshire will be over **£5.3 million per year** per year including benefits gained from using local park or green space and non-use benefits such as the preservation of parks for the future.
- The Wellbeing Value associated with the frequent use of local parks and green spaces by Huntingdonshire's residents is worth **£172.7 million per year** to the population of Huntingdon.
- Parks and green spaces provision in Huntingdon is estimated to save the NHS around **£560,432 per year** based solely on a reduction in GP visits and excluding any additional savings from prescribing or referrals.

### **5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 5.1 PLACE – Create, protect and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment.
- 5.2 PEOPLE – Support people to improve their health and well-being.
- 5.3 Leaders new vision to incorporate – Maintain Pride of place, re-prioritise and re-shape service delivery.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

6.1 **Phase 1** – Focused on understanding peoples use and perception of Parks and Open Spaces aswell as their aspirations for the future through various media:-

Questionnaire (713 completed),  
Over 500 Conversations with 4yrs-94yr olds (events, phonecalls, targeted focus groups – schools etc)

6.2 **Phase 2** – Following development of draft strategy we entered a second phase to test Vision, Aims and Actions. This phase took place during the Covid-19 restrictions and therefore took place online.

6.3 Targeted groups for consultation included Children, Young People, Families, Older People, the wider Communities and Non-users

6.4 At two different points in the development of the Strategy we have had the benefit of the comments of an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group which helped to finalise the key Themes

- 11th March 2020 – Emerging Themes and developing Action Plan
- 29th July 2020 – Feedback on supplementary documents to enhance the Strategy delivery using a ‘Strategy on a Page’ and ‘Walk in a Park’

## **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 To continue to support the current revenue funding for Parks and Open Spaces to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy and its Action Plan.

7.2 In line with the strategy’s Action Plan additional revenue bids may be bought forward in the future to support the implementation of projects and facilities. These would be evidence driven and approved by the Portfolio Holder at the time.

7.3 To further enhance the strategy and drive forward the operational management of each of our Strategic Open Spaces, a series of localised prospectus’ will be developed. Each forming a further building block of evidence to support the strategy and the parks operational needs.

## **8. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 81% of our residents, following Lockdown, believe that parks and open Spaces are keeping them fit and healthy.

8.2 The Health benefit of using open spaces is well documented and acknowledged by our communities. However, those who would most likely benefit are amongst the least likely to use them. The Strategy seeks to deliver partnership working with links such as Public Health,

Active LifeStyles and the Living Sport County Sports Partnership to achieve health and wellbeing outcomes

- 8.3 There are physical and environmental benefits from green infrastructure including improved air quality and less noise pollution. There are also benefits to active users of these spaces, positively impacting health and mental wellbeing. Strong evidence now supports the fact that green space improves public's health.
- 8.4 Improving Access to Green Spaces (Public Health England - 2014) captured and evidenced the health benefits from higher levels of physical activity, improved mental health and wellbeing as well as positive physiological effects of better quality environments. A recent analysis and report 'Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces' (Fields in Trust - 2018) again captured and demonstrated these benefits.
- 8.5 The Local Authority Health Profile (2018) identifies that health of people in Huntingdonshire is generally better than the England average. However excess weight in adults showed significantly worse than England average. Public Health England has identified the priorities in Huntingdonshire to be:
- Reducing excess weight in adults and children
  - Improving mental wellbeing in adults and children and
  - Supporting older people to live independently safe and well
- 8.6 Public Health England's 'Everybody Active, Every Day' report in October 2014 set out clear guidance for public sector bodies to promote physical activity, under the four themes of:
- Active society: creating a social movement
  - Moving professionals: activating networks of expertise
  - Active environments: creating the right spaces
  - Moving at scale: interventions that make us active
- 8.7 In the recent launch of the Tackling Obesity Strategy (2020), the Government has made clear links between living with excess weight and an increased risk of death or serious illness due to Covid-19. Whilst GP's will be actively encouraged to prescribe exercise and more social activities to help people keep fit, the government will keep the health agenda at the heart of its decision making. In turn these interventions will proactively tackle the burden of preventable ill health and empower everyone to make the healthy behaviours they want to make.
- 8.8 Our Strategy seeks to ensure that our population has access to Open Spaces and their associated communities to support and enhance their health and wellbeing. The Strategy forms part of matrix of policy that cuts across other subject to form part of their foundations, to include the Environment Agenda and planning policy.

- 8.9 *“Public parks all over the world have become a much-needed pressure valve, through which we can not only get exercise and access to nature and fresh air, but also see and interact with others in movement and from a safe distance. Along with the doorstep Thursday clapping for the NHS and the angst of queuing for essential shopping, visiting a park is one of the few public spaces where we can share a moment of humanity.”*

(Gilmore, Institute for Cultural Practices, 2020)

## **9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Climate Change – Research shows that (Schottland, 2019)

*“while the impacts of climate change are daunting, there is growing recognition that parks can be part of the climate solution. Parks reduce harmful carbon pollution that is driving climate change; they protect people and infrastructure from increasingly severe storms, sea-level rise, heat waves and droughts; and they also directly reduce some of the primary public health challenges that are exacerbated by climate change.”*

- 9.2 This strategy will look at defining the role of our Open Spaces in addressing climate change. Our parks and open spaces can be used as a starting point for new projects or innovative ideas to co-exist facilities and experiences that will support this agenda.

- 9.3 Wildlife and Nature – Natural Cambridgeshire and its partners have a vision to double nature in Cambridgeshire and our Open Spaces again provide a canvas for projects to base themselves in to support our varied biodiversity in Huntingdonshire.

*“that by doubling the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural green-space, Cambs and Peterborough will become a world-class environment where nature and people thrive, and businesses prosper.”*

- 9.4 Community engagement, during the development of this Strategy, has illustrated a desire to see parks and open spaces support local wildlife which the strategy seeks to support. In an Online vote during lockdown, ‘Wildlife and Nature’ won as the priority for residents, above key themes such as access and climate change.

- 9.5 In support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Vision and how we will connect with it, the Strategy seeks to push Wildlife and Nature into decision making across the Council whilst recognising that they are non-statutory services which need to be sustained and recognised for their value and impact on our lives.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 10.1 In the development of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy, we have identified and tested our Vision and Action Plan through rigorous Stakeholder Consultation.

10.2 The Strategy demonstrates a clear Action Plan informed through an understood environment and an objective view of resources.

**11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Strategy on a Page – Healthy Open Spaces Strategy

Appendix 2 – Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and 10 Year Action Plan

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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# HEALTHY OPEN SPACES

## OUR STRATEGY ON A PAGE

Take a walk in the park with us.....

**EMBRACE**   
**YOUR SPACE**

More people using and enjoying our parks, open spaces and play areas to benefit their health and well-being



# HEALTHY OPEN SPACES

## OUR STRATEGY ON A PAGE

### 1 WHY WE NEED A STRATEGY

Huntingdonshire has almost **600** parks and open spaces where our community and visitors can relax, play, enjoy nature and be active.

The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy seeks to protect our parks and open spaces for the future and explore how they can help our community stay fit and healthy, improve local people's mental health and well-being and contribute to the fight against climate change.

### 2 TALKING TO THE COMMUNITY

We listened to local people. Our questionnaire was completed by over **700** people and we had over **500** conversations with members of the public aged from **4** to **94** years of age.

**Did you know?** The **Wellbeing Value** associated with frequent use of local parks and green spaces is worth **£34.2 billion per year** to the entire GB population

### 3 THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Community engagement, talking to experts and visiting our local parks and open spaces made us think about...

- How we can work with **communities**
- The ways in which parks and open spaces can support local people to live **healthy lifestyles** and enjoy where they live
- Retaining and enhancing **quality and value** of provision
- Making sure everyone can **access** & enjoy parks and open spaces
- Working in **partnership**
- The role of parks and open spaces in addressing **climate change**
- Protecting local **nature and wildlife**

### 4 A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Our Embrace Your Space vision is supported by four key themes:

**SHAPE YOUR SPACE:** Shaping the future of parks, open spaces and play through a community asset based approach to development.

**CREATE YOUR SPACE:** Creating communities through parks, open spaces and play areas, tackling social isolation, improving physical health and supporting wellbeing.

**CELEBRATE YOUR SPACE:** Celebrate parks, open spaces and play – shout about their hidden value and increase usage by enabling people to have a life long relationship with these spaces.

**REINVIGORATE YOUR SPACE:** Think differently about the delivery of parks, open spaces and play both operationally and strategically.

## EMBRACE YOUR SPACE

More people using and enjoying our parks, open spaces and play areas to benefit their health and well-being

**Did you know?** The cost of Huntingdonshire's Parks and Open Spaces is **£16.38** per household per year

### 5 OUR PLEDGE

We're making a pledge to support our network of parks and open spaces.

The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy has an action plan of projects and changes we're going to make over the next 10 years. Our pledges are taken from that action plan.

### 6 DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A PLEDGE?

We can't make changes on our own, we need to work together. What could you do to support your parks and open spaces? We're asking local people, businesss and organisations to make a pledge, big or small, committing to doing something to help.

Find out more at [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/)

**Did you know?** **98%** of people in Huntingdonshire think parks and open spaces make themselves & other people **happier**

**Did you know?** Parks and greenspaces are estimated to save the NHS around **£111 million per year** based solely on reduction of GP visits and excluding any additional savings from prescribing or referrals.

We will celebrate the contribution of our Friends Groups and support them by creating a **Friends and Volunteer Groups Forum**

We will provide flexible **opportunities** for local people to **volunteer**

We will **make it easier** for communities and organisations to use parks and open spaces for events and activities

**OUR PLEDGES**

We will find ways for our parks and open spaces to join the fight against **climate change**

We will **connect** local people with the wildlife and nature that surrounds them

We will work with GPs, charities and other experts to create **projects and activities** that enable local people to keep fit and healthy in local parks

We will **contribute** to Natural Cambridgeshire's aspiration to double nature

Make it easy for people to find **information** about their local parks and open spaces

We will look for ways that our parks and open spaces can **tackle issues** that effect our community including mental health and social isolation

**Promote** our parks and open spaces as great places to visit and enjoy

We will create a **destination play area**



# HDC HEALTHY OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

2020



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Parks, open spaces and play areas are part of what makes Huntingdonshire a special place to live and to visit. They provide spaces that benefit our health and wellbeing, where we can use our imagination and enjoy the great outdoors. Huntingdonshire has a network of over 500 greenspaces ranging from parks and play areas to village greens and nature reserves. The provision of parks and open spaces is not a statutory service and austerity and budget cuts has impacted on how we, and our partners, look after our spaces for the benefit of the community.

We have developed a Healthy Open Spaces Strategy to ensure that our spaces continue to be used and valued by our community and also explore how they can support wider positive change. We have set out to understand how greenspaces across Huntingdonshire can support our local people to live healthier lives, improve their mental health and wellbeing, contribute to the fight against climate change and address social isolation.

In the process of developing this strategy we have heard from over 1,000 members of the community and had discussions with a range of potential and existing partners. We have heard why people think parks and open spaces are essential to their lives and about the reasons why some people do not use them.

**"Our local park is really important to us. It's a place we can enjoy as a family. Where we can be running around and having fun... or have quiet time relaxing and being close to nature. Our local park is like a different world for us to explore and enjoy!"**



# EMBRACE YOUR SPACE



More people using and enjoying our parks, open spaces and play areas to benefit their health and wellbeing.



### Shape Your Space

Shaping the future of parks, open spaces and play through a community asset based approach to development – local people embracing and shaping their space.



### Create Your Space

Creating communities through parks, open spaces and play areas – tackling social isolation, improving physical health and supporting wellbeing.



### Celebrate Your Space

Celebrate parks, open spaces and play – shout about their hidden value and increase usage by enabling people to have a life long relationship with these spaces.



### Reinvigorate Your Space

Think differently about the delivery of parks, open spaces and play both operationally and strategically.

**FIGURE 1:**

*Embrace Your Space:  
A Vision for the Future*







This approach will support a rethinking of how our parks, open spaces and play areas are managed and maintained, with a focus on the value and benefits they bring for local people and visitors to the area. It will help us to enhance the quality, value and accessibility of our provision for the benefit of existing and new audiences. Thinking strategically and entrepreneurially about our greenspaces means we can explore how to make the most efficient use of our resources and consider opportunities for income generation to make key sites self-sustaining, whilst maintaining free to access provision.

It is an exciting time for our parks, open spaces and play areas and meaningful change will require collaboration. Working in partnership will enable new voices and ideas to shape our greenspaces, enabling us to explore different way our parks can benefit our communities and to encourage new groups and organisation to use these spaces. The future of our parks, open spaces and play areas will be driven by the desire to use them to benefit our community.

# PARKS, OPEN SPACES & PLAY IN CONTEXT

....

## 02

### 2.1 What we mean by Parks, Open Spaces & Play Areas?

The Heritage Lottery Fund describes a park as “an existing designed urban or rural greenspace, the main purpose of which is informal recreation and enjoyment.” The term open spaces is more broad and includes a range of managed and maintained spaces including natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces, green corridors and outdoor provision for children and teenagers.

Huntingdonshire and its communities’ benefit from a wealth of greenspaces. The Ordnance Survey National Greenspace Map has mapped parks, open spaces and play areas across Britain. This helps to understand provision that is and isn’t managed by the District Council. Figure 2 summarises what the green space map tells us about provision in Huntingdonshire.



**592**

mapped  
green  
spaces

**1,534**

hectares of  
green  
space

**1.7%**

of the  
district is  
green  
space

**523**

hectares  
of public  
parks &  
gardens

**186**

play  
spaces

**16**

hectares

**8.7**

hectares  
of green  
space  
per 1k  
population


**87m<sup>2</sup>** of green space per person compared to **35.22m<sup>2</sup>** of green space per person in Great Britain and **42.75m<sup>2</sup>** of green space per person in the East of England



**FIGURE 2:**

*National greenspace  
map infographic  
summary*





**The total economic value to an individual is £30.24 per year (£2.52 per month), and this includes benefits gained from using their local park or greenspace and no-use benefits such as preservation of parks for future generations.**

**Parks and greenspaces are estimated to save the NHS around £111 million per year based solely on reduction of GP visits and excluding any additional savings from prescribing or referrals.**

**The Wellbeing Value associated with frequent use of local parks and greenspaces is worth £34.2 billion per year to the entire GB population.**

The Fields in Trust Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces (Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces, 2019 )



**FIGURE 3:***The Strategic Context*

This strategy seeks to look beyond how these spaces are managed and maintained to look at their value and the contribution they can make to the lives of local people and visitors.

It is important to acknowledge that parks, open spaces and play areas are non-statutory services. Understanding and appreciating their value is key to supporting a sustainable future. Moving from an operational to a strategic approach will insure that greenspaces continue to be available for communities and insure a focus on how these spaces can enrich and benefit people lives. This strategy seeks to ensure sustainable quality provision is available and accessible for all members of the community and that access to greenspace will improve the wellbeing of individuals and the wider community and visitors, delivering on what Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces (Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces, 2019) describe as parks and greenspaces ability to:

- Contribute to a preventative health agenda
- Reduce future Exchequer expenditure
- Reduce health inequalities
- Increase social cohesion and equality

This plan has not been developed in isolation as shown in figure 3 a number of policies and strategies have influenced and will be influenced by the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy. Appendix 1 provides a summary of key local, district and regional strategies that we have considered in the development of this plan.

## 03

**PLACES,  
PEOPLE AND  
MANAGEMENT****3.1 Introduction**

Creating and sustaining successful and vibrant parks, open spaces and play areas balances three key elements

- The **places** (the parks, the open spaces, the play areas),
- The **people** (those who use and enjoy these spaces) and,
- **Management** (how these parks are maintained and managed).

The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy has to find a way to balance these three elements by exploring various combinations.



---

## 3.2 Community Engagement

Key to the strategy was understanding how local people use and perceive the District's parks, open spaces and play areas. A local understanding would also enable us to compare Huntingdonshire to national data and research. To do this we undertook a programme of community engagement.

### Phase 1

Focused on understanding people's use and perception of parks and open spaces, as well as their aspirations for the future. This included a questionnaire which was completed by 713 people. In addition we had over 500 conversations with members of the public aged from 4 to 94 years of age, at community events and targeted focus groups across the District.

### Phase 2

Following the development of the draft strategy we entered a second phase of community engagement providing local people with an opportunity to comment on the strategy and its vision, aims and actions. This phase took place during the COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing and therefore took place online.

Appendix 3 provides details all the community engagement events undertaken to support the development of this strategy.

For parks, open spaces and play areas to be vibrant they need to be used and enjoyed. The community of Huntingdonshire District Council are users of the spaces and do value these spaces. Existing users understand and appreciate what greenspaces add to their lives. However, we need to work with non users to illustrate the benefits of spending time in these spaces and bring a more diverse range of people into our parks, open spaces and play areas.

”

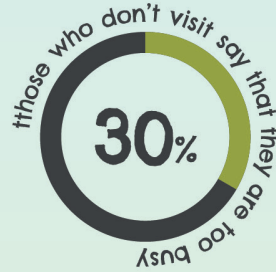
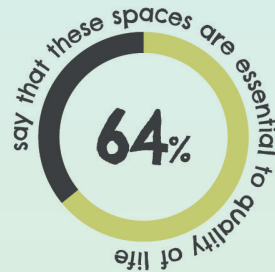
**"Getting into a green area and away from the computer allows me to get moving which increases my breathing and heart rate and makes me feel much better. Being around nature also makes me feel better."**

”

# HEALTHY OPEN SPACES AND PLAY STRATEGY

What the community thinks about Huntingdonshire's parks open spaces & play areas

## USING OUR GREEN SPACES



## HOW PEOPLE GET THERE:



9%



32%



58%

## WHY PEOPLE USE OUR SPACES

\*Please note, people could choose multiple answers

40% EXPERIENCE NATURE

46% CHILDREN'S PLAY PROVISION

37% STAY FIT AND HEALTHY

53% GO FOR A WALK

38% TO RELAX



### WHEN PEOPLE USE OUR SPACES



On average during Spring/Summer, a person will visit once or twice a week & stay for 1 - 2 hours



In Autumn/Winter a person will visit less often & stay for less time (30mins - 1 hour)

### KEEPING HEALTHY IN OUR SPACES

86% believe that these spaces encourage them to keep fit and healthy

71% regularly use these spaces to keep physically fit and healthy

### MENTAL HEALTH

86% believe that these spaces improve their mental health

78% visit these spaces to improve their mental health

98% think that these spaces make themselves & other people happy

\*Based on 710 questionnaire responses



**Figure 4:**  
Community  
Questionnaire  
Results



## Children

8% of the population of Huntingdonshire are Primary School aged children. To understand their perception about parks, open spaces and play areas and aspirations for these spaces we undertook a programme of focus groups. This enabled us to have in depth discussions with 65 children from Crosshall Junior School and Thorndown Primary School.

This process highlighted that whilst children appreciate and understand that green and open spaces provide places that enhance the environment, provide homes for wildlife and contribute to the community, the key focus is play. Play is the primary reason they use and visit these spaces, this includes using fixed play equipment, using the space as a place to unleash their imagination, and specific sports activities such as football. This is also reflected in one of the key barriers to use of these spaces, a preference for playing in other spaces or through different means. For example a preference for, *"...staying in and playing Fortnite..."* was a barrier to some children,

***"...playing Fifa online means I can still talk to my friends I do not need to go out and kick a ball about."***

When asked to create their ideal park or open space the idea of "gamifying" these spaces was often incorporated with children developing areas such as tree house where you can play on your x-box.

