

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	6 April 2006
Subject:	Public Green Spaces Review – Report and Recommendations
Responsible Officer:	Director of People, Policy and Performance
Contact Officer:	Ed Hammond (x5205)
Portfolio Holder:	Environment and Transport Education and Lifelong Learning Housing and Planning
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

That the report be noted and the proposed recommendations be endorsed

### **Reason for report**

The Environment and Economy Sub-Committee approved the enclosed review report at their meeting on 9 March 2006. It is being referred to Cabinet for a decision on the implementation of the recommendations.

This covering report provides a response from the Urban Living directorate on the content of the report.

## **Benefits**

The report identifies areas where further improvements can be made to compliment and build upon the emerging strategic development plans. There is a significant focus on limiting the risk of duplication of work, and governance arrangements in terms of monitoring and evaluating the directorate's performance.

The proposed recommendations provide an accountable framework for delivering required improvements and for implementation of the reports findings.

## **Cost of Proposals**

Due to the fact that the report complements the existing strategy the wider recommendations can be incorporated into the existing Parks improvement capital programme.

## **Risks**

Full implementation of the recommendations is dependant on continuing the Parks capital programme.  
Potential impact on revenue budgets may compromise operational aspects of the report.

## **Implications if recommendations rejected**

Failure to implement the recommendations arising from the report may result in adverse impact on the Council's CPA rating.

## **Section 2: Report**

### Brief History

2.1 The Public Green Spaces Review Group spent four months collecting evidence from officers, external witnesses and other stakeholders into the development of the borough's parks and open spaces. It has now made a number of recommendations, which were approved by the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 9 March 2006 and are now submitted to Cabinet for a decision on their implementation.

### Urban Living Response to Review's Report and Recommendations

2.2 A significant amount of work has been carried out recently to make plans for strategic development of parks and open spaces following 2005's Audit Commission report. The recommendations from the Green Space Review

are welcomed and provide a valuable reporting framework and delivery of best practice.

- 2.3 The report also presents a valuable link with the Audit Commission Cultural Inspection 2005, the Sports Recreation and Open Space Strategy, Cultural Strategy.
- 2.4 The existing Parks capital programme is focussing on key parks to raise them to a standard to meet the 'Green Flag Award scheme' and the recommendations will be incorporated into the planning process of these parks. Major development of parks outside this programme will be subject to sufficient funding being available.
- 2.5 The report makes a number of positive comments about the significant work being undertaken in parks and allotments and dedication demonstrated by staff in ensuring standards in parks are maintained.
- 2.6 It highlights the need to develop monitoring and governance arrangements with in-house indicators.
- 2.7 Some proposals such as non-segregated cycling will require a feasibility study before considering implementation

#### Options considered

Not applicable to this report.

#### Consultation

The relevant Portfolio Holders have been consulted on the contents of the review report and recommendations.

#### Financial Implications

Due to the fact that the report complements the existing strategy, the wider recommendations can be incorporated into the existing Parks improvement capital programme. The financial implications will be contained to the existing budgets in 2006-07.

However, in future years there will be a requirement for some revenue funding to maintain the improved standards. This will need to be costed up and taken into account by Public Realm Services in time for the next budget bidding process.

### Legal Implications

Planning Policy Statement 9 “Biodiversity and Geological Conservation” (PPS9) now requires Local Authorities to actively promote biodiversity when considering planning proposals. This is accompanied by ODPM Circular 06/2005 which provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation and complements the expression of national planning policy in Planning Policy Statement 9 and the accompanying Good Practice Guide. These have been considered as part of the “biodiversity” theme of the review.

### Equalities Impact

None relevant to this update.

### Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act implications

The review has considered security issues in parks, which will assist the Council in meeting its obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act.

## **Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents**

Appendix 1 - Report of the Review of Public Green Spaces (circulated in the Cabinet Supporting Documents Pack)

Appendix 2 – Reference from the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee