

OPEN SPACE STRATEGY
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 1st February 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Operations on the content of the draft Open Space Strategy. This report sets out the Panel's discussions.

2. COMMENTS

- 2.1 The Panel has been advised that the Strategy aims to provide an overarching vision of what the District's parks, open spaces and other public spaces could look like over the next 10-15 years. It will primarily be used to aid the planning process. In particular the Strategy will be used as a tool to lever Section 106 funding into the District.
- 2.2 The Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services has informed Members that minor amendments have been made to the Strategy since its publication with the Panel's Agenda. These have been included in the final version of the Strategy, which has been submitted to the Cabinet. Members of the Panel have been requested to forward suggestions for any further amendments directly to the Service Development Manager.
- 2.3 Comment has been made that adoption of the Strategy could encourage the perception that the Council will take responsibility for or assist with the maintenance or development of all the sites identified within the document.
- 2.4 Further comment has been made on the need for the Strategy to incorporate a detailed analysis of the implications of localism for the achievement of its aims. Work on the Strategy commenced in 2009, at a time when the Council was operating under different political and budgetary conditions. The Panel has received assurances that the ongoing process to update the Strategy will include the development of an appreciation of localism.
- 2.5 Following discussion on the terminology used to classify the different types of open spaces that exist and which ones have been included in the Strategy, Members have endorsed the decision to adopt an approach which is consistent with Planning Policy Guidance 17. The Panel has also commented that the Strategy should differentiate between sites that the public can visit free of charge and those that require payment for their use.
- 2.6 Finally, the Panel has been informed that the Strategy will be a "live" document that will be routinely updated by Officers and revised editions will be published.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of Operations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes and Reports of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 1st February 2011.

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