Other barriers include parents or carers being "too busy" to take children to the park, and the weather.

The idea of there not being parks, open spaces and play areas in their local area makes them angry, sad and frustrated. As previously discussed children appreciate and value the contribution that greenspaces make to their communities and their environment,

***"...having a park makes it a nicer place to live."***

They also believe these spaces support physical and mental health,

***"...you can move and run around down the park... have fun and exercise"***

and, ***"...I feel happy when I'm outdoors."***



**FIGURE 5:**

*Perfect park drawing*



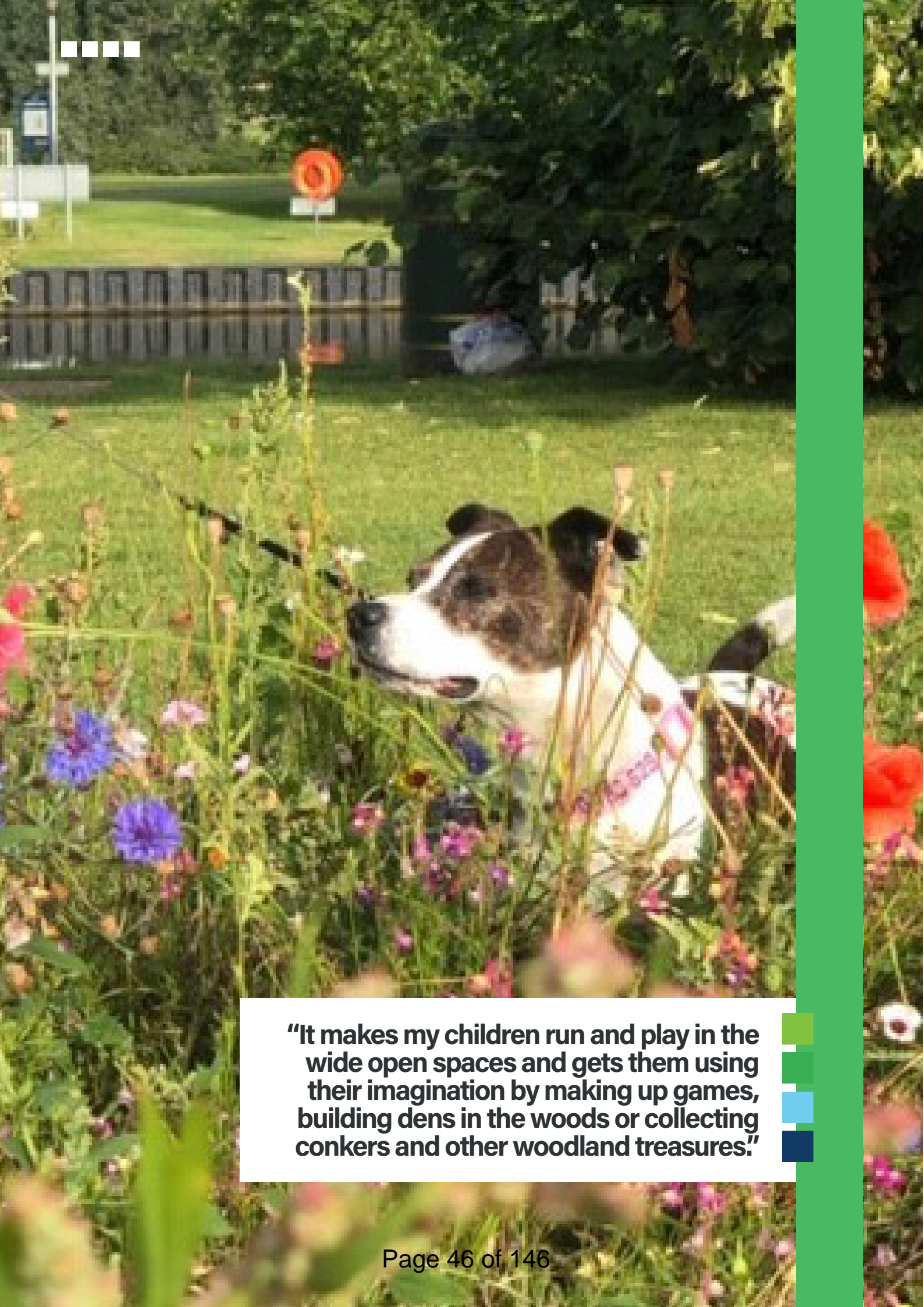
**Young People**

We spoke to 103 young people (aged 12 – 21) through a range of community events and focus groups with local youth clubs. There is a perception among this groups that you ***“kinda just grow out of going to the park”*** and whilst younger children have play, there is less of a clear 'driver' to bring young people into these spaces. Warm weather in the summer months and organised sports or events are the exception to this rule.



**“I go to the park to play, we live in a flat and do not have a garden. The park is like my garden where I can play with my friends.”**





**“It makes my children run and play in the wide open spaces and gets them using their imagination by making up games, building dens in the woods or collecting conkers and other woodland treasures.”**





## Families

Families are a key audience for Huntingdonshire's parks and open spaces. The questionnaire results showed that **46%** of people use parks to access children's/young people's play areas and **34%** use them to meet family and friends. A number of people we spoke to suggested that greenspaces are "places you use when you are a child or you have a child."

Among this group parks, open spaces and play areas provide,

***"...a free and easy way to entertain the children. I'm lucky enough to have a good play area on our estate and if the weather is good we'll be there. In the summer we can be there every day."***

This group also appreciates greenspaces for bringing communities together,

***"...you can always find another mum to have a chat with down the park, people just seem more open to having a chat in a play area" and "we use our space for community events and activities throughout the year it provides a space for people to get together."***

Consistently this group would reflect on being ***"very lucky in this area we have a lot of outdoor places to use as a family."*** However, there was a concern among some about perceived anti-social activities in these spaces, usually litter but occasionally there were references to anti-social behaviour for example ***"we do not let our sons go to the skate park at Riverside without us anymore and never in the evening. It's too dangerous, there are people using it for nefarious reasons."***

Greenspaces are seen as a way to introduce children to exercise and activity, ***"when they're playing they're running around and exercising without realising it. They're learning how to be active and enjoy themselves."*** Being active as a family was also valued with participants talking about walking, running and playing games in these spaces as a family.

The idea of parks and open spaces as a free to access resource is critical. It must be

acknowledged that parking charges, at some sites, were seen as a barrier to use and interpreted as a cost of visiting. Family groups are more likely to travel by car in part because it's easier ***"I have two children with me and a dog and all the stuff that comes with them. Walking or public transport is nice idea but not practical I have to drive and then I have to pay to park so we do not go as often."***

Among ideas for the future free events and activities were the most popular.

The perceived gap among this group is destination play, ***"the type of play where you can make a day of it."*** Splash or water play was particularly popular with this group.

**"Walking is a great part of my life for my wellbeing due to having cancer. I also like to take my children to play and have fun. This is great family bonding time and a great place for children to play safe and have fun as kids should. We as a family also walk the dog so it's nice to do all the above as a family together."**



## Older People

Huntingdonshire has an aging community (Public Health Intelligence, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, 2018/19), *“between 2016 and 2026 the older age groups, particularly the over 75 year age groups are expected to have the most population growth across Cambridgeshire.”*

We spoke to older people at a range of events and activities to understand how they perceive and use parks, open spaces and play areas, and the barriers that keep them from using these spaces. This process illustrated that they are nostalgic about these places, connecting them with their childhood. In addition a number of participants spoke of moving to the area to retire because *“it is the very definition of green and pleasant around here.”* Parks, open spaces and play areas contribute to their lives and their perception of where they live. How and why they use them is dependent on a range of factors. For example, those with grandchildren will look for spaces and places that provide for the children offering play provision and/or a safe space to spend time.

**“I spent my childhood down the park, I would love to spend more time outdoors now.”**





Older people's health and therefore their ability to get to and around open spaces was a key issue. People spoke of their decision making process and what they look for in terms of facilities:

*"...when we're thinking about somewhere to go we need to know we can park, we need to know there's a toilet, we need or rather want to know we can get a good cuppa and a piece of cake!"*

They need clarity about what facilities are available so they can make a decision as to whether it's appropriate, for example a number of people felt they would be more likely to visit Hinchingsbrooke Country Park after we told them electric wheelchairs are available to hire and there is a café and toilet provision on site. Active older people are using these places, and programmes such as Healthy Walks are encouraging them to get outdoors and exercise in Huntingdonshire's network of open spaces.

**"How would I get there? I do not drive, I can't walk very far, I have to rely on my friends to take me anywhere!"**

When speaking to this group they told us we need to consider two key elements access and infrastructure, to support this there is much to learn from the approaches of others.



### **The Wider Community**

People's use and relationship with parks and open spaces changes throughout their lives. As we explored earlier in this section children and play are among the key drivers. For other adults exercise, recreation and wellbeing are among the reasons for using parks and open spaces. Parks and open spaces can also be part of people's everyday commute; ***"I park my car at Riverside and walk through the park to the office. Those few minutes in the park are a great start to the day and a way to wind down at the end of it."***

We engaged with members of the BAME community by working with Huntingdon Community Group and members of the Ghanaian community. They view the District's network of parks, open spaces and play areas as important community facilities specifically for family activities and sport "it's where we go as a family to play sport together". During discussions they spoke of the importance of play to family relationships and the development of their children, appreciating that outdoor

play provision, and spaces to play, aid learning and enable children to make friends.

They spoke of feeling welcome and safe in these spaces, with 'being too busy' being cited as the key barrier. As with other groups non-users need clear reasons to visit and use greenspaces, specifically those without children. Events and activities are one way to bring non-users into these spaces or introduce them to new experiences.

### Non Park Users

For this group engagement suggests it isn't so much about barriers to using these spaces, as it is about lacking a reason to use these spaces. Whilst 29% of non-parks users said being "too busy" prevented them from using these spaces, 26% said "I'm not interested in parks" and 25% said they are too far away. The Ordnance Survey Greenspace mapping suggests that 96% of the population, of Huntingdonshire, live within a ten minute walk of greenspace. To an extent for this group the question the strategy needs to answer is "why should I use parks and greenspaces?"

Non users are more likely to have no (or older) children and therefore have a perception that there is no reason to use these places. They are more likely to be using indoor facilities such as gyms or swimming pools for exercise and wellbeing.

■■■■

**"I moved from London to here so I could access the countryside so I could spend more time outdoors."**



Engagement with non-park users shows a need to help this group understand the value and benefits of using parks and open spaces. They also need help in finding their nearest, accessible quality provision and to be shown that these spaces offer more than the traditional view of a park or open space and the activities which take place within them.

**“If I’m really honest it just doesn’t occur to me to go. I do not have a dog to walk, or children to take to a play area so I’m not sure what I would do there.”**

### 3.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Appendix 4 provides an overview of stakeholder engagement to support the development of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy. This process focused on understanding the current situation, identifying opportunities for change and exploring how parks, open spaces and play areas can deliver positive outcomes around wider agendas. The Communities and Local Government work on Public Parks (Communities and Local Government Committee, 2017) states ***“we strongly agree with those who have emphasised the importance and value of parks to individuals, communities, and to wider national agendas such as public health, and climate change and flood risk mitigation. Parks are a treasured public asset, which are greatly valued by their communities. They help to bring communities together, and should remain freely accessible to everyone.”***

Stakeholder engagement showed a willingness to work in partnership on the basis that accessible quality parks, open spaces and play areas can contribute to a range of outcomes. It should be acknowledged that parks, open spaces and play areas across the District are already maintained, managed and sustained in partnership. Town Councils, Parish Councils and Friends Groups are all key partners and make significant contributions to provision across the District. Stakeholders spoke of a need to see ***“more meaningful partnership working”*** between existing partners and also look to new and wider partners who can support change, for example ***“can we involve the business community in our parks and open spaces? How can we broaden the range of people we work with?”***

**“I do not have time to go, there’s other things I would rather do.”**



A fundamental area of concern for stakeholders was funding ***“we have less money, so there is less support from staff and more and more the Friends are being asked to fill the gap”***. There is a need to find new ways to sustain and enhance provision and the potential conflict between parks being a tool to generate income to support themselves and the community perception that they should be free. Cambridgeshire, and therefore Huntingdonshire's, involvement in the Future Parks Accelerator (please refer to Appendix 1) were also discussed in this context.

The role of communities was discussed, with the potential for a 'Wigan Deal' style approach being discussed. Whilst some stakeholders expressed a desire for this approach to be explored within the context of the strategy, others, specifically existing Friends Groups expressed concern about ***“relying on communities when we're struggling to find enough volunteers.”***

In online focus groups (please refer to appendix 3, that took place during the COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing, there was an interest in volunteering and a desire to see communities support their parks and open spaces through volunteering. These conversations also highlighted a range of barriers we need to address to encourage and enable more community involvement.

These included:

- Easy to find information about volunteering opportunities;
- Co-ordination;
- Flexible options;
- Activities for children to enable parents and carers to volunteer.

Stakeholders also highlighted that the deprived and inactive communities that are most likely to benefit from Huntingdonshire's network of parks, open spaces and play areas are the least likely to use them. Engagement with stakeholders explored ways of bring new users in to greenspaces, with a targeted focus on those most likely to benefit. Our community engagement with people from deprived communities illustrated a need to break through the perceptions that ***“parks are not for me”*** and show clear benefits to families and individuals of using these spaces.

### 3.4 Emerging Themes

Listening to communities and stakeholders highlighted a range of key themes and associated outcomes to be explored in the context of developing this strategy. These are:

#### Spaces for Health & Wellbeing

How do we build on participation in initiatives such as Park Runs, Healthy Walks and other programmes, and embed physical health and wellbeing, in how we manage and deliver greenspaces?

#### Connecting Communities to the Benefits of Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas

How do we help communities to understand and appreciate the benefits of using parks, open spaces and play areas, to them as individuals and families, as well as the value to the community?

#### The Role of Communities

How do we give communities a meaningful role in shaping the future of parks, open spaces and play areas, that they will participate in?

#### Gaps in Provision

Community engagement has shown perceived gaps in provision, section 4 explores this further. How do we prioritise change to address these gaps in provision?

#### Funding

Should we take a different approach to funding the future of Huntingdonshire's network of parks, open spaces and play areas?



I would love to volunteer in my local park but it always seems to be during the week when I'm at work"





# 04

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## THE VALUE OF OUR PARKS, OPEN SPACES & PLAY AREAS

**4.0** The Communities and Local Government work on Public Parks (Communities and Local Government Committee, 2017) posits a need for *“greater recognition of the value and benefits of parks, and appropriate prioritisation in local authority planning and funding decisions.”* This section of the strategy seeks to support this by illustrating the quality and value of parks, open spaces and play areas in Huntingdonshire.

## 4.1 To The Community

Our survey results suggest 68% of the population of Huntingdonshire visit greenspaces on a regular basis (at least once a fortnight) compared to national research (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2019) which suggests **"57 per cent of the UK population - regularly use park in the UK."** Figure 6 illustrates the results of our questionnaire to highlight why greenspaces are important.

Even 76% of non-users say that having parks, play areas and open spaces in their communities "make me, and other people, happy and 86% think they make their local area "a better place to live". Our quantitative and qualitative research shows that the people of Huntingdonshire value and appreciate their greenspaces, but they do not think they're perfect. Litter, anti-social behaviour and parking charges (at some parks) are areas of concern and frustration.

As shown in the survey infographic, the community associates greenspaces with opportunities to be healthy and active.

Community engagement also highlighted the value of parks and open spaces as places to meet people and have a conversation **"I've recently separated from my husband and I have been feeling lonely, one thing I really like about our local play area is if I take the children they can play and there's usually another parent who'll be there to chat with."**

Social isolation and loneliness is a growing issue, Cambridgeshire County Council (Cambridgeshire Insight, 2019) defines loneliness as **"a subjective feeling about the gap between a person's desired levels of social contact and their actual level of social contact. It refers to the perceived quality of the person's relationships."**

Parks and greenspaces can play a vital role in bringing communities together and tackling social isolation.

**We are lucky to have great spaces for families and friends to meet, socialise, exercise and enjoy the facilities."**

**Figure 6:** How Huntingdonshire Values Its Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces







## 4.2 Understanding Existing Provision

The Ordnance Survey National Greenspace Map records 583 greenspaces across the District including parks, play areas, church yards, allotments and other accessible provision. Part of understanding existing provision is understanding usage, below are the most popular provision in the district based on questionnaire responses.

### The most popular parks and open space in Huntingdonshire based on questionnaire response

1. Hinchingsbrooke Country Park
2. Priory Park
3. Paxton Pits
4. Riverside, Huntingdon
5. Hill Rise

Alongside community and stakeholder engagement we wanted to understand what parks, open spaces and play areas provide in terms of their quality and value. To support the strategic process we visited a selective sample of 47 sites, from across the District, primarily owned or managed by Huntingdonshire District Council. Appendices 4 and 5 provides a summary of findings from these assessments. These assessments focused on understanding the quality and value of existing provision. Each of the sample of sites assessed in the development of this strategy received a quality and value score. The criteria used for these assessments built on existing mechanisms such as the Green Flag Award and was developed in partnership with stakeholders through the parks and open spaces workshop.

### 4.2.1 Quality of Existing Provision

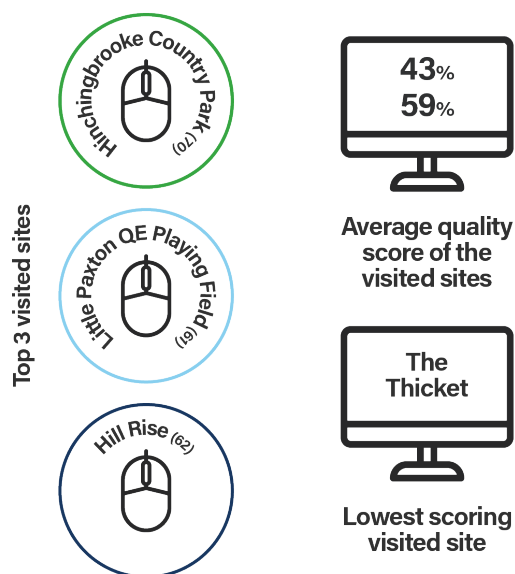
- 79% of park users who completed our survey described their last experience of visiting their local park, open space or play area as good or very good.
- 6.5% of non-users said that anti-social behaviour prevented them from visiting a park or open space in the last 12 months.
- 3.2% were put off by dog fouling and the same proportion by the quality of the facilities.

Overall data from park users showed that provision is considered to be of good quality. Qualitative engagement with non-park users suggests that the quality of the facilities themselves are not considered to be a barrier, rather a feeling that these spaces are not for them and / or other options are preferable.



We visited a structured sample of sites. Each of which was given a quality score, based on the provision within the site. The criteria for this score was based on benchmarks including the Green Flag Award and Play England's play standards alongside factors the community told us were important, such as bins, benches and toilets. The scoring system can be found in appendix 5 and the highest score a site could attain was 77.

**Figure 7.** Quality of Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas in Huntingdonshire



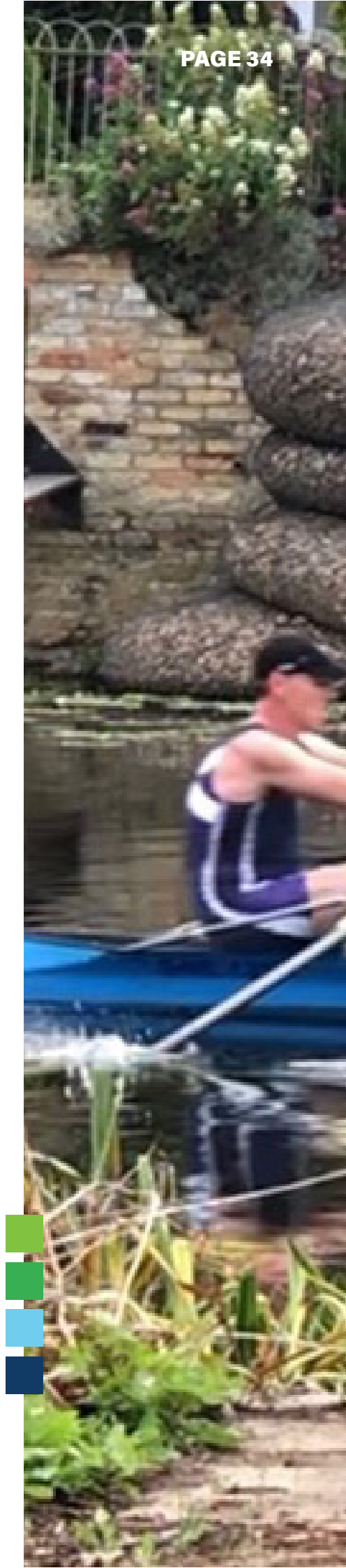
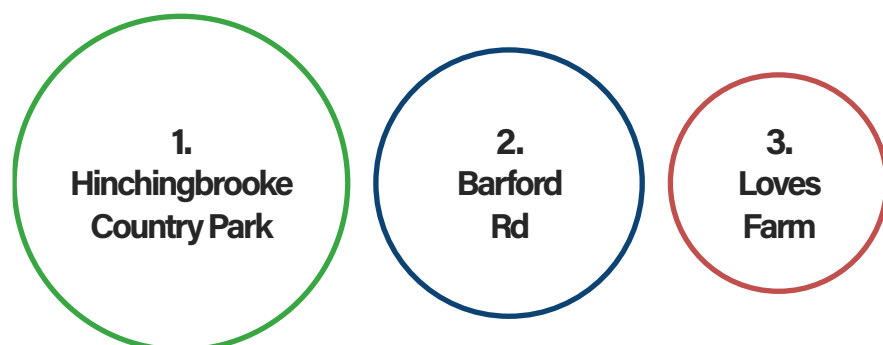
It is important to acknowledge that not every site can have everything. The presence of toilets contributes to the quality scoring process, but it is not suitable or possible for every site to have toilet provision. As a result parks with facilities and equipment will score higher than natural open spaces, this is illustrated by country parks being the highest scoring primary typology (average 70) and compared to natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces which have an average score of 40. The lowest scoring site, The Thicket, is a natural woodland space with very limited infrastructure, which contributes to its low score but it is also lacking in identity. Overall the quality assessments show a strong baseline of provision across the District and highlight areas for consideration moving forward.

## 4.2.2 Value of Existing Provision

If quality is about the specific site, value is about the context in which the site is located and the contribution it makes to its community. Value considers factors including accessibility, proximity to other provision, usage, deprivation and its landscape, biodiversity and heritage. It also considers the sites role in the wider green infrastructure network and the mechanism available for the community to engage with the site. For example, sites in areas of deprivation receive a higher score in the context of health and wellbeing, to reflect the needs of that community and the benefits they can receive from the space. Appendix 6 provides the value scoring criteria and the scores the sites visited during the assessment process. The highest available weighted value score is 170.

**Figure 8.** Value of Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas in Huntingdonshire

### Highest value sites:





### 4.2.3 The Performance Parks and Open Spaces

The Association of Public Service Excellence (ASPE) monitors Local Authorities year on year performance in relation to the performance of parks and opens services. This monitoring also considers performance in the context of a family group of other Local Authorities. This is a robust matrix for understanding how provision is managed and maintain in relation to other Local Authorities. Figure 9 below summarise key performance indicators from the 2018/19 performance at a glance.

Key Performance Indicator	Performance 2018/19	Improved Since 2017/18
Hectares of maintained public open space per 1,000 head of population	●	—
Number of hectares maintained per FTE front line employee	●	▲
Quality assurance and consultation process score	◆	▼
Maintenance cost per household (including CEC)	●	▼
Maintenance cost per household (excluding CEC)	●	▲
Maintenance cost per hectare of maintained land (including CEC)	●	▼
Maintenance cost per hectare of maintained land (excluding CEC)	●	▲
Maintenance cost per 1,000 head of population (including CEC)	●	▼
Maintenance cost per 1,000 head of population (excluding CEC)	●	▲
Hectareage of local nature reserves (LNR) per 1,000 head of population	●	—
Average NPFA play value score of children's playgrounds	●	—
Number of public events per 1,000 head of population	●	N/A
Countryside management	●	▼

**Figure 9.** ASPE Parks Performance at a Glance 2018/2019

- Performance is better than the family group average
- ◆ Performance is not as good as the family group average
- Performance for 2018/19 is within 5% of the 2017/18 results
- ▲ Performance has improved year on year
- ▼ Performance has declined year on year





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### 4.2.4 The Impact of COVID-19

The majority of this strategy and the community and stakeholder engagement that shapes it took place before the outbreak of COVID-19. It must be acknowledged that the pandemic has had an impact on how the community is using public open space.

*"Public parks all over the world have become a much needed pressure valve, through which we can not only get exercise and access to nature and fresh air, but also see and interact with others in movement and from a safe distance. Along with the doorstep Thursday clapping for the NHS and the angst of queuing for essentials shopping, visiting a park is one of few public spaces where we can share a moment of common humanity."*

(Gilmore, Institute for Cultural Practices, 2020)

The new normal, is likely to be a different normal for parks and open spaces. Events and activities that have traditionally brought people into these spaces and been a mechanism for generating income are not likely to return in the short to medium term.

**Figure 10.** Huntingdonshire District Council Four Actions to Respond to COVID-19

Four actions can address immediate customer needs and prepare for the future.





 <p><b>Focus on care and concern</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reach out, but with support, not marketing</li> <li>Make a priority of employees and community</li> <li>Stay true to company purpose and values</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Meet your customers where they are</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovate digital models to help customers weather the crisis safely from home</li> <li>Expand home delivery options</li> <li>Consider contactless operations</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Reimagine the post-COVID-19 world</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic hard times will force cost cuts</li> <li>Migrate customers to digital channels to save money and boost satisfaction</li> <li>Brick and mortar stores may look very different post-crisis</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Build agile capabilities for fluid times</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tap social media, not surveys, for quick customer readings</li> <li>Solicit employees for ear-to-the-ground insights</li> <li>Save time with "test and scale" labs</li> <li>Pay attention to "failure modes" indicating that you've missed customer signals</li> </ul>
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Figure 10 summarises Huntingdonshire's District Council's key actions for responding to the needs of its community in response to COVID-19. Elements of this have been embedded into the development of this strategy for example we used social media and online engagement to give local people a mechanism for commenting on the draft strategy. The challenges around funding that parks have faced will continue and the opportunities for income generation are likely to be restricted for some time. This is the new reality that must be faced and empathises the need to promote the value and benefits of Huntingdonshire's parks and open space.

During the COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing a short online questionnaire was used to enable a level of understanding of how it was impacting on people's use and perception of parks and open spaces. Completed by 248 people figure 11 below summarises the key results of this survey.

**Figure 11.** COVID-19 Summary Questionnaire Results

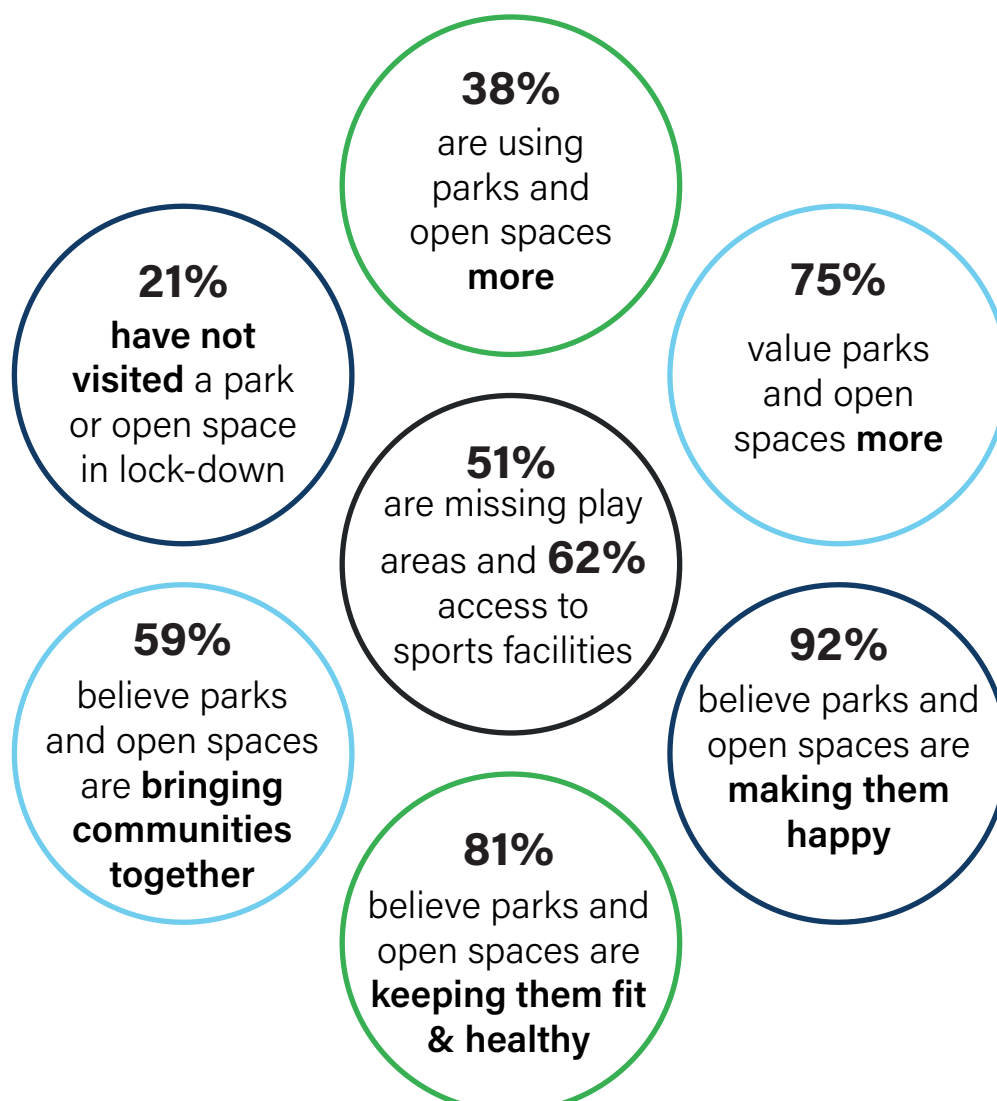


Figure 11 shows that during the lock-down the percentage of people who believe parks and open spaces are keeping them fit and healthy has increased from 71% (when we did our original survey) to 83%. It is interesting to note that while 38% are using them more, 35% believe they are using them less. Three quarters of respondents are valuing parks and open spaces more as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting social distancing measures.

#### **4.2.5 The Future**

There are already proposals and development in place to enhance and develop the provision of parks and open spaces across Huntingdonshire. In part this a result of development to meet housing and other needs. The current Local Development Framework (Huntingdonshire District Council, 2011) sets out the requirements for the "provision of children and young people's play equipment, parks and gardens, allotments/community gardens" depending on the type and size of development. Key proposals for the future include:

##### **Hinchingbrooke Country Park**

Proposals have been developed to strategically enhance Hinchingbrooke Country Park for the benefit of the community. These proposals include destination play provision, improved café provision, additional parking and other strategic development. The aim is to enable the site to generate an income to support its sustainability and improvements, whilst still providing a quality 'free to access' park provision. At the time of developing this strategy it was unclear when work would commence on site due to ongoing negotiations with Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the lease / ownership of the Country Park.

##### **Paxton Pits Extension**

The Friends of Paxton Pits (Friends of Paxton Pits, 2019) have secured "the expansion of the Reserve from its current 192 acres to more than 700 acres during the next 10 years ." This expansion will result in improved visitor and education facilities to support the site.

##### **Prestley Country Park**

The Alconbury Weald housing development has already resulted in a range of additional play provision in The Stukeleys. A future phase of development (Urban & Civic, 2019) includes a 63 hectare country park. "The Country Park represents an important greenspace for the wider area, as well as acting as a permanent buffer between the Stukeleys and Alconbury Weald."

##### **St Ives Park**

Proposals are being developed to create a naturalised park in St Ives. The park will bring together existing green infrastructure, resulting in a space for recreation and nature with enhanced biodiversity and a naturalised approach to greenspace management.

##### **Environment Agenda**

Huntingdonshire District Council is exploring approaches for contributing to the fight against climate change. Parks and open spaces will undoubtedly have a role to play and opportunities are explored within this strategy.





### 4.3 Areas for Improvement

Based on the engagement and research we have identified the following as the key areas of focus for this strategy and its action plan.



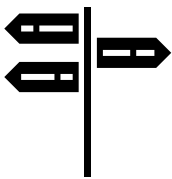
#### Retain and Enhance Quality and Value

The site assessment sample we undertook showed that parks, open spaces and play provision is of a relatively good standard. This alongside community and stakeholder engagement, and research showed our spaces are valued and add value to Huntingdonshire. The action plan in this strategy explores how to maintain and raise quality and value. The data collated during this process will enable the prioritisation of specific geographic areas and typologies of provision which have the highest impact.



#### Creating Destination Play

There is a wealth of play provision across the District that is well used by families and visitors. However, there is arguably the lack of a destination play space that can provide a day out and attract people from a wide catchment area. This was reflected in qualitative engagement with communities that highlighted a desire for high quality play provision particularly splash play.



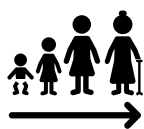
#### Geographical Gaps

According to the Fields in Trust Greenspace Index (Fields in Trust, 2019), (which maps all accessible greenspace not just those managed by the District Council), 79 of the District's 106 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) have less than the minimum standard of provision. Communities do not think in terms of LSOA's so perhaps a more useful benchmark is the following:

##### *Percentage of the Population who don't live within a 10 minute walk of a greenspace*

- 4.4% of the population of Huntingdonshire.
- 5.07% of the population of the East of England.
- 4% of the population of Great Britain.

The data mapping developed to support this strategy will enable geographical gaps in terms of quality, value and accessibility to be identified and prioritised. Chances to planning guidance and the updating of the Greenspace Supplementary Planning Document will be key mechanisms for addressing this.



#### Provision for All Ages

As part of the site assessment process, details of the suitability and appeal of provision for different age groups was recorded. This process is summarised in table 1 below.

Table 1: Age Groups

Age Group	N° of Sites from the sample
Pre School 0 to 4 years	42
Children 5 to 12 years	39
Teenagers 13 - 18 years	29
Young working age 18 - 44 years	24
Older working age 45 - 64 years	25
Retired 65+	21



Community engagement suggests a perception that there is a shortage of provision for teenagers, however there are a number of sites that provide provision such as multi-use game areas and skate parks. This suggests that moving forward provision for young people needs continue to be developed in partnership with the young people in those communities and look for ideas and opportunities for this age group. As one teenager describes ***“adults tend to assume they know what we want. Can't they talk to us about what we want.”***

The aging population in Huntingdonshire is a community that appears to be under-served, and older people have asked that consideration be given to how we can support them to access and use parks and open spaces.



### **Accessibility for All**

Based on the sample of sites visited there is a noticeable gap in provision for people with disabilities and additional needs. Community engagement has highlighted requests for a changing place, disability play provision and improve pathway networks. Targeted engagement and partnership working needs to be undertaken to address this shortfall and look for innovative and inclusive approaches that ensure everyone can enjoy Huntingdonshire's parks, open spaces and play areas.



### **Working in Partnership**

Huntingdonshire District Council maintains 6,755 elements of greenspace across the district ranging from amenity grass to shrub beds. These sites are managed, owned and supported by a range of organisations. The development of this strategy has highlighted a need to build on existing relationships and work in partnership to deliver positive change.

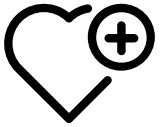
Working in partnership is key to the future of greenspace in Huntingdonshire. The Future Parks (Heritage Fund, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and National Trust, 2019) puts an emphasis on ***“building lasting cross-sector partnership solutions, identifying sustainable sources of funding and investment, identifying***







**partnership models, building community 'ownership' and involvement and by providing skills and training to grow our greenspaces."** This approach is reflected and built upon within the action plan for this strategy and will enable more partnership working with a range of organisations such as the Great Ouse Valley Trust, Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs & Northants and the Forestry Commission.



### **Parks and Open Spaces Supporting Health and Wellbeing**

The community understands and appreciates the contribution parks and greenspaces make to their health and wellbeing. However, those who would be most likely to benefit are among those least likely to be using them. The management and maintenance of parks and open spaces has traditionally taken an operational approach, moving to a strategic approach with a focus on how greenspaces can support the wider agenda will require a change. Part of this will be delivered through partnership working, for example links with Public Health, Active Lifestyles and the Living Sport County Sports Partnership, will be key to achieving health and wellbeing outcomes.



### **Climate Change**

Research shows that (Schottland, 2019) "while the impacts of climate change are daunting, there is growing recognition that parks can be part of the climate solution. Parks reduce harmful carbon pollution that is driving climate change; they protect people and infrastructure from increasingly severe storms, sea-level rise, heat waves and droughts; and they also directly reduce some of the primary public health challenges that are exacerbated by climate change." This strategy will look at defining the role of Huntingdonshire's parks, open spaces and play areas in addressing climate change.



### **Wildlife and Nature**

Natural Cambridgeshire and its partners have a vision to "**that by doubling the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural green-space, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will become a world-class environment where nature and people thrive, and businesses prosper.**" Community engagement has also illustrated a desire to see parks and open spaces support local wildlife. There are clear opportunities for our parks and open spaces and our wider green infrastructure to contribute to doubling nature and supporting initiatives around establishing green linkages and wildlife corridors.

