

To: City Executive Board
Date: 7th December 2011
Report of: Head of Leisure and Parks
Title of Report: Green Spaces Strategy

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To propose a draft Green Spaces Strategy for consultation.

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillor Mark Lygo

Report approved by:

Finance: Val Craddock

Legal: Lindsay Cane

Policy Framework:

Vibrant, Sustainable Economy

Strong, Active Communities

Cleaner, Greener Oxford

Recommendation(s):

To approve the Draft Green Spaces Strategy for public consultation.

Appendix 1: Draft Oxford Green Spaces Strategy 2012-2026

Appendix 2: Equalities Impact Assessment

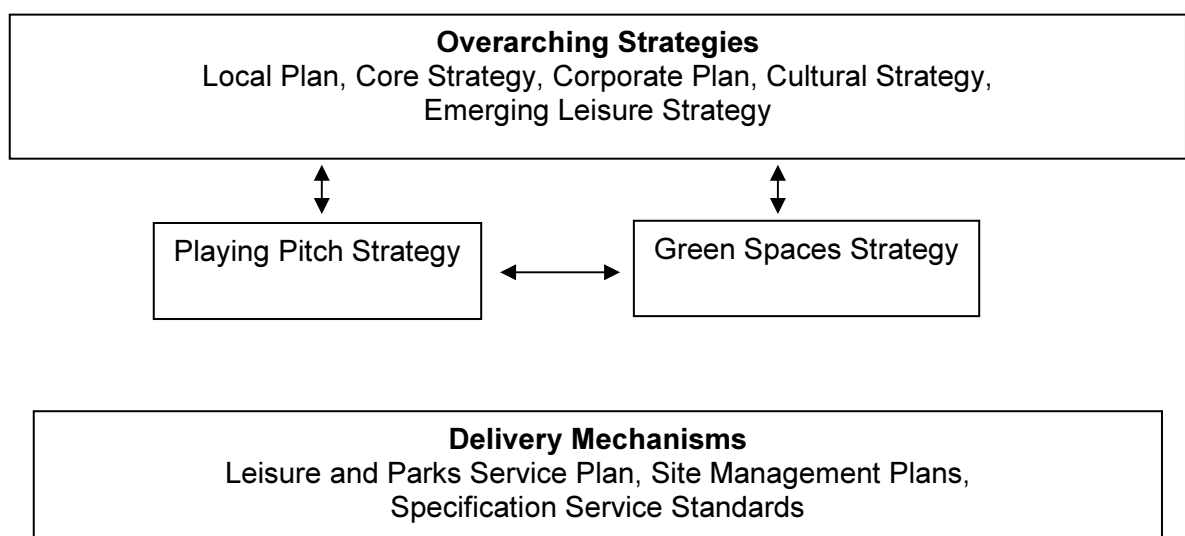
Introduction

- 1 Oxford City Council's current Green Spaces Strategy expires in 2011. The benefit of preparing a strategy is the protection, creation and improvement of a network of high quality open spaces in Oxford. The strategy will have a focus over the next four years, but will run from 2012 to 2026 in recognition of the long term nature many changes to green spaces take and to also bring it in line with the Core Strategy. The action plan will be reviewed and updated annually so it remains relevant.

Methodology

- 2 The Draft Oxford Green Spaces Strategy 2012 to 2026 (appendix one) has been compiled over the last 10 months using:
 - CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) Space best practice guidance on writing Green Space Strategies. CABE was the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space. CABE Space was a specialist unit within CABE that aimed to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and open spaces.
 - Feedback from the cross party Leisure Advisory Group on the objectives.
 - Input from the Green Spaces Strategy Steering Group comprising:
 - GreenSpace South East Regional Manager as an external critical friend
 - Groundwork Thames Valley
 - Council services areas; Corporate Assets, Communities and Neighbourhoods and Planning.
 - A review of the work already undertaken to date, such as the Oxford City Green Space Study by Scott Wilson, asset audits and previous consultation and satisfaction survey results.

3 Relationship to other Strategies



Current Vision

- 4 “To provide world-class parks and open spaces to enhance the quality of life of everyone living, visiting or working in Oxford.”

Draft Aims

- 5 The aims below are extracted from the Strategy. The first three are standard aims that should be in any Green Spaces Strategy which cover quantity, accessibility and quality. Aims four, five and six have been developed using:

- Input from the Leisure Advisory Group
- Input from the Green Spaces Strategy Steering Group
- Consultation with Parks Management

Aim 1	To establish a minimum standard of green space provision to ensure that Oxford has an agreed amount of green and play spaces to meet existing and future needs of residents, workers and visitors
Aim 2	To ensure everyone living, working and visiting in Oxford has easy access to open space
Aim 3	To achieve high quality green spaces across Oxford, including spaces that are nationally recognised for their quality and attractions
Aim 4	To promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the City’s biodiversity, sustainability and heritage
Aim 5	To promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the City’s health and well-being
Aim 6	To support community cohesion and community involvement in the stewardship of green spaces

Objectives and Action Plan

- 6 Each of the six aims has specific objectives, with a total of 22 objectives in total. In order to ensure that each objective is met, an action plan at the end of the strategy lists a set of realistic and achievable activities.

Consultation Process

- 7 The consultation process, which has been agreed with the Council’s Consultation Officer, will involve sending an executive summary, with covering letter to all key stakeholders and community groups including:
- Oxford City Council Services: Parks and Leisure Staff; Corporate Assets; Planning; Street Wardens
 - Sports and Leisure Clubs
 - Friends / Voluntary Groups / Neighbourhood Action Groups
 - Residents
 - Contractors
 - Essential Services

- Other Landowners
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Parish Councils
- Governing Bodies: E.g. Natural England; Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association
- Education Sector: Primary and Secondary Schools; Oxford University and Colleges; Language Schools
- Health Sector: NHS Oxfordshire; Surgeries; hospitals
- Police – PCSO's
- Transport Sector: Sustran; Bus Companies
- Community Centres

8 Throughout the consultation period the draft strategy will be available on Oxford City Council's web site and will be available for comment through the on-line consultation page. A press release will promote the start of the consultation.

Level of Risk

- 9 The level of risk is reviewed as low as the service would continue without a Green Spaces Strategy. However in order to be world class and deliver on the Council priorities such as improving health and well-being and bringing communities together a strategy needs to be in place.
- 10 This strategy will positively contribute to the evidence base for setting the Community Infrastructure Levy as well as applying for external funding from Governing Bodies and Sport England.

Climate Change / environmental impact

11 Public spaces play a major role in combating the effects of climate change, from moderating rising temperatures in our cities to help with preventing flooding. Climate change adaptation is increasingly important in policy making for public space. Aim four of the Green Spaces Strategy is to support the Council target to reducing its carbon footprint and act on climate change.

Equalities Impact

12 Aim two of the Green Spaces Strategy is to ensure everyone living, working and visiting in Oxford has easy access to open space, therefore addressing the inequalities of provision across the City. An Equalities Impact Assessment is available in appendix three.

Financial Implications

- 14** The Green Spaces Strategy action plan will be delivered using the existing revenue budget, bidding for external funding, developer contributions and by bringing partners together.

Legal Implications

- 15** There are no direct legal implications arising out of the contents of this report.

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 1.4

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