

# REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	17 November 2011
<b>Subject:</b>	Open Space Strategy and Action Plan
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes [Affects all the borough]
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Brendon Hills, Corporate Director Community and Environment  Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director/Place Shaping
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety  Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	Yes
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix A – draft Open Space Strategy Appendix B – Action Plan

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report sets out the vision for the open spaces in the Borough. It has been developed from the audit of the Borough's open space assets and assessment of the community's current and future needs. It establishes what the Council wants to achieve in the future and explains how this will be done, how long this will take and the resources that will be needed to achieve its goals. The strategy examines the key issues relating to open space provision in Harrow and sets out a detailed action plan.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Agree the Open Spaces Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2012 to 2017.
2. Agree a review of the Strategy which will be reported annually to Cabinet.
3. Authorise the Environment and Community Safety Portfolio Holder to set individual Action Plan targets.

### **Reason (for recommendation)**

Adoption of the Strategy builds a framework for the future management and development of open spaces in the borough ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to meet customer needs and corporate priorities thereby ensuring best uses of resources and finance.

The Open Space Strategy builds on the needs analysis reported in the PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **2.1 Introductory paragraph**

An audit of open space was undertaken in 2010 for the PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreations Study. This Study is one of a number of documents which comprise the Local Evidence base for the Local Development Framework. The Study follows the guidance published by the Mayor of London. It provides a robust evidence base for the development of the Open Space Strategy.

The development of the Strategy builds on the strengths of the PPG17 Study but includes a wider consultative base and employs a wider spectrum of data including health and multiple deprivation indicators.

### **2.2 Climate Change Consultation**

The Themes for the Strategy were developed by an internal Steering Group made up of representatives of relevant Council Departments.

Consultation with local people has taken the form of three individual surveys undertaken in connection with other events and surveys in the borough. This helped to establish the strategic priorities.

Let's Talk took place in the summer of 2011 and focussed on finding out resident's views on the most popular services. A total of 1,903 people completed questionnaires; 1,702 residents filled out the paper questionnaires and 78 residents filled it in online. The overall response shows that services such as parks are the most popular in the borough and most used.

The Under One Sky Festival held on Sunday June 26th 2011 and was attended by 8,000 people. A consultation was held during which 117 people gave their opinions on their local parks and green spaces. They were asked about their favourite park or green space, what they like about it and what they like to do there; also what is their least favourite park or green space and what they do not like about it.

A consultation exercise specifically about Harrow's Parks and Green Spaces was undertaken during the summer of 2011. This took place at sixteen different open space locations across the Borough. One hundred and thirty eight people were asked about the themes for the strategy and how important each of these are to them. The themes that mattered most were safety, followed by cleanliness and maintenance, health and welcoming to all.

### **2.3 Financial Implications**

The aim of the Strategy is to make better use of existing resources. Where possible, opportunities to attract external funding will be explored in partnership with user groups and local organisations.

The Strategy will enable Open Spaces to secure funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy in future. It will also assist in providing a targeted approach to capital and revenue budget preparation and prioritisation.

### **2.4 Performance Issues**

The Strategy Action Plan sets out performance measures for individual objectives which will be reported in the Annual Review to Cabinet. Specific, measurable targets against these measures will be set in preparation for commencement of monitoring from 1 April 2012. Consultation will take place in the intervening period with key stakeholders, such as the Portfolio Holder and strategic partners.

### **2.5 Environmental Impact**

There are no adverse environmental impacts identified. The actions identified in Theme Two: Sustainable Green Spaces should make a positive contribution to the environment, promote sustainability and help to adapt to changes in weather patterns caused by climate change.

The Strategy seeks to protect existing open spaces and where possible to enhance existing open spaces, namely key District and Local Parks.

### **2.6 Environmental Impact**

There are no adverse environmental impacts identified.

The Strategy seeks to protect existing open spaces and where possible to enhance existing open spaces, namely key District and Local Parks.

## **2.7 Risk Management Implications**

Without a strategic approach provision and development will be haphazard, the strategy provides a focused direction for use of resources

## **2.8 Equalities implications**

An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and confirms that there are no adverse equality issues related to this proposal.

Consultation has produced a clear message across all groups and in comparing the relative importance of the strategy's themes, the most important theme is safety, followed by cleanliness and maintenance. The next most important themes measured in this way are health and welcoming to all.

A full EQIA may be required where there are specific issues within the Action Plan could create inequalities. Such as Key Principle 9. Encourage Diversity and Inclusion: To increase the use of parks and green spaces by under-represented groups

## **2.9 Corporate Priorities**

The Open Spaces strategy incorporates the following corporate priorities

- **Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.**

Consultation identified that making the borough's parks safe and clean are the two main priorities. This Strategy reflects their preferences and makes a major contribution to this priority.

- **Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.**

In establishing priorities for this Strategy the needs analysis undertaken for the PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study has been used to identify those areas which are deficient in open space provision in both quantitative and qualitative terms. There is a strong correlation between open space deficiencies, poor health and multiple deprivation. This Strategy seeks to address some of those deficiencies for the benefit of people living in these areas.

- **United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads.**

The development of this Strategy has involved extensive consultation with local people, internal and external partner organisations who have all contributed to the formulation of the Strategy Themes.

- **Supporting our Town Centre, our local shopping centres and our businesses.**

Good local green spaces contribute to the well being and prosperity of local areas including main and local shopping areas.

### **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Jennifer Hydari	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 27 October 2011		
Name: Matthew Adams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 31 October 2011		

### **Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance**

Name: Martin Randall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date: 31 October 2011		

### **Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance**

Name: Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date: 27 October 2011		

### **Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** David Corby, Service Manager – Public Realm Maintenance  
020 8424 1758  
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**Background Papers:**  
None

**Call-In Waived by the  
Chairman of Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**

**NOT APPLICABLE**

*[Call-in applies]*