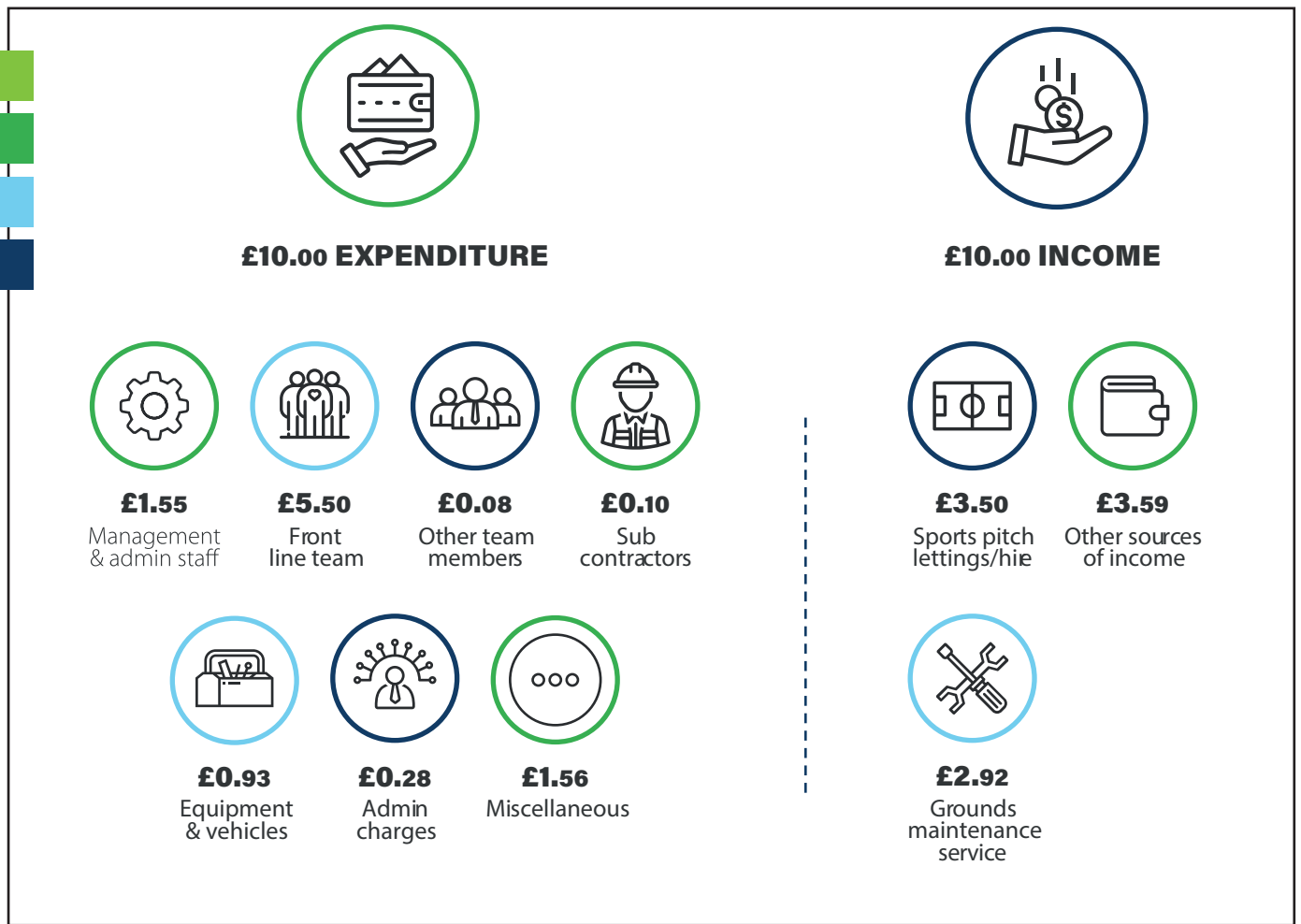
## 05

# FUNDING OUR SPACES AND PLACES

**5.0** It must be acknowledged that provision of greenspace is not a statutory service and austerity has impacted on parks, open spaces across Huntingdonshire. This strategy has to be a realistic proposition for the future so it is important to consider available funding and resources.

## 5.1 Funding

Funding for parks and greenspaces has been reduced across the country. In 2018/19 Huntingdonshire District Council invested £1.8 million (excluding central establishment charges) in parks, open spaces and horticulture services. Alongside this just over £500,000 was generated in income. Figure 12 illustrates how this money was invested and generated.



**Figure 12.** Income and Expenditure - Huntingdonshire's District Council's Parks and Open Spaces (excluding central establishment charges CEC)

ASPE Parks Performance at a Glance 2018/2019 compares Huntingdonshire District Council's to other similar authorities. This performance matrix shows that Huntingdonshire District Council's **cost of service per household is £16.38** (excluding CEC) compared to the family group average of £25.86. The **cost of service per hectare of maintained land in Huntingdonshire £3,035** (excluding CEC) is also below the family group average of £4,588.

The sample site assessments show that the majority of sites are well maintained, however if budgets continue to be reduced there will inevitably be a point where poor maintained sites' costs become more expensive to restore and sustain. This can result in other issues, for example evidence provided by stakeholders as part of the Public Parks (Communities and Local Government Committee, 2017) shows that anti-social behaviour increases in greenspaces where maintenance standards have fallen. The community has also expressed concerns about what they consider to be the cost of visiting parks and greenspaces. Car parking charges were consistently raised and criticised at community engagement events. In terms of ideas to encourage people to use open spaces, from the questionnaire, removing car parking charges was the most popular request, This strategy seeks to find a balance that maintains parks and open spaces as free to access places to enjoy, with an entrepreneurial approach than ensures efficient management and appropriate income generation.



## 5.2 Staff

The role and remit of the staff who manage and maintain parks has changed considerable over time. Figures 13a and 13b (O'Brien, 2019) show how the traditional parks manager role has changed.

The current staffing structure can be found in appendix 7.

Figure 13a. Traditional Parks Manager



Figure 13b: Modern parks management



These structures reflect the current operational approach to management and maintenance of parks, open spaces and play areas. This strategy puts forward a change of approach with an emphasis on community development and the health and wellbeing agenda. Moving forward the staffing structure will need to respond to this approach.

### 5.3 Volunteering

The Council's Countryside Services works with Friends Groups at Holt Island Nature Reserve, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Paxton Pits Nature Reserve and Sudbury Meadows. In addition there is a Friends Groups at Priory Park. A range of groups and organisations also work in Huntingdonshire's parks, open spaces and play areas including Park Run, Riverside Miniature Railway, the Wildlife Trust and a range of sports clubs and community groups. They all make an invaluable contribution across the District.

Within Countryside Service's team is a part time Volunteer Co-ordinator, whose main focus is supporting volunteering at Paxton Pits to ensure the visitor centre is able to open. Engagement with volunteer and community groups has raised a concern about finding volunteers and encouraging meaningful community engagement ***"there's been a change in the culture, we were brought up to give back. Young people do not feel that way"*** and ***"if you walk down the high street every charity shop is asking for volunteers, we're competing in a smaller pool and I'm concerned about the future of our group."***

Only 16% of questionnaire respondents expressed an interest in volunteering and during community engagement interest was limited.

In online focus groups, carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic the majority of participants felt volunteering was important for the future of parks and open spaces. In addition most people spoke of a desire to volunteer but highlighted a range of barriers, which range from time of day to level of commitment. Exploring mechanism for developing volunteer opportunities that benefit people health and wellbeing as well local public open spaces is one of the key roles of this strategy.

I've been looking to volunteer but it is hard to find out where you can go and what you can do"





# 06

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## EMBRACE YOUR SPACE: A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE

**6.0** Huntingdonshire's community feels "very lucky to have the green and open spaces we do" and they add to what makes the area special. We want more people using, benefitting from and contributing to our network of greenspaces and our vision for the future is



# EMBRACE YOUR SPACE



More people using and enjoying our parks, open spaces and play areas to benefit their health and wellbeing.



### Shape Your Space

Shaping the future of parks, open spaces and play through a community asset based approach to development – local people embracing and shaping their space.



### Create Your Space

Creating communities through parks, open spaces and play areas – tackling social isolation, improving physical health and supporting wellbeing.



### Celebrate Your Space

Celebrate parks, open spaces and play – shout about their hidden value and increase usage by enabling people to have a life long relationship with these spaces.



### Reinvigorate Your Space

Think differently about the delivery of parks, open spaces and play both operationally and strategically.

**FIGURE 14:**

*Embrace Your Space: A Vision for the Future*



The vision is supported by four strategic themes. These themes contain a range of high level actions which have been shaped by research and consultation. These actions will be delivered over the lifetime of the strategy through collaboration with the community and partners.



## 6.1 Shape Your Space

Shaping the future of parks, open spaces and play through a community asset based approach to development – local people embracing and shaping their space.

Huntingdonshire District Council will collaborate with partners and communities to:

- Strengthen partnership working and identify new stakeholders.
- Create a mechanism for engagement with park users.
- Establish a network for Friends and Volunteer Groups.
- Remove the perception of “red tape” as a barrier to communities using spaces for events and activities.
- Pilot participatory budgeting to give communities a chance to understand and shape how money is spent.
- Take a community asset based approach to develop park plans in medium-term and then longer term to create and enhance spaces.
- Create new friends groups for priority sites.
- Through collaboration better engage our communities and attract new people to volunteering.
- Develop an “Everyone Welcome” standard to ensure people of all ages and abilities can access parks, open spaces and play areas.

## 6.2 Create Your Space

Creating communities through parks, open spaces and play areas – tackling social isolation, improving physical health and supporting wellbeing. Huntingdonshire District Council will collaborate with partners and communities to:



- Partnership working to identify and address community health and wellbeing issues and opportunities.
- Test methods for monitoring physical activity in parks and open spaces.
- Connect local people with their environment and wildlife.
- Give parks and open spaces a defined role in addressing climate change.
- Work with Public Health to explore social prescribing of time in parks and open spaces



### 6.3 Celebrate Your Space

Celebrate parks, open spaces and play – shout about their hidden value and increase usage by enabling people to have a life long relationship with these spaces.

Huntingdonshire District Council will collaborate with partners and communities to:

- Make information about parks and open spaces accessible and easy to find.
- Use a range of methods to market and promote our network of parks, open spaces and play areas.
- Outreach projects, delivered in partnership, to connect targeted communities to the value of parks, open spaces and play areas.
- Build an events strategy with a focus on health and wellbeing.
- Support people to create lifelong relationships with parks and open spaces.
- Explore community open spaces management.



### 6.4 Reinvigorate Your Space

Think differently about the delivery of parks, open spaces and play both operationally and strategically. Huntingdonshire District Council will collaborate with partners and communities to:

- Re-evaluate and restructure to create a single “parks & open spaces” team and support staff to develop new skills in response to the strategy.
- Identify capital investment priorities with a focus on health and well-being.
- Use resources effectively and efficiently.
- Take a strategic approach to income generation.
- Think differently.

### 6.5 An Action Plan for Change

This following ten year plan sets out a journey for the future of the District's parks and open spaces. It puts forward a route to delivering the Embrace Your Space vision, through actions to support each of the four key themes and the aims within them.



**FIGURE 15:**

*Ten Year Action Plan*












Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
<b>Strengthen partnership working &amp; identify new stakeholders.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Active Lifestyles Living Sport</li> <li>Partners</li> <li>Local Business</li> </ul>	<p><b>Establish a Healthy Open Spaces &amp; Play Forum</b> Create a mechanism for partners to come together to share ideas and deliver the strategy in partnership. <b>Establish a resource hub to share information and support across the forum.</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Town Councils</li> <li>Parish Councils</li> <li>Countryside Services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Complete the site assessment process developed as part of this strategy</b> Assess sites that haven't been visited as part of the development of this strategy. Review assessment criteria with Parks and Open Spaces Forum partners.</p>		<p><b>Update Site Assessments</b> Update site assessment and resulting quality and value scores.</p>
<b>Create a mechanism for engagement with park users.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understand community satisfaction levels.</b> Develop an annual survey for understanding community satisfaction both for specific sites and the District as a whole.</p>	Set appropriate targets for increasing visitor and community satisfaction.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enable people to share their views and ideas.</b> Establish a variety of mechanisms such as virtual "parkies" and token voting to enable the community to share their ideas.</p>	<p><b>Create a clear pathway for community Engagement</b> Develop a strategy for community engagement with a particular focus on disengaged hand hard to reach.</p>	
<b>Establish a network for Friends and Volunteer Groups.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Friends Groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Set up Friends Network</b> This network will be a mechanism for friends groups to share skills and knowledge. It will also enable partnership working for example on funding applications, marketing and events. It will also enable improved lines of communication between friends group and HDC.</p> <p>Work with Future Parks and other partners to explore opportunities for regional network to support information sharing and best practice.</p>		Review the outcomes of the network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friends Groups</li> <li>HDC</li> </ul>		<p><b>Friends Group Day</b> An event to celebrate and share the amazing work of local friends groups.</p>	
<b>Remove the perception of "red tape" as a barrier to communities using spaces for events and activities.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reduce the "red tape"</b> Let community groups and organisations know that parks and opens spaces are available for events and activities. Move the events application process online. Reduce the perception "red tape" prevents the use of green spaces.</p>		

Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
				
				
				
each audiences.				
				
				
				

















Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
Pilot participatory budgeting to communities a chance to understand and shape how money is spent.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>		<p><b>Understand the unit cost of maintaining each individual site.</b> Breakdown the cost of maintaining each site to support informed decision making in partnership with communities.</p>	<p><b>See if participatory budgeting is a viable option.</b> Select a destination or district level park and undertake a participatory review and set the budget priorities for the site.</p>
Take a community asset based approach to develop park plans in medium-term and then longer term to create and enhance spaces.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> <li>Friends groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Led Parks Plans for 5 key sites</b> Identify 5 sites, ideally with low quality and value scores, develop community led parks plans. These plans should be shaped by the community, identifying roles/actions for local people in delivering change and setting out appropriate mechanisms for income generation. These plans do not need to be to Green Flag standard but focus on a community led shared vision for the sites future and a plan for delivering positive change.</p>		<p>Review impact or approach, if successful target a further 5 plans per</p>
Establish a mechanism for celebrating the quality of parks and open spaces.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> <li>Friends groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Support more staff to become Green Flag Judges</b> Support continuing professional development and learning from best practise by enabling members of staff to become Green Flag Judges.</p>	<p><b>Increase the number of sites with a Green Flag in Huntingdonshire</b> Encourage and support Parish, Town Councils and Community Groups to apply for Green Flag Awards. Consider applications for key HDC sites.</p>	<p><b>All main Huntingdonshire District Council sites to have achieved</b></p>
Create new friends groups for priority sites.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Future Parks</li> </ul>		<p>Establish new friends groups for 3 new sites. Improve community engagement and involvement through establishing and supporting new friends groups.</p>	<p>Review impact of approach, if successful target a further 2 friends gro</p>
Through collaboration better engage our communities and attract new people to volunteering.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> <li>Friends groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pledge Your Part</b> Launch a campaign for people and organisations to make a public pledge to support parks and open space. Pledges can be small or large and will be shared and celebrated through social media.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> <li>Friends groups</li> <li>CVS</li> </ul>			<p><b>Establish community engagement and volunteering team.</b> Work with the Countryside Service and other partners to create a team for community engagement, but also up skill local people. Support coordination of v</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>			



Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
<p>ory budgeting pilot, where by local people and community groups</p>				
<p>year.</p>				
<p>d a Green Flag.</p>				
<p>roups per year.</p>				
				
<p>m with a focus on not only increasing volunteering and community volunteer activity.</p>				
<p><b>Set up a web and app based mechanism for volunteers.</b> Enable people to quickly find out about and sign up for volunteering opportunities.</p>				

























Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
Develop an "everyone welcome" standard to ensure people of all ages and abilities can access parks, open spaces and play areas.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>		<p><b>The everyone welcome standard improves accessibility and connects people with their parks,</b> Work with the community to establish a standard that ensures that parks and open spaces are accessible by 2030 and all open spaces by 2040. Create spaces that can meet the needs of all ages and respond to</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>		<p><b>Accessible Activities Pilot</b> Work with Healthy Lifestyles, One Leisure, Countryside Services and other partners to create a pilot project that is enjoyable for all. If successful roll out across the District.</p>	
Partnership working to identify and address community health and wellbeing issues and opportunities.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Town councils</li> <li>Parish councils</li> <li>Friends groups</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflect the aspirations of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy in the design and development of future provision.</b> The approach of this strategy should be embedded in the development of all future provision sites, including those projects that have completed</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Active Lifestyles</li> <li>Living Sport</li> <li>Other partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bring existing Health and Wellbeing projects into parks and open spaces.</b> Through cross department engagement encourage existing projects and organisations to use parks and open spaces as a delivery mechanism for healthy activity.</p>		<p><b>Establish new health and wellbeing new projects</b> In partnership develop and deliver specific health and wellbeing projects</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Active Lifestyles</li> <li>Cambridgeshire County Council</li> </ul>	<p><b>Support the CCC/PCC Physical Activity Campaign for over 65</b> Promote the campaign via parks and open spaces social media. Create parks and open spaces friendly versions of activities for those who are confident enough to exercise outside.</p>	<p>Work with the campaign to promote parks and open spaces activities and give older people the confidence to try the.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Friends groups</li> <li>Community Groups</li> <li>Local Sports clubs</li> <li>Active Lifestyles</li> <li>Living Sport</li> </ul>			<p><b>Pilot an activity hub at the Riverside Parks</b> Create an activity hub where parks visitors can access in health activities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Active lifestyles</li> <li>Living sport</li> <li>Other Partners</li> </ul>		<p><b>Address childhood inactivity in deprived areas.</b> Link with local schools and other partners to pilot an Oxmoor active kids project, getting inactive children into open spaces. Work with them to plan the future of these spaces for their benefit.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Active lifestyles</li> <li>Living sport</li> <li>Other Partners</li> </ul>		<p><b>Encourage people to use parks and open spaces as a route to a healthy lifestyle</b> Develop a pilot, in partnership with physical and mental health organisations, to use parks and open spaces as a route to a healthy lifestyle and improve their physical and mental health through exercise, healthy eating and other lifestyle</p>	

Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
<p><b>open spaces and play areas.</b>                      Accessible to all. Develop a plan for ensuring all parks are accessible by the aging population.</p>				
<p>Project with a focus on health activities that are accessible and</p>				
<p>Commenced before the development of this strategy.</p>				
<p>Projects.</p>				
				
<p>Activities at St Neots and Huntingdonshire's Riverside Parks.</p>				
<p>Children and young people in to local and accessible parks and open</p>				
<p>Spaces as a mechanism for supporting people to maintain a healthy lifestyle changes.</p>				



















Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
<b>Test methods for monitoring physical activity in parks and open spaces.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>		<p><b>Paxton Pits visitor monitoring pilot.</b> Funding has been secured to pilot a tap in, tap out scheme to monitor and understand visitor numbers.</p>	Learn from this pilot and consider for other destinations and districts targeted decision making.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>			<p><b>Establish a mechanism for monitoring levels of physical activity</b> Set targets based on this process.</p>
<b>Connect local people with their environment and wildlife.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural Cambridgeshire</li> <li>HDC</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Doubling Nature</b> Commit to supporting Natural Cambridgeshire's Doubling Nature through parks and open.</p>	<p><b>Big Tree Plant</b> Work in partnership with the Woodland Trust and support the aspirations of the District Council's Tree Strategy through an annual big tree plant event.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural Cambridgeshire</li> <li>HDC</li> <li>Cambridgeshire County Council</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>			<p><b>Green routes</b> Develop a network of routes using rights of way and green corridors to connect people to their parks and open spaces through active travel based around green infrastructure.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Wildlife trust</li> <li>Schools</li> </ul>		<p><b>Connect with wildlife</b> Work with local schools and organisations to create a project that connects local children with local wildlife.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>			<p><b>Create a pictorial meadow maze at St Neot's Riverside to celebrate Embrace Your Space and</b> The selection of the site should be suitable for the maze, but should also seek to give a site a sense of</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Build on the success of wildflower planting</b> Introduce appropriate wildlife mixes to new sites and areas.</p>	<p><b>Support people to create wild-flower spaces at home.</b> Connect with Love Parks Week, distribute wild-flower seed packages as part of event, activities and promotions.</p>	
<b>Give parks and open spaces a defined role in addressing climate change</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>CCC</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>		<p><b>Explore opportunities for parks to play and open spaces to play a role in addressing climate change.</b> Work with partners and experts to identify feasible projects and opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Deliver projects in partnership based on research.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>CCC</li> </ul>		<p><b>Monitor the impact of parks and open spaces on the environment.</b> Explore the possibility of mechanism to measure and share the positive impact of parks and open spaces on climate change. Connect to the Tree Strategy, Doubling Nature and the Environment</p>	

Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
t level provision. Visitor information can then be used to support				
in parks and open spaces.				
				
