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**To: The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

**Subject: Greenspace Strategy Progress Update**

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## **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) of the progress being made in the development of the City Council's Greenspace Strategy.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) are recommended to:

- 1) Note progress in the development of the Greenspace Strategy detailed within the report
- 2) Consider the information contained in the appendices covering
  - a. Household and stakeholder consultation
  - b. Quality Assessments undertaken
  - c. Draft Strategy
- 3) Note the delivery programme detailed Appendix B
- 4) Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member

## **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The City Council's existing Greenspace Strategy terminates on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. In March 2017 Community First Partnership were commissioned to develop a Greenspace Strategy for the City Council in accordance with an agreed scope.

## **4 Consultation**

- 4.1 The first phase of the consultation process has now been completed. This included a number of surveys, stakeholder meetings and workshops. The findings resulting from the various consultation processes have been reported and summarised in Appendix A.
- 4.2 As second phase of consultation took place in early February 2018 with two workshops being held. These provided an update on work to date in the formation of the strategy, explored emerging themes and prioritised recommendations. The results of the workshops will be documented shortly
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the draft strategy will be completed in March 2018 at which point it is proposed that it will be subject to Public consultation.

## **5 Research**

- 5.1 A review of local, regional and national policy affecting greenspace provision and management has been completed and a report issued in July 2017.
- 5.2 A review of the existing strategy (2018 -2018 Greenspace Strategy) aims and objective achievements has been completed and issued in July 2017.

## **6 Quality Assessment**

- 6.1 A quality assessment based on Green Flag Award methodology has been undertaken on a total 223 open spaces. The results of this extensive piece of work was reported in Nov 2017. A summary of the results is given in Appendix A

## **7 Quantity**

- 7.1 This is a fundamental building block for the strategy and will inform planning policy and local standards.
- 7.2 Extensive work has been required to update the mapping dataset and this has taken considerably longer than originally anticipated as there has been considerable change due to development with some sites having been lost and others partially lost to development.
- 7.3 Since 2008 mapping has focused on Council owned and managed land. This dataset has needed to be expanded to cover all green spaces regardless of ownership. Further classification of these sites has also been required (type / hierarchy / accessibility).
- 7.4 The 2008 strategy recorded 521 spaces totalling 1960 hectares but did not fully consider the accessibility of spaces. Based on our understanding of the supply of accessible green space there is a similar number of accessible green spaces within Coventry but the area has decreased significantly from 1980 hectares to 1376.
- 7.5 The final dataset was completed in Jan 2018 along with the quantity analysis report.

## **8 Draft Strategy**

- 8.1 A number of emerging themes have been identified resulting from the earlier surveys and consultations. These are summarised in Appendix A and have been used as a basis for establishing strategic recommendations and priorities as part of the second phase of workshops.

## **9 Programme**

- 9.1 It is anticipated the draft strategy will be produced by the end of February 2018 and the final strategy by early April 2018. The programme is shown Appendix B. The end dates may vary slightly depending upon any public consultation on the draft strategy.

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### A. Consultation

Phase 1 consultation completed and included:

- Household Survey
- Positive Image Survey to boost response from BME communities
- CYP survey (low level of response)
- Stakeholder meetings & consultation (Public Health / Sport England / Planning / Greenspace & Heritage Forum)
- Stakeholder Workshops x2 (18/10/17 & 01/11/17)

Key findings and Initial conclusions:

- Parks & green space well used and well valued
- Satisfaction typically quite high but lowest levels with provision for CYP / outdoor sports
- one third of respondents do not visit their most local space
- nearly 60% of respondents walk to parks and green spaces, suggesting local provision is important.
- many barriers identified - inc poor communications, asb, lower standards of maintenance
- strategy should seek to join up service delivery - across CCC departments and with external bodies
- lack of recognition & support for volunteers

### B. Quality Assessment

Assessment covered 264 spaces provided by the Council, however, of these, 41 were visited and were found not to be able to be scored for a number of reasons, so sample is 223 sites.

The assessment used was based on Green Flag Award methodology.

Summary:

- The average quality score for the 223 sites scored was 43 (out of 100)
- By typology, average quality scores were highest for Cemeteries and Churchyards and lowest for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace;
- By Ward, average quality scores were highest for St Michaels's Ward and lowest for Westwood Ward;
- By criteria average quality scores were highest for control of dogs/fouling and lowest for conservation of landscape features;
- Sites associated with Friends Groups had higher average scores than those without;
- Criteria scores have been depressed by the inclusion of sites which are abandoned and/or derelict and which are not being maintained

***Overall, there appears to be little correlation between deprivation and green space quality in Coventry. Residents of all wards enjoy some access to good or high quality green spaces. The type of space and hierarchy is the key determinant of quality.***

## C. Draft Strategy

Emerging issues / draft recommendations (for discussion):

- Green space as assets not liabilities
- General maintenance - impact of reduced GM budget has been noticed with many residents wanting more frequent grass cutting.
- Greater positive management for biodiversity - support national / local pollinator strategy. Link to Biodiversity Audit - any recommendations for improvement / action?
- Increase the amount of land managed as pictorial meadows.
- Recognition of role of trees inc street trees (link to Urban Forestry Strategy – timescales?)
- Green and blue infrastructure - links / corridors are important and benefits are not maximised
- Opportunities for food production - link to allotments strategy(?) - is there unmet demand for traditional allotments or a need for more innovative approaches (community gardening, community orchards etc).
- Contribution to physical and mental health
- Encouraging greater levels of activity (sports / activity hubs? any revenue / staffing support)
- Parks and green spaces should be accessible to all (also sustainable transport)
- Significant opportunity for increased community participation and ownership - but need increased staffing resource to support this (existing active volunteer groups)
- Multi-agency / partnership approach (WWT / CRT / Universities / friends groups / RSLs / others). And a more joined up approach
- More innovation & creativity to provide solutions - is there any appetite for alternative models of governance ???
- Encourage greater community ownership and more community led events / use of space by third parties.
- Improved funding - s106 / external funding / commercial activity
- Planning process needs to address quality of green space design (where new is provided)
- Demographics - extremes of young and old
- ASB is a key barrier - effects exacerbated by reduction in maintenance budgets
- Better marketing & promotion of parks / green spaces and events
- Planning process for calculating developer contributions / commuted sums needs to be reviewed and improved.

- Develop a more proactive approach to Biodiversity Offsetting
- Sustain Green Flag Award sites at 5 (plus LRC)? Any targets for expansion
- Cross reference / co-ordination with Urban Forestry Strategy / Play / Playing Pitch Strategy / (allotments)