				
				
ncourage people to explore. identity and value it currently lacks.				
				
				
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Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>		<p><b>Establish a design criteria that ensures new and enhanced provision supports the climate change objectives</b> Embed the Trust for Public Land's Climate-Smart Cities (Schottland, 2019) four objectives cool, absorb, connect and thrive.</p>	
<p>Work with public health to explore social prescribing of time in parks and open spaces.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Public health</li> </ul>		<p><b>Work with the wider Local Authority to develop Mental Health Project with meaningful measures</b> Work across the Authority to establish a project that enhances the mental health of local people and communities. Explore opportunities for delivery existing programmes such as mental health training in parks and open spaces. Throwing With Nature Guidebook.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Public health</li> </ul>			<p><b>Research existing parks and open spaces based social prescribing models.</b> Develop a pilot approach in partnership with One Leisure to build on their existing offer.</p>
<p>Make information about parks and open spaces accessible and easy to find.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Friends groups</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Make information easy to access</b> The development of this strategy has brought together a wealth of information about the sample of sites across the District. Work with Countryside Services, One Leisure and other partners to ensure this information should be made easily accessible for the community and visitor ensuring communities can find the information they need to plan a visit. For example make it easy to find out which parks have toilet facilities.  This should also ensure people can be inspired in terms of what they can do in our spaces and have a clear picture of the equipment available.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Promote active travel and highlight the wealth of the way people can reach and travel between the parks and open spaces network.</b> Promote a wide variety of travel options from taking a walk to riding a horse. Provide information on routes and infrastructure, connect with organisations such as the Great Ouse Valley Trust and Cambridgeshire County Council Rights of Way. Support with positive signage for example number of steps a mechanism for measuring distance between sites.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Town and Parish Councils</li> </ul>			<p><b>Parks People Podcast</b> Capture people's memories and experiences of parks on a podcast from grounds maintenance staff to members of the public, share the love of parks. Explore opportunities for funding this project and develop in partnership for example with a local college.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Local businesses</li> </ul>		<p><b>Help park visitors to find out where to spend a penny...</b> Build links with local businesses such as public houses and restaurants. Creating a mapping system/app that enables parks visitors to find nearby toilet facilities they can use.</p>	



Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
<p><b>Change agenda.</b>                      , protect and connect.</p>				
<p><b>able outcomes.</b>                      ouncil staff through connecting them with parks and open spaces.                      en spaces. Link with the WWF and Mental Health Organisation's</p>				
<p><b>Implement parks and open spaces social prescribing pilot.</b></p>				
				
				
				
				

















Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>			<p><b>Develop a strategy to respond to demand for toilet provision.</b> Target key sites based on community engagement and usage. Explore toilet provision.</p>
Use a range of methods to market and promote our network of parks, open spaces and play areas.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Friends groups</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Embrace Your Space Online Engagement</b> Continue to use #EmbraceYourSpace as mechanism for community engagement, social listening and to raise awareness of parks and open spaces.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Friends groups</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>		<p><b>Embrace Your Space Day</b> Establish an annual Embrace Your Space day with events taking place at sites across the district including a cross district scavenger hunt.</p>	Monitor attendance and participation by friends and community groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community Groups</li> </ul>		<p><b>Memory Bank</b> Encourage local people to share their memories of local parks by sharing photos and stories through an online portal.</p>	<p><b>Memory Day</b> Tell local history through our parks an annual event to share memories and lives. Promote parks and what they can do for people through the website.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community Groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parks After Dark</b> Learn from the success of the national Museums After Dark event, identify appropriate events and activities in appropriate sites that encourage evening use.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Town and Parish Councils Friends groups</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Create a brand for Huntingdonshire's parks and open spaces.</b> Celebrate and share the value of the network through a brand that highlights what parks and open spaces give to the local community. Link with existing brand platforms such as Love Huntingdonshire.</p>	<p><b>Develop the brand on sites through the creation and implementation of signage.</b> Focus on positive informative signage and interpretation. Have a clear message on the site. Where appropriate use positive signage to encourage activities.</p>	
Outreach projects, delivered in partnership, to connect targeted communities to the value of parks, open spaces and play areas.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>		<p><b>Engage missing communities and introduce them to parks and open spaces.</b> Targeted community engagement with a focus on BAME communities, young people and people living in areas of deprivation. Build links in relevant groups and projects to take non users to the park.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>		<p><b>BAME community engagement</b> Build links with the BAME community</p>	Create events and activities targeted at bringing BAME communities into parks.

Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
e options such as "portable posh loos" at peak periods and charged				
open spaces.				
ups				
ies and experiences of parks and how they have shaped people's words of the community.				
able people to safely experience parks after dark.				
<b>ation of a signage and interpretation strategy.</b> ear brand across the district will elements that can be nuanced to ty for example "do play here" and 1000 steps to the next bench.				
				
				




























Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Schools</li> </ul>	<p><b>Develop engaging initiatives to bring families in our parks and open spaces.</b> Provide inspiration for families, show them the activities and fun they can have in our parks and open spaces and provide the tools they need. Create and distribute projects in partnership with local schools.</p>		<p><b>Parks Passport</b> Encourage people to visit more of our parks and open spaces. Create a passport app, where families can collect a virtual stamp for each site they visit. Use the app to give ideas for activities they can do in each location.</p>
Build an events strategy with a focus on health and wellbeing			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>All partners</li> </ul>		<p><b>Collaborate on an events strategy</b> Develop an events strategy that delivers a diverse range of events across a wider variety of parks and open spaces.</p> <p>Events should range in scale and include a mix of "free to enter" and income generating events and look to attract a range of audiences including non-users.</p>	
Support people to create lifelong relationships with parks and open spaces.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Let people know that parks are a great place to have a chat and meet new people.</b> Develop and implement a programme of low key "meet up" events in parks and open spaces that provide opportunities for people to meet walking to "meet ups" for people who fancy a chat.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Education</li> </ul>	<p><b>Park Twinning</b> Link with Forest Schools to create a scheme for schools to find and "twin" with a local park or open space. Enabling schools to use their local environment and building childhood experiences that will last a lifetime.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Adapt to the COVID-19 New Normal</b> Encourage those people who've found their local park as a result of the pandemic to keep using them. For example "your parks need you... When you needed them they were there, now our parks need you." Use this to stimulate volunteering and community participation.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Living sport</li> <li>Local colleagues</li> </ul>			<p><b>Explore the possibility of "gamifying" the experience of visiting</b> Take a new approach to the outdoors with a focus on the time when</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Older People's Groups</li> </ul>		<p><b>Engage with local care homes and older people projects</b> Work in partnership to deliver activities together in parks for the benefit of older people.</p>	

Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
				
				
meet up with like-minded people. These could range from dog				
				
open spaces to engage and attract young people. people think they are growing out of going to the park.				
				














Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDC</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Older people groups</li> <li>• Care homes</li> </ul>			<p><b>Intergenerational play project</b> Work with schools and older people community projects, to pilot an people's project and local school.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDC</li> <li>• Community groups</li> </ul>			<p><b>Pilot Experience the Outdoors Days Scheme</b> Pilot a project to create a monthly play day, which provides opportunities to experience new types of play and activities for people of all ages. A type of park run for experiences where people know it's going to happen on a regular basis. The event would move from site to site introducing new audiences to new spaces and activities but happen at a consistent point in each month.</p>
Explore community open spaces management			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDC</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Community groups</li> </ul>			<p><b>Adopt an open space.</b> Establish a scheme for local groups, organisations and businesses to adopt a space. Adopters can support the space through financial or in kind contributions such as volunteering, promotion, education programmes or supporting projects within the site.</p>
Re-evaluate and restructure to create a single "parks & open spaces" team and support staff to develop new skills in response to the strategy.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Restructure and refocus the team/s</b> Ensure a team is in place that can deliver and support this strategy. Have members of the team who can celebrate and champion parks.</p>		<p>Review progress made and consider combining operations and countryside services to form one team.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Put parks in the job title</b> Identify people who work in and influence parks and open spaces.</p>		<p><b>Give parks a face and point of contact to improve and enhance community engagement and maintenance standards.</b> Pilot two "park people" in key sites not currently supported by Countryside Services. The role will balance community engagement and relative/low level maintenance.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDC</li> <li>• Partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Identify the needs of staff for training and skills development.</b> Undertake a skills assessment based on the requirements of this strategy.</p>	<p><b>Based on the skills analysis develop a staff training and development programme.</b> To support identified initiatives and strategic approach, for example encourage more staff to become G</p>	
Identify capital investment priorities with a focus on health and well-being.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ensure a diverse range of provision is available across Huntingdonshire.</b> Use the strategy to ensure different levels and types of experience across the District. For example from a play perspective offer a range which meet the needs of families and children of all ages. Use the wider context for investment to create different levels and types of ex</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDC</li> <li>• Partners</li> </ul>		<p><b>Identify capital investment priorities with a focus on health and wellbeing.</b> Work with partners who specialise in health and wellbeing to identify targeted investment that will benefit health and wellbeing. Engage with the community to understand their perspective and inform them of change.</p>	



Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
intergenerational play project in partnership with an existing older				
				
				
				
				
Green Flag Judges.				
e of provision from destination play through to local areas of play experiences to meet different needs and attract different audiences.				
				









Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
Use resources effectively and efficiently			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understand and prepare for the financial impact of COVID-19</b> Review existing budgets and resources to prepare for the future and the impact of COVID-19. Review this on an annual basis.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reduce Litter</b> Explore opportunities for piloting new approaches that connect with the aspirations of the litter minimisation strategy.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>			<p><b>Infrastructure investment programme</b> Use park plans and site assessments to identify and target infrastructure improvements and enhancements including bins, benches and pathways. Explore options for achieving economies of scale through district wide investment and partnership working with Town and Parish Councils.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Protect and maintain trees across our network of parks and open spaces.</b> Use the HDC Tree Strategy to shape the approach across in parks and open spaces.</p>		
Take a strategic approach to income generation.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>		<p><b>Create a destination play space</b> Respond to the identified need for destination play space. Use destination play to attract new audiences and create days out that will result in secondary spend both on and off site.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Community groups</li> <li>Friends groups</li> </ul>		<p><b>Post Pandemic identify opportunities for income generation.</b> Use the parks plans and site assessment process to identify opportunities for income generation. Prioritise and take into account the short, medium and long term impact of COVID-19.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Friends groups</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>			<p><b>Review what has been achieved at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park to be self-sustaining.</b> Plans are in place for Hinchingsbrooke Country Park should be self-funding by this point the life of strategy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Friends groups</li> <li>Partners</li> </ul>			<p><b>Strategy for another destination park to become self-sustaining.</b> Learn from Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and develop proposals to...</p>

Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
				
				
				
				
				
critise based on impact and implement. These proposal should				
				
make 2 further destination site self-funding.				





Involving	Year 1	Years 2 - 3	Years 4 - 7
Think differently.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>COVID-19</b> Use the impact, in terms of usage and perceived value of parks, resulting from COVID-19 as an opportunity to think differently and make a stronger case for the impact and value of accessible greenspace from a health perspective.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Work with planning to review and define planning standards that support quality and accessible across the District.</b> Identify the link between parks, open spaces and play areas and the key areas of housing growth within the city, and ensure targeted investment in adjacent sites is the beneficiary from any development and planning gain. Adjust the focus of planning policy to support quality and accessible provision. Recalculate financial contributions and move towards developers taking on management and maintenance responsibility of future provision. Explore opportunities for natural play and new types of provision to meet local need.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC</li> <li>Oxmoor based community groups</li> <li>Local Community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Establish an Urban Park in Oxmoor</b> Connect existing greenspaces and infrastructure to develop an urban park in Oxmoor. Work closely with the community to enable the space to respond to local need and encourage the usage.</p>		

Years 8 - 10	Strategic Themes			
	Shape	Create	Celebrate	Regenerate
				
				
				



## 6.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance management is reliant on the collection of baseline data as part of the proposed objectives associated outcome and will be reviewed as part of the annual review process.

**Figure 16.** Performance Management and Monitoring Schedule

Performance Indicator	Description	Baseline Year 1	Year 2		Year 3	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Visitor satisfaction	Percentage of user sample satisfied or very satisfied with the management and maintenance of Silver Jubilee Park.					
Health and Wellbeing	Number of organisations and initiatives using parks and open spaces for health and wellbeing activities.					
External income	Level of income derived from external funding sources.					
Awards and recognition	Achieve and retain awards for quality / good service.					
Green Flag Awards	Nº of sites with Green Flag Awards across the District.					
Volunteers	Nº of volunteer hours contributed to the site per annum.					
Action	Percentage of actions completed as part of the five year action plan.					
Partnerships	Nº of partnerships developed with local organisations, groups and businesses.					
Diversification	Diversification of audience/s, measured using annual survey					
Events	Increase attendance and participation at events.					
Doubling Nature	Progress towards aspiration to "Double Nature".					
Community Engagement	Level of engagement via social media.					
Workforce Development	Participation in training and development by parks workforce.					
Friends Groups	Number of Friends Groups.					
Adopt a Space	Number of site adopted by local schools / businesses					





# 07

## THANK YOU



This strategy has been shaped, supported and enhanced by a wide variety of people and originations. Every person who took part in the conversation has played a part in shaping the future of our parks, open spaces and play areas.



# 08

## CAVEATS

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The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy is based on information supplied by Huntingdonshire District Council and a range of stakeholders. This report brings together information from a range of sources, Information provided by stakeholders has been received and evaluated in good faith and Pleydell Smithyman Limited cannot be held responsible for any omissions, errors or inaccuracies which may have an impact on future plans.





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# 01 SUMMARY POLICY REVIEW

This appendix summarises a selection of key policies that connect with this strategy and will impact on its implementation.



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## The Huntingdonshire District Council Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022

The Corporate Plan (HDC: Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022, 2018) sets out a vision to “support a safe and healthy environment, deliver economic growth and provide value for money services for the people of Huntingdonshire.” This vision is supported by two key focuses:

**People:** *“We want to make Huntingdonshire a better place to live, to improve health and wellbeing and support people to be the best they can be.”*

**Place:** *“We want to make Huntingdonshire a better place to work and invest and we want to deliver new and appropriate housing.”*

The ability of parks, open spaces and play areas to deliver wellbeing value and improve people lives clearly connects with the aspirations of the corporate plan. For example Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces (Jump X Simertrica for Fields in Trust, 2018) posits that,

*“...an individual would need to be compensated **£974 a year** to replace the life satisfaction they would have gained from their local park or greenspace (more than once a month). There is no question that Huntingdonshire’s greenspaces contribute to “a healthy environment”*

and

*“make Huntingdonshire a better place to live, to improve health and wellbeing and support people to be the best they can be.”*

This strategy explores how they can play more of a role in delivering the vision of the Corporate Plan for the benefit of people and places across the district. The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy seeks to go beyond a traditional park and play strategy. There is a specific focus on developing specific actions and outcomes that can benefit the health and wellbeing of people. For example the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA, 2019) found that **“people living more than 1 kilometre away from a greenspace have nearly 50 percent higher odds of experiencing stress than those living less than 300 meters from a greenspace.”** Economists estimate that globally national parks contribute £4.67 trillion in mental health benefits (Whipple, 2019), suggesting they **“provide services amounting to a significant proportion of global GDP. And that is before you consider the other environmental services they offer.”** Research, and community and stakeholder engagement has been used to shape this strategy and set out how Huntingdonshire’s parks, open spaces and play areas can continue to support the health and wellbeing of its community.

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## Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

The Local Plan (Huntingdonshire District Council , 2019) "sets out the Council's approach to securing sustainable development from 2011 to 2036 in order to meet identified needs." This includes policies related to the protection of open spaces, biodiversity and geodiversity, and trees, woodlands, hedges and hedgerows. The Local Plan seeks to protect existing open space by ensuring that development does not result in the loss of valuable public open space. Any development should support and enhance open space. The Local Plan stipulates that,

***"...in order to ensure that compensatory measures provide net benefits to the community the proposal will be expected to include enhancement of any remaining open space in cases of partial loss, the enhancement of other existing spaces or new provision that would serve the same community as that being lost. New provision for the loss of sports or recreational open space should be in a form that best meets an identified existing need, as agreed with the Council."***

This strategy explores how we define need in relation to parks and open spaces. Traditional models such as the Fields in Trust 6 acre Standard have focused on the amount of accessible space available, this strategy seeks to also consider quality and value of provision.

## Future Parks Accelerator

The Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) (Heritage Fund, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and National Trust, 2019) is a joint initiative between the National Trust, The National Lottery Fund and Local Authorities, with financial support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Future Parks Induction Pack explains:

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***"...an accelerator approach has been chosen deliberately to enable fast and agile development of innovative solutions in the most efficient & effective way."***

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The FPA is focused on eight urban areas including Cambridgeshire. The focus of the project is to ***"secure the future of Cambridgeshire's parks and greenspaces by building lasting cross-sector partnership solutions, identifying sustainable sources of funding and investment, identifying partnership models, building community 'ownership' and involvement and by providing skills and training to grow our greenspaces."*** This Healthy Open Spaces Strategy has been developed within the context of the Future Parks Accelerator. It explores how Huntingdonshire can both contribute to, and benefit, from the FPA process.



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## **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-24 (DRAFT)**

The strategy outlines the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board which brings together *"politicians, health and social care professionals and other leaders across the system work together to solve problems and lead change to benefit our residents."*

The strategy is based around the following priorities:

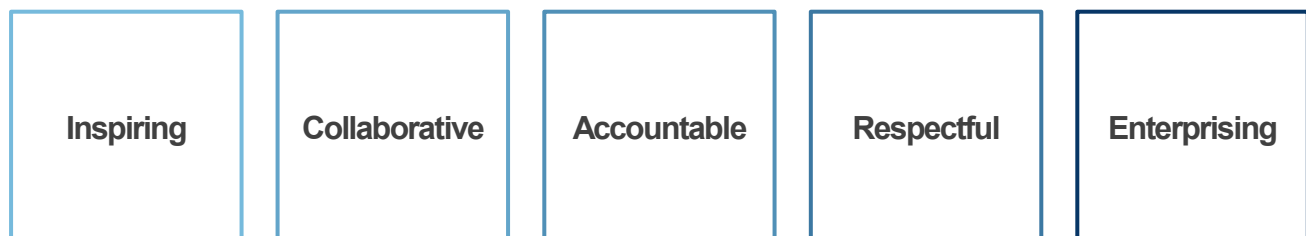
- Priority 1: Places that support health and wellbeing**
- Priority 2: Helping children achieve the best start in life**
- Priority 3: Staying healthy throughout life**
- Priority 4: Quality health and social care**

Parks and open spaces have a role in supporting and delivering this priorities. The strategy is based around a 'Think Communities' approach which *"means freeing up local staff to work together across organisations and with communities to solve problems and achieve the outcomes local people want. The approach aims to build relationships locally and address situations where 'care is not joined up' and 'systems not talking to each other,' described in the HealthWatch What would you do? report. Small voluntary sector organisations can be key to the Think Communities approach - which aligns with the skills and assets already held within communities and neighbourhoods. "*

Parks and open spaces have a role in supporting and delivering this priorities. The strategy is based This community based approach has also been explored in this strategy, in the context of parks and open spaces. With a focus on working with communities to understand need and exploring partnership working to deliver change.

### **iCare**

Huntingdonshire District Council aims to provide a high quality service for its community, to support this aspiration they have developed the iCare values. These values have shaped the creation of this strategy and will play a role in its implementation.



## The Wider Policy Context

Parks, open spaces and play areas make a valuable contribution to our communities, but their value has not been reflected in terms of funding. The People, Place and Policy Review – The Future of Public Parks in England (Crowe, 2018) cites research by the Association of Public Service Excellence which,

***“...provides a stark overview of local authorities’ declining resources, confirming that they face a funding gap of £5.8 billion by 2020 due to government austerity measures (a loss of 75p in every £1 of core funding). This creates huge challenges for local government, with a wider range of competing priorities, including many social services with a much greater public profile and expectations than greenspace and parks services.”***

A 2016 UK Parliamentary Communities and Local Government (CLG) Select Committee resulted in a range of recommendations (Crowe, 2018) including,

***“...encouraging local authorities to look beyond public funding to initiatives such as independent trusts, private sector investment models, and funds from the health sector. They recommend further volunteer involvement and community engagement, and working in partnership with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and others.”***

The recommendations of this inquiry have been considered in developing this strategy. It is notable that the inquiry stopped short of making the provision and maintenance of parks a statutory duty stating (Communities and Local Government Committee, 2017),

***“...we recognise that reductions in local authority Public parks budgets may disproportionately disadvantage discretionary services, such as parks. However, we are not persuaded that such a statutory duty, which could be burdensome and complex, would achieve the outcomes intended. Instead, we recommend that the Minister publishes guidance to local authorities that they should work collaboratively with Health and Wellbeing Boards to prepare and publish joint parks and greenspace strategies that clearly articulate the contribution of parks to wider local authority objectives, and set out how parks will be managed to maximise such contributions.”***

This strategy brings together research and engagement to articulate how parks, open spaces and play areas contribute to the health and wellbeing of local people and visitors. As well as exploring how these valuable and important places can contribute to the delivery of the Huntingdonshire District Council Corporate Plan.



# 02

## THE COMMUNITY

This appendix summarises population data and demographic information.





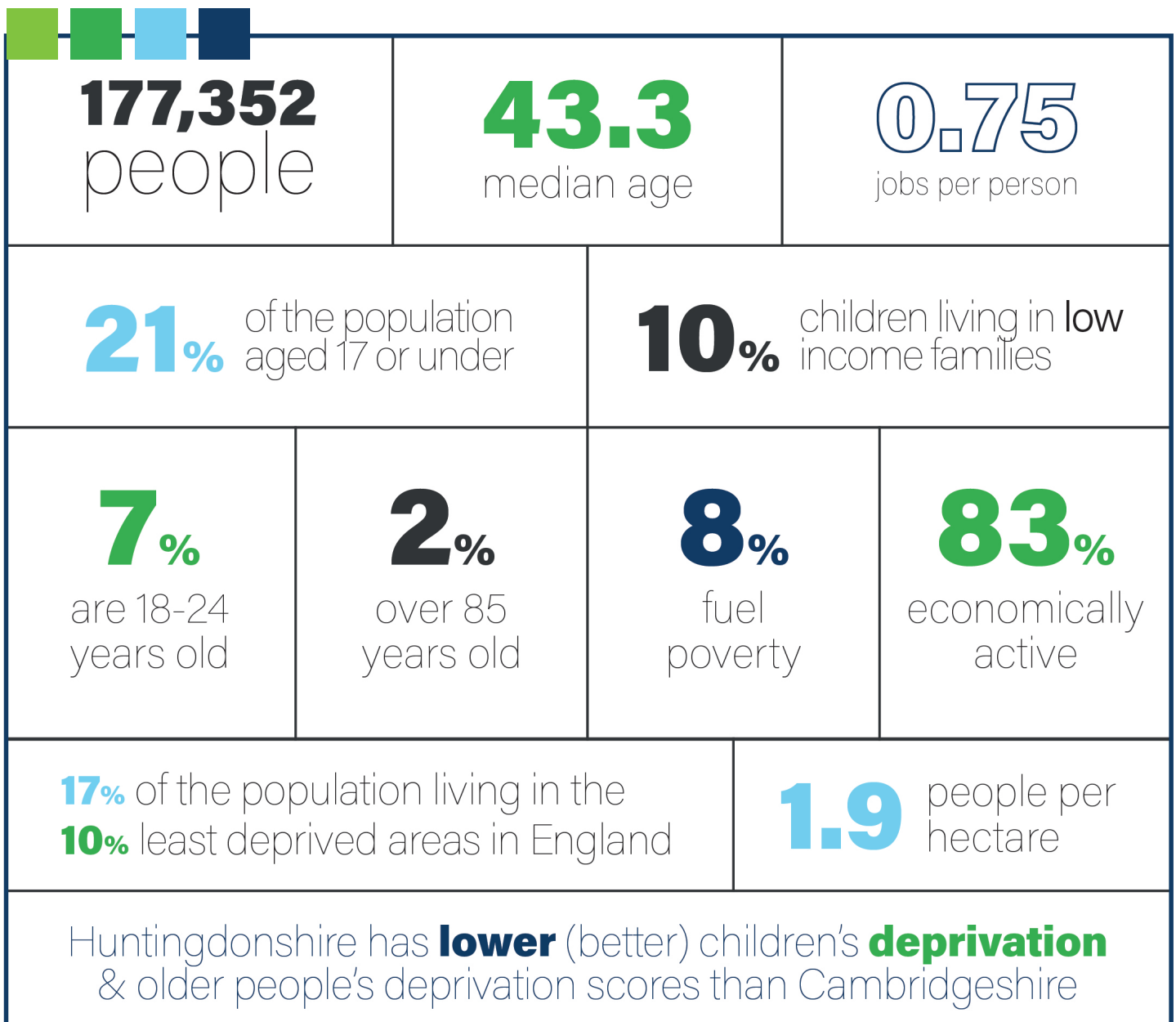
## Understanding the Population

Parks, open spaces and play areas will need to respond to changing communities and changing needs. These spaces also need to find the balance to service the different needs of a more diverse community. As of June 2018 Huntingdonshire, had a population of approximately 177,350 people (Huntingdonshire District Council, 2019). The population reflects the rural nature of the district with just 1.9 people per hectare compared to 30.4 people per hectare in Cambridge City. In the period between the 1991 and 2011 censuses the population grew by 20% (Huntingdonshire District Council, 2019).

*"...partly in response to housing market pressures in and around Cambridge."*

**FIGURE 1:**

*Huntingdonshire Population Summary (Office of National Statistics, 2019 & Cambridgeshire Insight, 2019)*



Housing growth is projected to continue, Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Huntingdonshire District Council, 2019) projects a need for 20,100 additional houses to meet population growth. The type of people living in Huntingdonshire is forecast to change, for example a,

**"...decline in the working age population as a proportion of the total population"** is projected. The Local Plan sets out a need **"to create a more balanced and diverse local population and encourage more young people to stay or move here."**

Fields in Trust Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces (Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces, 2019) used national survey data to develop an understanding of who is and isn't using parks.

## FIGURE 2:

### Parks Users Socio-Demographic Characteristics

**TABLE 4.1** SAMPLE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS: PRIMARY SURVEY (2017)

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (CONTROL VARIABLES FOR ANALYSIS)	PARK AND GREEN SPACE USERS (MEAN)	NON-USERS (MEAN)	TOTAL SAMPLE (MEAN)
Male (%) (reference = female)	48.6% (1288/2648) *	44.3% (613/1385) *	47.1% (1901/4033)
Mean age	47.0 *	50.0 *	48.0
Mean household income (£)	£33728 *	£28576 *	£31980
With children (%) (reference = other)	32.6% (862/2643) *	17.7% (245/1381) *	27.5% (1107/4024)
Married / partnership (%) (reference = other)	49.3%(1287/2609) *	43.3% (596/1377) *	47.2% (1883/3986)
Higher education (%)	51.4% (1345/2618) *	39.0% (537/1376) *	47.1% (1882/3994)
CV and NHS cost savings			£1,872,900,000
Employed (%) (reference = other)	56.3% (1480/2630) *	44.4% (610/1374) *	52.2% (2090/4004)
Live in London (%) (reference = other)	12.8% (339/2648) *	7.8% (108/1385) *	11.1% (447/4033)
BAME (reference = white)	7.7% (201/2616)	7.6% (105/1373)	7.7% (306/3989)
Members of park/cons. org. (%)	21.8% (576/2648) *	12.9% (179/1385) *	18.7% (755/4033)
Rural (reference = urban/suburban)	20.4% (541/2643)	20.2% (280/1378)	20.4% (821/4033)

Sample restricted to residents in UK (incl. Northern Ireland) aged 16 and over. National representative sample using age, gender, and region quotas. Sample excludes speedsters (n=65), those who indicated that their parks required an entry fee (n=282), and those giving invalid names for their local park (n=141). User defined as used park or green space once a month or more in past 12 months. Notes: Gross annual household income: averages computed using the midpoints of the income and age categories. Legend: \* p<0.10 significant difference between user and nonuser samples (t-test).

Demographic data suggests that Huntingdonshire District Council has a population that is typical of the demographic that would use parks and open spaces. For example Fields In Trust Research (Fields in Trust, 2018) found that **"over half of the park and greenspace users have completed higher education (51%), a significantly higher proportion than among non-users (39%), while a higher proportion of park and greenspace users are in employment (56%), compared to 44% of non-users."** At the time of last census 40.8% of Huntingdonshire's population had completed higher education.

Communities within the community also need to be considered, The Communities and Local Government (Communities and Local Government Committee, 2017) also found BAME communities use parks more often with 71% using them at least once a month compared to 56% of people identifying as white.

Data for Huntingdonshire shows 73% of BAME respondents use a park or open space at least once a month compared to 84% of those identifying as white. 5.2% of Huntingdonshire's population is from BAME backgrounds, compared to 7.4% in England, however our research and national data suggests a need for this strategy to build links with BAME communities and connect them with local parks, open spaces and play areas.

on a national level Fields in Trust Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces (Revaluing Parks and Greenspaces, 2019) found that BAME people living outside of London on average gave their local park a 'satisfaction with quality score' of 4.14 out of 5, compared to 4.24 across all communities. The results of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy questionnaire showed that 67% of BAME respondents rated their last visit to a park or open spaces at good or very good compared to 80% of those who identify as white. This suggests the BAME community are less satisfied with the quality of provision, in discussions with this group there was concern around levels of litter and the appearance of some parks and open spaces, which connected to these results.

The Communities and Local Government work on Public Parks (Communities and Local Government Committee, 2017) found park usage is ***"higher among those living in urban areas than those living in rural areas (61 per cent compared to 51 per cent use their park at least once a month)."*** Huntingdonshire is a rural district where regular park and open space usage is higher than the national results. This supports the argument that they are valued and appreciated by the local community.

### **Health& Wellbeing**

Overall (Public Health Intelligence, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, 2018/19) ***"health outcomes in Huntingdonshire are broadly very good and often statistically significantly better than national averages"***. Areas for concern in relation to health outcomes ***"include alcohol abuse in young people, excess weight in adults and the prevalence of respiratory disease."***

It is interesting to note that (Public Health Intelligence, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, 2018/19) ***"Huntingdonshire has statistically significantly better levels of excess weight in children and statistically significantly worse levels of excess weight in adults than the England averages."*** Levels of physical activity in 15 year olds in Cambridgeshire (Huntingdonshire level data is not available) are statistically similar to England as a whole, with physical activity among adults in Huntingdonshire at 75.1% significantly higher than England (66%). This suggests people in Huntingdonshire are more likely to be active but also more likely to be overweight or obese. This suggests a role for parks, play areas and open spaces in addressing this imbalance and supporting healthy lifestyles.



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***"In terms of mental health conditions in Huntingdonshire, rates of Schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder, and other psychoses, and depression, are at levels statistically significantly lower than England averages. Rates of dementia and learning disabilities are statistically similar to national averages"*** (Public Health Intelligence, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, 2018/19). Mental health and emotional disorders are impacting on children and young people data suggests (Public Health Intelligence, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, 2018/19) ***"One in eight (12.8%) 5 to 19 year olds had at least one mental disorder when assessed (equivalent to approx. 3,810 children and young people in Huntingdonshire)"*** and ***"emotional disorders were the most prevalent of the disorders (8.1%) (equivalent to approx. 2,410 children and young people in Huntingdonshire)."***

From a national perspective research by ResPublica (ResPublica , 2017) found that ***"61% of respondents who felt they had good access to green and open spaces were satisfied with their physical health, versus only 44% of respondents who felt they had poor access to such spaces. Similarly, only 14% of respondents who felt they had good access to such spaces were dissatisfied with their mental health as opposed to 22% of respondents who felt they had poor access to such spaces."*** Engagement with communities in the development of this strategy should reflect the value that local people places on parks, open spaces and play areas in the context of their mental health as one respondent explained ***"outside time and nature times creates calm, and gives perspective. Fresh air boosts metabolic performance which aids mental health. Mixing with other people. Creating distraction and stress free time."***

## **Volunteering**

The 2018/19 Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport Community (DCMS) Lifestyle Survey (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2019) found that 22% of adults (16+) formally volunteered, giving unpaid help through clubs or organisations, once a month and 36% in the last year. The DCMS research also shows that ***"people living in rural areas were more likely to formally volunteer than those in urban areas"*** and that people aged over 65 are the most likely to volunteer and those aged 25-34 the least. Rates of formal volunteering are 15 percentage points higher in the least deprived areas than the most deprived, however informal (giving unpaid help to individuals who aren't relatives) is relatively consistent across the scale of deprivation. This demographic data suggest a relatively strong pool of potential volunteers across the District.



# 03

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This appendix summarises the approach to community engagement.



## Phase 1

Phase one of our programme of community engagement was designed to provide an understanding of how local people and visitors are currently using parks and open spaces, their perception of these spaces and how they feel they contribute to their health and well-being. Below is a summary of the events and activities we undertook during this phase.

### Community Events

Attending community events enabled engagement with a range of people, including some who might not participate in a specific consultation activity. During the summer of 2019 a pop up community engagement activity was taken to four events:

- Huntingdon Carnival and Live in The Park, Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th August 2019
- St Neots Dragon Boat Race, Saturday 17th August 2019
- Hinchingsbrooke Country Park 30th Birthday Celebrations Part 2, Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th August 2019
- Love Farm Big Lunch, Sunday 8th September 2019

Interactive displays and a quick complete survey were used to obtain feedback from participants on how they use parks and open spaces, their perceived value of the spaces and aspirations for the future. This process began the conversation with local people and informed later phases of engagement.

### Questionnaire

713 people completed a questionnaire that was available online with hard copies at events, in community locations including parks, libraries and leisure centres. Respondents came from across Huntingdonshire and results of this questionnaire are presented and analysed in the main report.

### Focus Groups

During summer 2019, in partnership with local groups, schools and organisations, a programme of focus groups and discussions. This process ensured the strategy had representation from a range of target groups including:

- Children at Primary School
- Young People in Secondary School and College
- Retired People
- People from Diverse Backgrounds
- People with Additional Needs
- People who are not currently engaged in exercise



## Social Media

Huntingdonshire District Council and a range of partners including Friends Groups, Parish Councils and Town Councils promoted opportunities for community engagement through social media. During October half term 2019 an #EmbraceYourSpace social media campaign was launched to encourage members of the local community to share photographs capturing images of parks and open spaces. This provided an insight into how the community was using local parks and open spaces during this week. Photographs from the #EmbraceYourSpace campaign have been included in this report.

## Phase 2

Phase one of our programme of community engagement focused on understanding how local people use and value parks, open spaces and play areas. This information informed the development of the strategy. Phase 2 of the engagement process was an opportunity for the community to sense check and comment on the proposals and ensure that it reflected their needs and expectations.

Initially the plan was to hold five community events across the District at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Paxton Pits, Ramsey Leisure Centre, St Noets Farmers Market and St Ives Market. This was proposed to take place during the Easter holiday period to maximise footfall and opportunities for participation. However, COVID-19 restrictions resulted in the cancellation of these events and community engagement was moved online.

## Social Media

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As part of our digital engagement social media was used to raise awareness of opportunities to get involved. In addition, as shown in figure 1, local people were asked to participate in a vote bracket to help us understand priorities. This resulted in changes to the strategy to put an increased level of emphasis on wildlife and nature.

As events were not possible, information about the draft strategy and its aspirations was made available via the Huntingdonshire District Council alongside mechanism for leaving comments, feedback and queries.

## Questionnaire

It must be acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent local down and social distancing measures has had an impact on the use and perception of parks and open spaces. The Parks Management Forum (<https://parksmanagementforum.co.uk> June 2020) estimates "the use of parks over the last 4 months (February to May 2020) has increased over 136% nationally and some in localities even more." The impact of COVID-19 will be felt moving forward both in terms of how communities use parks and open spaces are how they are managed. 248 people completed a short questionnaire, the result of which are summarised in figure 2.

# Help us understand your priorities for the future of local parks and greenspaces...

We've been working on a Healthy Open Spaces Strategy to shape the future of our parks and greenspaces for the benefit of our community.

Huntingdonshire District Council spends the equivalent of just under £24 per household, per year (excluding council recharges), on our parks and open spaces. If you were making the decisions, how would you invest that money?

To help us understand the communities priorities we'll be asking you to select where you would spend the money, if it was your decision. This isn't a vote, but is about us seeing what the community values.

Over the next seven days we'll be polling you based on the bracket below, let us know what you think is the most important and would improve parks for you and your family. The ideas for investment below are taken from community engagement and the results of our healthy open spaces community survey.



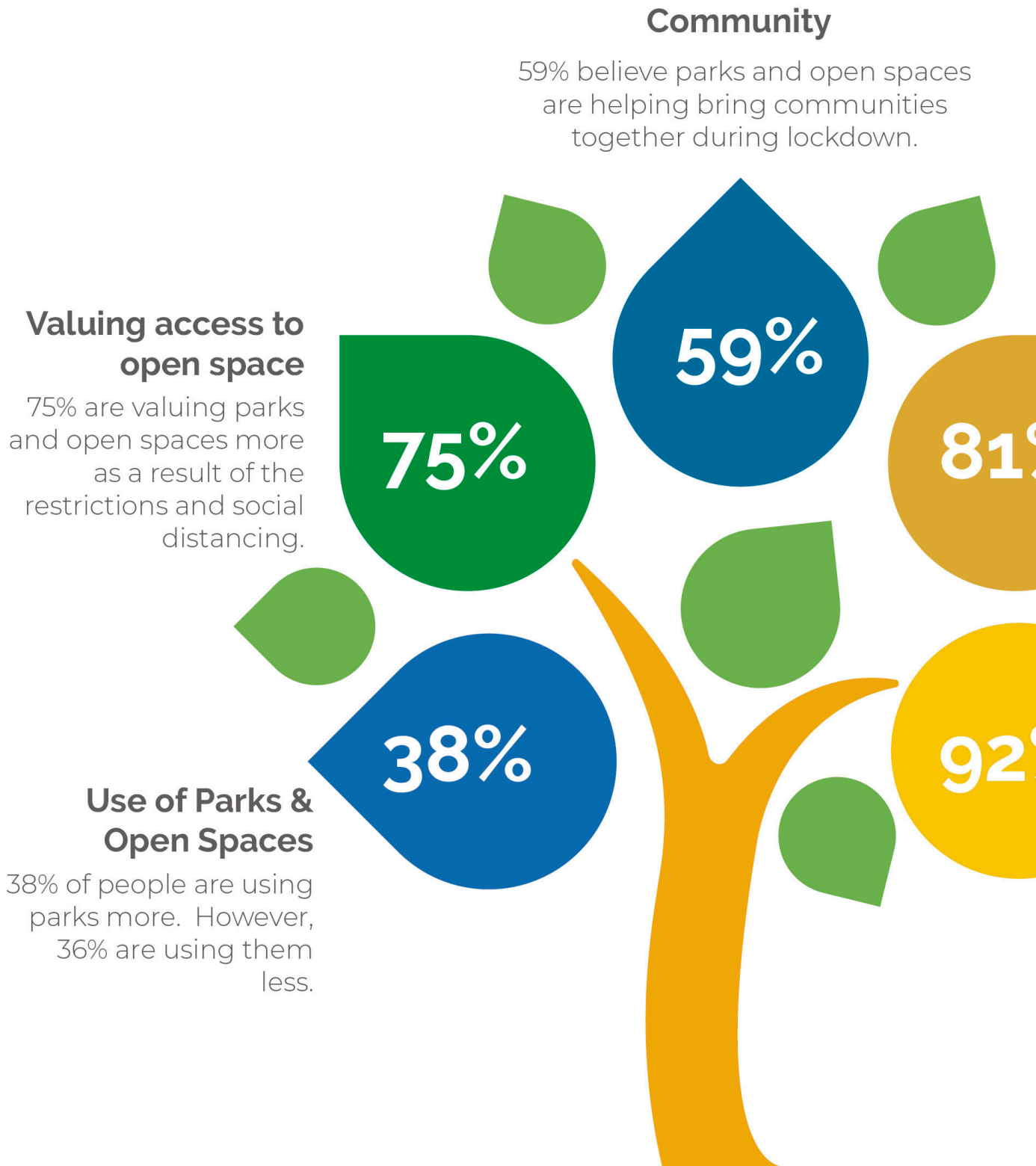
**FIGURE 1:**  
Social Media Bracket

## Online Focus Groups

We undertook a programme of five online focus groups attended by a total of five focus groups attended by 31 members of the public ranging in age from 21 to 73. The focus group sessions were based around a discussion of the vision and strategic themes. These open and honest discussions resulted in additions and amendments to the action plan particularly around working with schools, encouraging people to volunteer and working with communities. It should be acknowledged that because these activities took place online it limited participation to those who had access to the internet.

**FIGURE 2:**

COVID-19 Survey Summary






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# COVID-19 Short Survey

248 people completed a short survey about their use of parks and open spaces during COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions.

## Keeping healthy



81% think access to open space encourages them to keep healthy. 92% think parks and open spaces are improving their mental health and well-being.

## Because I'm happy

92% say access to parks and open spaces during covid-19 restrictions and social distancing is making them and over people happy.



# 04 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This appendix summarises the approach to stakeholder engagement.



## Introduction

In the context of this strategy, a stakeholder is a person, group or organisation that has interest or concern in Huntingdonshire's Parks and Open Spaces. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the strategy's actions, objectives and policies<sup>1</sup>. They are the persons, groups or organisations that will work in partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council's Parks and Recreation team to deliver the action plan. They include Friends and Community Groups, Parish and Town Council, other departments from across Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the third sector.

The approach to engagement commenced with a mapping exercise to identify existing and potential stakeholders, with a focus on understanding their interest / influence. This mapping process was developed into an engagement plan, with a focus on ensuring stakeholders were able to participate and believed that it would be a beneficial process. Alongside targeted stakeholder engagement events and activities, stakeholders were also invited to attend community events. Stakeholders also played a vital role in raising awareness of the strategy and promoting opportunities for communities to participate in engagement.

## Phase 1

The first phase of engagement was focused on ensuring a rounded understanding of the current situation and aspirations for the future from stakeholders perspectives.

## Workshop

The initial workshop was an opportunity to bring stakeholders together, to launch the development of the strategy and set clear parameters. The workshop used interactive tools and activities to create a shared understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the current approach. It also explored stakeholders aspirations for the future and initiatives that could be connected to the strategy, as well as giving participants an opportunity to shape the criteria for the site assessment process. The final element of the workshop focused on creating a shared vision and lead to #EmbraceYourSpace.

## Interviews, Meetings and Site Visits

Stakeholders had the opportunity to request a one to one or small group discussion of the strategy and their potential role in shaping and delivering change. A number of individuals and organisations took up this offer, with discussions taking the form of interviews, meetings and sites visits.

## Friends and Community Groups Workshop

Friends and Community Groups are vital to parks and open spaces. A workshop was held specifically for these groups, with a focus on the current situation, understanding the role of these groups and their aspirations for the future. This was an open and honest discussion that enabled an informed understanding of the groups roles, plans and frustrations.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/stakeholder.html>



### **Phase 2**

This stage of the stakeholder engagement process was focused on sharing the draft strategy and providing mechanisms for comment and feedback. The way in which this phase was delivered was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting social distancing, therefore elements of the engagement took part online.

#### **Workshop**

The phase 2 stakeholder workshop presented the findings of the research and engagement, alongside the draft vision, themes and a range of potential projects. Attendees were encouraged to question and feedback on the findings, as well as to work together to develop potential projects for the action plan.

#### **Pop Up Event**

A drop in session was held at Pathfinder House, to enable anyone who worked for Huntingdonshire District Council to pop in and find out about the strategy and proposals for the future. This diversified the range of people who had an opportunity to comment, beyond those whose work for the Council connected directly with parks and open spaces.

#### **Member Working Group**

The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy Working Group met in early March 2020, to review and question the findings of the strategy. In addition Members were able to put forward potential projects and aspirations for the action plan.

#### **Online Engagement**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions further face to face engagement with stakeholders was not possible. Digital engagement opportunities were developed with online presentations and feedback sessions for Town, Parish and District Councils and Members. In addition stakeholders were signposted to a video presentation and digital comment cards which were made available via Huntingdonshire District Council's YouTube page.



# 05

## UNDERSTANDING QUALITY

The criteria that was used to assess the quality of a sample of Huntingdonshire's Parks and Open Spaces.







**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
HEALTHY OPEN SPACES & PLAY STRATEGY  
SCORING CRITERIA - QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

M18.186.R.013





Attributes	Description/s	Score
Sense of Welcome and Arrival	A welcoming place score of 9+	4
	A welcoming place score of 7 to 8	3
	A welcoming place score of 5 to 6	2
	A welcoming place score of 4 or under	1
Healthy, Safe and Secure	A healthy, safe and secure score of 9+	4
	A healthy, safe and secure score of 7 to 8	3
	A healthy, safe and secure score of 5 to 6	2
	A healthy, safe and secure score of 4 or under	1
Well Maintained and Clean	A well maintained and clean score of 9+	4
	A well maintained and clean score of 7 to 8	3
	A well maintained and clean score of 5 to 6	2
	A well maintained and clean score of 4 or under	1
Road, paths, cycle ways and access	Suitable materials, level for safe use, some disabled access.	3
	Suitable materials but with some faults, disabled access poor.	2
	Roads / paths in correct place but in need of obvious repair, disabled access poor and very restricted.	1
Facilities: Bins	Numerous for the site and in good condition.	5
	Numerous for the site and in average condition.	4
	Adequate number in good / average condition.	3
	Insufficient number but in a good condition.	2
	Insufficient number in a poor condition.	1
Facilities: Seats	Numerous for the site and in good condition.	5
	Numerous for the site and in average condition.	4
	Adequate number in good / average condition.	3
	Insufficient number but in a good condition.	2
	Insufficient number in a poor condition.	1
Facilities: Toilets	Provided within the park, easy to access, signed and well maintained.	5
	Provided within or adjacent to the park, difficult to find maintenance / condition is average.	4
	Provided with the park or adjacent to it and visible, but not well cared for an generally uninviting.	3
	Provided within the park or adjacent to it but in very poor condition and generally avoided by park users.	2
	Temporary toilet provision for events / facilities e.g. cafe are open.	1

Attributes	Description/s	Score
Parking	Parking provided integral to, or adjacent to the space. Adequate spaces, site clean, tidy, in good condition and well signed.	5
	Parking provided integral to, or adjacent to the park, adequate spaces but maintenance could be better.	4
	Parking provided integral to, or adjacent, to the park, limited spaces, maintenance good or reasonable.	3
	Parking provided integral to, or adjacent to the park, limited space, maintenance poor.	2
	Parking provision is very limited.	1
Information	Information is available on site for locals and visitors.	3
	Information is available online for locals and visitors.	2
	Limited information about the park is available.	1
Facilities: Additional	Cafe / food offer	5
	Disability facilities / provision	5
Play: Availability	Play provision is well located, in good condition and easy to find.	5
	Play provision is hard to find and in good condition.	3
	Play provision is available but is need of improvement.	1
Play: Quality	An average score of 9+	5
	An average score of 7 to 8	4
	An average score of 5 to 6	3
	An average score of 4 to 3	2
	An average score of 2 or under	1
Physical Health	Facilities for physical activity are available (e.g. pitches or changing rooms) and promote on site.	5
	Physical activity is promoted and encourage on site.	4
	Facilities are available on site.	3
	There is potential for physical activity on site.	1
Mental Health and Well Being	There is evidence of activity related to mental health and well being taking place on site.	5
	The sites potential to support mental health and well being is promoted on site / online.	3
	There is potential for the site to benefit people's mental health and well being.	1
Quick Green Flag Score Average	An average score of 9+	4
	An average score of 7 to 8	3
	An average score of 5 to 6	2
	An average score of 4 or under	1
Management Plan	Evidence of management plan	5

ID	The Site				General				Facilities						Play		Health		Green Flag		Quality	
	Site Name	Postcode	Ward	Primary Typology	Sense of Welcome and Arrival	Healthy, Safe and Secure	Clean and Well Maintained	Roads, Paths, Cycle Ways and Access	Bins	Seats	Toilets	Parking	Information	Additional	Availability	Quality	Physical Health	Mental Health	Quick Score	Management Plan	Score	%
1	Holt Island Nature Reserve	PE27 5BY	St Ives South	Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	1	3	4	3	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0.00	5	1	7	0	31	46.83
2	Falcon Drive	PE29 1LP	Huntingdon East	Amenity green space	2	3	3	0	3	4	0	0	1	0	1	4.50	1	1	7	0	30	39.18
3	Garner Court	PE29 1GE	Huntingdon North	Amenity green space	1	3	3	3	3	4	0	4	1	0	5	6.22	0	1	6	0	41	52.67
4	Coneygear Park	PE29 1GB	Huntingdon North	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	3	4	0	0	1	5	5	7.57	5	1	8	0	51	65.68
5	Flamsteed Park	PE29 6JG	Brampton	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	5	5	6.00	5	1	8	0	42	54.55
6	Sapley Playing Field	PE28 2GA	Huntingdon North	Urban Park	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	4	1	0	5	6.30	5	1	8	5	50	65.32
7	Mayfield Crescent	PE29 1UJ	Huntingdon East	Urban Park	2	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	3	5.33	0	1	6	0	28	35.93
8	Stukeley Meadows Linear Nature Reserve and Play Areas	PE29 6UF	The Stukeleys	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	3	5	0	0	3	5	3	6.70	5	1	6	0	48	62.69
9	King George V Field, Sapley Road	PE29 3RP	Huntingdon East	Amenity green space	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	5	5	6.20	5	1	7	0	45	58.05
10	Huntingdon Town Park - Bloomfield Park	PE29 3LF	Huntingdon North	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	3	5	0	0	3	5	5	6.60	5	1	7	0	51	66.69
11	Priory Park	PE19 1DY	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	3	3	1	5	1	5	5	7.56	1	1	8	5	56	73.23
12	Love Farm - 3 Camp Ground	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	3	5	0	0	3	5	5	7.67	1	0	8	0	49	63.20
13	Loves Farm - Train Station	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	Provision for children and teenagers	2	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	5.20	0	0	5	0	26	34.35
14	Love Farm - Bawlings	PE19 6GD	St Neots East	Provision for children and teenagers	1	3	3	2	0	5	0	0	1	0	5	3.22	0	0	7	0	30	38.60
15	Loves Farm - 1	PE19 6SL	St Neots East	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	5	5.60	5	5	8	0	43	56.19
16	Love Farm - 4 (Pirate Ship)	PE19 6GL	St Neots East	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	5	5	7.22	1	0	8	0	38	49.64
17	Love Farm - 2 (Hull Way) & Furrow Fields	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	Provision for children and teenagers	2	2	3	2	3	5	0	0	1	0	5	4.78	1	1	7	0	37	47.76
18	Henbrook	PE19 2ED	St Neots Eynesbury	Provision for children and teenagers	2	2	3	2	3	3	0	4	1	0	5	4.89	1	0	6	0	37	47.58
19	Barford Road	PE19 2SA	St Neots Eynesbury	Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	4	3	0	5	7.33	5	1	7	5	54	70.56
20	Dumock Way, St Ives	PE27 5EX	St Ives South	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	5.22	5	0	7	0	35	45.09
21	Hill Rise, St Ives	PE27 6HR	St Ives West	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	3	4	0	4	3	5	5	5.78	5	5	7	5	62	81.10
22	Fire Station Play Area, Huntingdon	PE29 3RQ	Huntingdon North	Provision for children and teenagers	2	2	3	2	3	3	0	0	1	5	5	5.00	5	0	6	0	42	54.87
23	Riverside Huntingdon	PE29 3RP	Huntingdon East	Urban Park	1	2	2	2	2	3	0	5	3	5	5	6.11	5	1	5	5	52	67.68
24	Little Paxton - QE Playfield	PE19 6EY	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	Urban Park	3	2	3	2	3	3	0	5	1	10	5	0.00	5	5	7	0	54	69.70
25	Paxton Pits	PE19 6ET	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	4	3	3	3	3	2	5	5	3	5	0	0.00	5	1	8	5	55	81.53
26	Somersham - Memorial Hall (Victory Hall)	PE28 3HE	Somersham	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	5	1	10	5	6.67	5	1	7	0	58	74.89
27	King George V Field, Ramsey	PE26 1GB	Ramsey	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	0	1	0	5	6.56	5	1	7	0	42	54.94
28	Signal Road, Ramsey	PE26 1NG	Ramsey	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	5	5.11	0	0	7	0	32	42.03
29	Sawtry, Rowell Way	PE28 5WA	Sawtry	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	0	1	5	3	7.30	1	0	7	0	41	53.64
30	Yaxley, Park Close	PE7 3WJ	Yaxley	Urban Park	2	3	3	2	3	3	0	3	1	5	5	6.33	5	1	6	0	48	62.51
31	Stilton Community Rec Field	PE7 3RP	Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	5	5	6.40	5	0	7	0	41	52.79
32	Brampton Memorial Hall	PE28 4QR	Brampton	Urban Park	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	5	1	5	5	6.60	5	1	7	0	57	73.77
33	Stokes Drive 2	PE29 2UV	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	5	3	5.67	0	0	7	0	37	47.62
34	Stokes Drive - 1 (Opposite Green Acre Close)	PE29 2UW	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	Provision for children and teenagers	2	3	3	0	3	3	0	0	1	0	3	4.67	0	0	7	0	29	38.10
35	Wigmore Farm	PE29 2AR	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	0	1	5	5	5.80	1	1	7	0	43	55.58
36	Huntingdonshire Community Nursery	PE29 2AG	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	Allotments, community gardens and city (urban) farms	3	2	2	2	3	3	0	3	3	5	0	0.00	1	1	6	0	34	51.00
37	The Thicket	PE27 6DT	St Ives South	Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	2	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0.00	1	1	5	0	19	28.36
38	Hinchingbrooke Country Park	PE29 6DB	St Ives South	Country Park	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	3	3	5	5	5.89	5	5	8	5	70	90.44
39	Spring Common	PE29 1TQ	Huntingdon North	Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	1	1	2	2	3	3	0	0	1	10	0	0.00	0	1	4	0	28	42.29
40	Sudbury Meadows	PE19 7AB	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	0	1	5	0	0.00	5	5	8	5	46	68.10
41	Alconbury Weald Skatepark & Play Space	PE28 4XG	The Stukeleys	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	3	1	5	5	7.70	5	0	8	0	51	66.71
42	Oxmoor Estate	PE29 7BB	Huntingdon North	Urban Park	2	2	3	2	3	3	0	0	1	0	3	5.71	5	1	6	0	37	48.11
43	Judith's Field	PE29 2WB	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	Urban Park	3	3	2	2	3	3	0	2	3	5	5	7.30	5	1	6	0	51	65.76
44	Coneygear Park, St Neots	PE19 2TL	St Neots Eynesbury	Urban Park	2	2	3	2	3	3	0	3	3	5	5	5.78	1	1	6	0	45	58.48
45	St Neots - Skate Park	PE19 7SB	St Neots Eatons	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	5	5	5.80	5	0	7	0	40	51.95
46	Riverside, St Neots	PE19 7SB	St Neots Eatons	Urban Park	3	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	3	0	5	6.70	5	1	6	5	56	72.66
47	Co-op Play Area	PE29 2PA	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	Provision for children and teenagers	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	0	1	0	5	6.00	0	0	7	0	36	46.75





# 06

## UNDERSTANDING VALUE

The criteria that was used to assess the value of a sample of Huntingdonshire's Parks and Open Spaces.





**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
HEALTHY OPEN SPACES & PLAY STRATEGY  
SCORING CRITERIA - VALUE ASSESSMENT**

M18.186.R.014



Factor	Criteria	Rationale	Measure	Score	Weighting
Context	Accessibility	Based on audit.	Unrestricted	10	x1
			Limited	5	
			Restricted	0	
	Proximity	Based on GIS analysis using 400m buffer zone for open space.	No overlap	10	x1
			1 overlap	9	
			2 overlaps	8	
			3 overlaps	7	
			4 overlaps	6	
			5 overlaps	5	
			6 overlaps	4	
			7 overlaps	3	
			8 overlaps	2	
			9 overlaps	1	
Quantity	Fields in Trust Greenspace Index GIS Score	less than 1 / less than the minimum standard	10	x1	
		1 - 2	7		
		3 - 4	5		
		5+	3		
Level and type of use	Hierarchy	Based on prescribed hierarchy	Destination	10	x1
			District	7	
			Neighbourhood	5	
			Local	3	
	Level of use	Number of people observed using the site during visit	50+	10	x1
			30 - 49	8	
			15 - 29	5	
			5 - 14	3	
			4 and under	1	



Factor	Criteria	Rationale	Measure	Score	Weighting
Wider Benefits	Landscape	Statutory designations for protected landscapes.	Within protected landscape	10	x1
			View(s) with appeal	5	
			No landscape value	0	
	Biodiversity	Formal designation	NNR	10	x1
			SSSI	8	
			LNR	5	
			SINC	3	
			pSINC	2	
			No designation	0	
	Heritage	Features associated with the site	SAM	10	x1
			Registered parks and gardens	7	
			Within conservation area	5	
	Community		Friends / community group	10	x2
			Community projects e.g. allotments associated with site	5	
			Regular events and activities	3	
	Life Long Learning	Number of education establishments within a 400m butter	>5	10	x2
			3-4	7	
			2-3	5	
			1	3	
			0	0	
Health & Well Being	Indices of Multiple Deprivation at LSOA Level	20% most deprived	10	x2	
		21 - 40%	7		
		41 - 60%	5		
		61 - 80%	3		
		81 100%	1		

Factor	Criteria	Rationale	Measure	Score	Weighting
Green Infrastructure	Connectivity	Direct contact with other green spaces even if restricted or limited.	>5	10	x3
			3-4	7	
			2-3	5	
			1	3	
			0	0	

ID	The Site			Context				Level and Type of Use			Landscape
	Site Name	Postcode	Ward	Accessibility	Proximity	Quantity	TOTAL	Hierachy	Level of Use	TOTAL	
38	Hinchingbrooke Country Park	PE29 6DB	St Ives South	10	2	3	15	10	10	20	0
19	Barford Road	PE19 2SA	St Neots Eynesbury	10	3	7	20	7	3	10	0
15	Loves Farm - 1	PE19 6SL	St Neots East	10	2	10	22	3	3	6	0
16	Love Farm - 4 (Pirate Ship)	PE19 6GL	St Neots East	10	2	10	22	3	3	6	0
11	Priory Park	PE19 1DY	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	10	1	5	16	10	8	18	0
4	Coneygear Park	PE29 1GB	Huntingdon North	10	6	10	26	7	3	10	0
21	Hill Rise, St Ives	PE27 6HR	St Ives West	10	6	5	21	7	3	10	0
36	Huntingdonshire Community Nursery	PE29 2AG	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	10	2	10	22	7	3	10	0
17	Love Farm - 2 (Hull Way) & Furrow Fields	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	10	5	10	25	3	3	6	0
12	Love Farm - 3 Camp Ground	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	10	4	10	24	3	3	6	0
13	Loves Farm - Train Station	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	10	4	10	24	3	3	6	0
39	Spring Common	PE29 1TQ	Huntingdon North	10	6	10	26	5	1	6	0
1	Holt Island Nature Reserve	PE27 5BY	St Ives South	5	1	10	16	7	1	8	5
14	Love Farm - Bawlins	PE19 6GD	St Neots East	10	4	10	24	3	1	4	0
18	Henbrook	PE19 2ED	St Neots Eynesbury	10	2	10	22	7	3	10	0
27	King George V Field, Ramsey	PE26 1BE	Ramsey	10	10	10	30	5	3	8	0
24	Little Paxton - QE Playfield	PE19 6EY	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	10	7	10	27	5	3	8	0
25	Paxton Pits	PE19 6ET	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	10	7	10	27	5	3	8	0
30	Yaxley, Park Close	PE7 3WJ	Yaxley	10	7	10	27	3	1	4	0
37	The Thicket	PE27 6DT	St Ives South	10	5	10	25	5	1	6	0
42	Oxmoor Estate	PE29 7BB	Huntingdon North	10	7	7	24	5	3	8	0
7	Mayfield Crescent	PE29 1UJ	Huntingdon East	10	7	10	27	7	1	8	0
43	Judith's Field	PE29 2WB	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	10	5	10	25	7	8	15	0
31	Stilton Community Rec Field	PE7 3RA	Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley	10	10	7	27	5	0	5	0
40	Sudbury Meadows	PE19 7AB	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	10	1	3	14	7	1	8	0
8	Stukeley Meadows Linear Nature Reserve and Play Areas	PE29 6UF	The Stukeleys	10	9	10	29	7	3	10	0
44	Coneygear Park, St Neots	PE19 2TL	St Neots Eynesbury	10	3	10	23	5	3	8	0
35	Wigmore Farm	PE29 2AR	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	10	10	10	30	5	1	6	0
45	St Neots - Skate Park	PE19 7SB	St Neots Eatons	10	5	3	18	10	5	15	0
46	Riverside, St Neots	PE19 7SB	St Neots Eatons	10	5	3	18	10	5	15	0
3	Garner Court	PE29 1GE	Huntingdon North	10	7	7	24	3	1	4	0
41	Alconbury Weald Skatepark & Play Space	PE28 4XG	The Stukeleys	10	7	7	24	5	1	6	0
23	Riverside Huntingdon	PE29 3RP	Huntingdon East	10	1	10	21	10	5	15	0
26	Somersham - Memorial Hall (Victory Hall)	PE28 3HE	Somersham	10	8	10	28	5	3	8	0
29	Sawtry, Rowell Way	PE28 5WA	Sawtry	10	9	7	26	3	3	6	0
6	Sapley Playing Field	PE28 2GA	Huntingdon North	10	4	7	21	5	3	8	0
20	Dumock Way, St Ives	PE27 5EX	St Ives South	10	10	10	30	5	1	6	0
47	Co-op Play Area	PE29 2PA	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	10	4	3	17	10	1	11	0
28	Signal Road, Ramsey	PE26 1NG	Ramsey	10	9	10	29	5	3	8	0
9	King George V Field, Sapley Road	PE29 3RP	Huntingdon East	10	1	10	21	5	1	6	0
10	Huntingdon Town Park - Bloomfield Park	PE29 3LF	Huntingdon North	10	3	5	18	7	1	8	0
5	Flamsteed Park	PE29 6JG	Brampton	10	6	3	19	3	1	4	0
22	Fire Station Play Area, Huntingdon	PE29 3RQ	Huntingdon North	10	1	10	21	3	1	4	0
32	Brampton Memorial Hall	PE28 4QR	Brampton	10	7	10	27	5	1	6	0
33	Stokes Drive 2	PE29 2UV	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	10	7	10	27	3	3	6	0
34	Stokes Drive - 1 (Opposite Green Acre Close)	PE29 2UW	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	10	7	10	27	3	3	6	0
2	Falcon Drive	PE29 1LP	Huntingdon East	10	9	7	26	3	1	4	0



ID	The Site			Wider Benefits						Green	Value	
	Site Name	Postcode	Ward	Biodiversity	Heritage	Community	Life Long Learning	Health & Well Being	TOTAL	Infrastructure Connectivity	Score	%
38	Hinchingsbrooke Country Park	PE29 6DB	St Ives South	0	7	20	10	6	43	0	78	45.88
19	Barford Road	PE19 2SA	St Neots Eynesbury	5	0	20	10	10	45	0	75	44.12
15	Loves Farm - 1	PE19 6SL	St Neots East	0	0	20	6	10	36	9	73	42.94
16	Love Farm - 4 (Pirate Ship)	PE19 6GL	St Neots East	0	0	20	6	10	36	9	73	42.94
11	Priory Park	PE19 1DY	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	0	0	20	14	2	36	0	70	41.18
4	Coneygear Park	PE29 1GB	Huntingdon North	0	0	20	6	6	32	0	68	40.00
21	Hill Rise, St Ives	PE27 6HR	St Ives West	0	0	20	6	2	28	9	68	40.00
36	Huntingdonshire Community Nursery	PE29 2AG	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	0	0	20	6	10	36	0	68	40.00
17	Love Farm - 2 (Hull Way) & Furrow Fields	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	0	0	20	6	10	36	0	67	39.41
12	Love Farm - 3 Camp Ground	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	0	0	20	6	10	36	0	66	38.82
13	Loves Farm - Train Station	PE19 6GS	St Neots East	0	0	20	6	10	36	0	66	38.82
39	Spring Common	PE29 1TQ	Huntingdon North	0	0	14	14	20	34	0	66	38.82
1	Holt Island Nature Reserve	PE27 5BY	St Ives South	0	0	20	6	10	41	0	65	38.24
14	Love Farm - Bawlins	PE19 6GD	St Neots East	0	0	20	6	10	36	0	64	37.65
18	Henbrook	PE19 2ED	St Neots Eynesbury	0	0	14	14	14	28	0	60	35.29
27	King George V Field, Ramsey	PE26 1BE	Ramsey	0	0	0	6	14	20	0	58	34.12
24	Little Paxton - QE Playfield	PE19 6EY	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	0	0	20	0	2	22	0	57	33.53
25	Paxton Pits	PE19 6ET	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	0	0	20	0	2	22	0	57	33.53
30	Yaxley, Park Close	PE7 3WJ	Yaxley	0	0	6	10	10	26	0	57	33.53
37	The Thicket	PE27 6DT	St Ives South	0	0	0	6	10	16	9	56	32.94
42	Oxmoor Estate	PE29 7BB	Huntingdon North	0	0	0	10	14	24	0	56	32.94
7	Mayfield Crescent	PE29 1UJ	Huntingdon East	0	0	0	10	10	20	0	55	32.35
43	Judith's Field	PE29 2WB	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	0	0	6	6	2	14	0	54	31.76
31	Stilton Community Rec Field	PE7 3RA	Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley	0	0	10	0	2	12	9	53	31.18
40	Sudbury Meadows	PE19 7AB	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	0	0	20	0	2	22	9	53	31.18
8	Stukeley Meadows Linear Nature Reserve and Play Areas	PE29 6UF	The Stukeleys	5	0	0	6	2	13	0	52	30.59
44	Coneygear Park, St Neots	PE19 2TL	St Neots Eynesbury	0	0	0	6	6	12	9	52	30.59
35	Wigmore Farm	PE29 2AR	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	0	0	0	0	14	14	0	50	29.41
45	St Neots - Skate Park	PE19 7SB	St Neots Eatons	0	0	0	0	2	2	15	50	29.41
46	Riverside, St Neots	PE19 7SB	St Neots Eatons	0	0	0	0	2	2	15	50	29.41
3	Garner Court	PE29 1GE	Huntingdon North	0	0	0	6	14	20	0	48	28.24
41	Alconbury Weald Skatepark & Play Space	PE28 4XG	The Stukeleys	0	0	0	12	6	18	0	48	28.24
23	Riverside Huntingdon	PE29 3RP	Huntingdon East	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	46	27.06
26	Somersham - Memorial Hall (Victory Hall)	PE28 3HE	Somersham	0	0	0	6	2	8	0	44	25.88
29	Sawtry, Rowell Way	PE28 5WA	Sawtry	0	0	0	6	6	12	0	44	25.88
6	Sapley Playing Field	PE28 2GA	Huntingdon North	0	0	0	0	14	14	0	43	25.29
20	Dumock Way, St Ives	PE27 5EX	St Ives South	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	42	24.71
47	Co-op Play Area	PE29 2PA	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	0	0	0	6	6	12	0	40	23.53
28	Signal Road, Ramsey	PE26 1NG	Ramsey	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	39	22.94
9	King George V Field, Sapley Road	PE29 3RP	Huntingdon East	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	37	21.76
10	Huntingdon Town Park - Bloomfield Park	PE29 3LF	Huntingdon North	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	36	21.18
5	Flamsteed Park	PE29 6JG	Brampton	0	0	0	6	6	12	0	35	20.59
22	Fire Station Play Area, Huntingdon	PE29 3RQ	Huntingdon North	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	35	20.59
32	Brampton Memorial Hall	PE28 4QR	Brampton	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	35	20.59
33	Stokes Drive 2	PE29 2UV	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	35	20.59
34	Stokes Drive - 1 (Opposite Green Acre Close)	PE29 2UW	Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	35	20.59
2	Falcon Drive	PE29 1LP	Huntingdon East	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	32	18.82



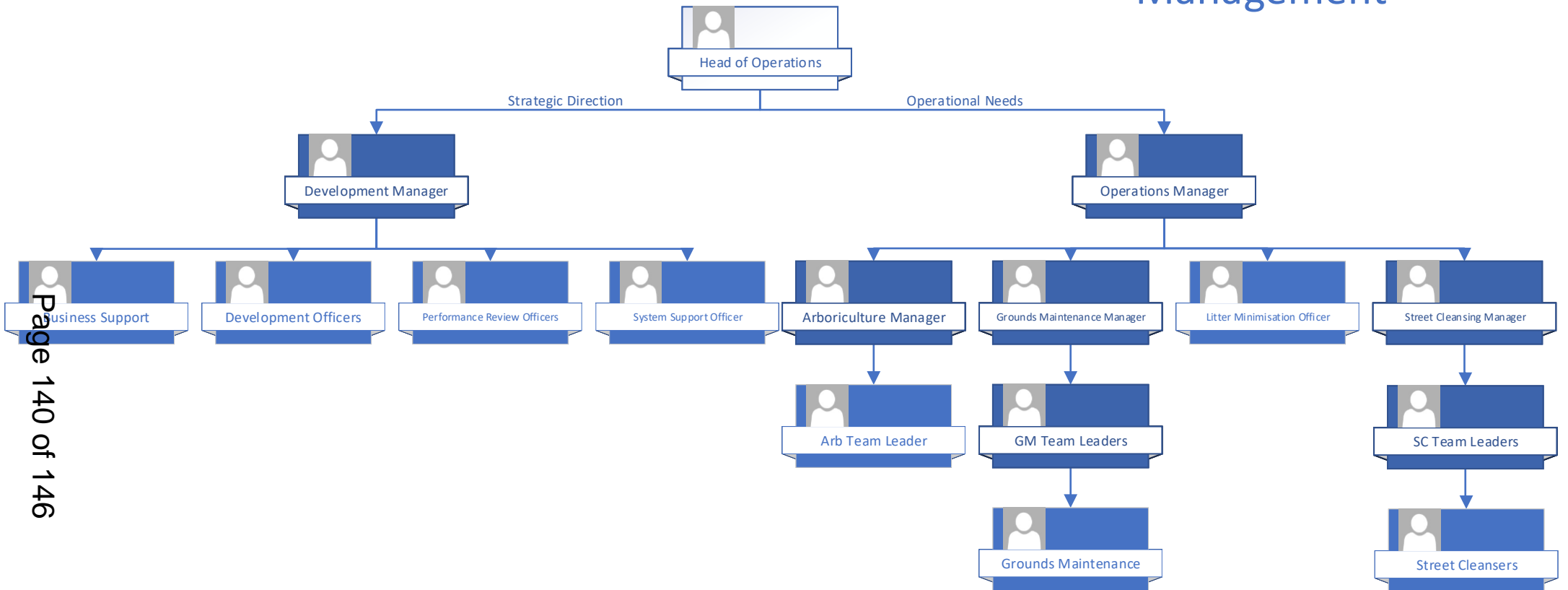
# 07

## STAFF STRUCTURE

The staff structure at the time the strategy was developed.



# Parks and Open Space Management





PleydellSmithyman



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## Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21

### Performance and Growth

Topic	Membership & Scope	Lead Officer	Progress
Housing Strategy to 2025	Councillor A Roberts Councillor S Wakeford Councillor D Wells Councillor Mrs S R Wilson  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment and make suggestions on the emerging Housing Strategy.</li> </ul>	David Edwards/Liz Bisset	<p><b>6th August 2020</b> – A meeting took place with Members; the Interim Corporate Director (Place), David Edwards and Liz Bisset. The vision for the strategy was outlined and Members had an opportunity to comment and make suggestions.</p> <p><b>Next Step</b> The completed strategy will be presented to the Panel at the meeting on 7th October.</p>
Transport Strategy	Councillor S J Criswell Councillor I D Gardener Councillor P L R Gaskin Councillor M S Grice	Nigel McCurdy/David Edwards	Study has not commenced.
Asset Management Strategy	Councillor I D Gardener Councillor D A Giles	Jackie Goldby/Justin Andrews	Study has not commenced.

### Customers and Partnerships

Topic	Membership & Scope	Lead Officer	Progress
Digital Strategy	Councillor D Tysoe	Tony Evans	<p><b>Next Step</b> The Assistant Director – Transformation will attend the Panel meeting on 8th October where a discussion will take</p>



			place.
Climate Change Strategy	Councillor T D Alban Councillor Mrs J Tavener Councillor Mrs S R Wilson	Neil Sloper	<b>18th October 2020</b> – The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Local Government Association Scrutinising Climate Action Webinar on 18th September.  <b>Next Step</b> The remit for strategy development has not been established. In absence of this it is recommended that Members review examples of climate change studies conducted at other local authorities.
Waste Strategy	Councillor Ms A Dickinson Councillor D A Giles Councillor Mrs S Smith Councillor Mrs S R Wilson	Neil Sloper	Study has not commenced.
Lifelong Health – Part Two	Councillor S J Criswell Councillor Mrs A Dickinson Councillor K P Gulson Councillor Mrs S Smith Councillor Mrs J Tavener Councillor Mrs S R Wilson  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways of developing better health outcomes for residents.</li> <li>• Identify the benefits of a whole system approach for the Council.</li> </ul>	Oliver Morley	<b>12th September 2019</b> – The Panel received the final report of Part One and agreed to continue the study under the guise of ‘Part Two’.  <b>14th October 2019</b> – The Task and Finish Group met with Liz Robin, Public Health.  <b>10th December 2019</b> – Following the presentation of the Part One report to Cabinet and the meeting with the Director of Public Health, the Task and Finish Group met to refocus the scope of

			<p>the study. The study will now focus primarily on collaboration with Parish &amp; Town Councils and community groups in order to improve residents' physical activity and well-being.</p> <p><b>13th January 2020</b> – The Task and Finish Group received a presentation from Active Lifestyles and assessed the interaction the service has with Parish &amp; Town Councils and community groups.</p> <p><b>28th January 2020</b> – Alyce Barber, Community Development Officer, attended and informed Members of her work with projects that helps build social contact, builds support networks and addresses mental health issues. Members will also discuss the evidence that links an individual's mental health with physical health.</p> <p><b>12th February 2020</b> – The Task and Finish Group received and discussed a number of case studies.</p> <p><b>Next Step</b> – The Group will conduct an evidence review in October/November 2020.</p>
<b>(Renamed)</b> Healthy Open Spaces Strategy	Councillor Mrs A Dickinson Councillor K P Gulson Councillor Mrs S Smith	Helen Lack	<b>11th March 2020</b> – A meeting took place with Working Group Members, the relevant Executive Councillors, Helen

	<p>Councillor Mrs J Tavener Councillor Mrs S R Wilson</p>		<p>Lack and Sarah Wheale-Smith of PleydellSmithyman so that Members could give their views on the draft Strategy.</p> <p><b>29th July 2020</b> – A second meeting took place with Working Group Members, Helen Lack and Sarah Wheale-Smith of PleydellSmithyman. Members were shown the executive summary and a full draft of the Strategy.</p> <p><b>Next Step</b> The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy is to be presented to Members at the Panel meeting on 8th October 2020.</p>
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