

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure

DATE 15 March 2011

DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT Aberdeen Draft Open Space Strategy

REPORT NUMBER: EPI/11/055

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Draft Aberdeen Open Space Strategy for public consultation (appendix 1). The Strategy will replace the Parks and Green Space Strategy 2005 and Aberdeen's Strategy for Access to the Outdoors 2004. The draft Open Space Strategy has been prepared in line with Scottish Planning Policy and national best practice guidelines.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

1. Approve the Draft Open Space Strategy and associated action plan for public consultation.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Aberdeen Open Space Strategy 2011-2016 has been prepared within existing budgets, mainly staff time. This strategy considers the Council's five year business plan for delivering best value for its citizens and improving the quality of life in Aberdeen.

It should be noted that this strategy may have capital and revenue implications as a result of future projects required to implement the strategy. This will be mainly staff time in implementing the action plan. However, the current financial situation has been regarded as a core consideration throughout the strategy's development, and it aims to reduce internal expenses through partnership working, involving communities and finding innovative ways of working.

Key actions and resources to deliver the strategy are listed in the action plan.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Strategy itself includes consideration of all legal and environmental sustainability issues. It meets the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy and supports the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of this strategy.

As part of developing the strategy and in response to the comments received on the scoping report from the consultation authorities (appendix 2), a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be carried out in line with The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The SEA Environmental Report will be consulted on at the same time as the open space strategy.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Scottish Planning Policy and Planning Advice Note (PAN) 65, state that local authorities should carry out an audit of open spaces and use this to prepare an open space strategy.

The Aberdeen Open Space Strategy sets out a vision for new and improved open spaces in the City and aims to benefit people, health, the economy and the environment. The Strategy will address the deficiencies identified in the 2010 open space audit. Details are provided in the open space audit report at: http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/pla/pla_open_space_audit.asp

The strategy considers different types of open space, including public parks and gardens, informal amenity space, woodland, natural and semi-natural areas, play space, sports areas, green corridors and civic space. The Strategy covers the whole of Aberdeen, excluding private gardens, farmland and land outwith 500 metres of built up areas, in line with PAN 65.

The Adopted Aberdeen Local Plan and proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan require an open space strategy to be prepared in order to provide a strategic framework for protecting, creating, connecting and improving the city's open spaces. The Strategy supports the Aberdeen Local Development Plan and natural heritage policies.

The Open Space Strategy has been prepared using the Open Space Audit results and thorough community and stakeholder consultations carried out from March to December 2010. This included six community consultation events throughout the city, several workshops with a wide range of stakeholders, meeting with the Aberdeen Youth Council and providing a drop-in session for Elected Members.

The events focused on the open space audit findings and invited communities and other stakeholders to comment on their local open spaces.

Further details are provided in the draft Aberdeen Open Space Strategy, which is included in appendix A. As these are large documents, and in the interest of efficient use of resources, copies of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and appendices are available by email or in the Members' Library.

6. IMPACT

The Aberdeen Open Space Strategy will help meet the Five Year Business Plan and will link with the Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking commitment to “adopt and implement policies which safeguard Aberdeen’s green belt and green wedges”. It will also assist the Council in delivering the Single Outcome Agreement’s National Outcome 12 - “We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and enhance it for future generations” and contributes to several other outcomes such as No. 6 – “We live longer, healthier lives”, No. 7 – Tackling inequalities, No. 10 – “We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need” and No. 11 – Strong, resilient and supportive communities

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Aberdeen Greenspace Mapping October 2007
2. Aberdeen Greenspace Audit Draft Report August 2007
3. Greenspace Quality- A guide to assessment, planning and strategic development
4. Open Space Audit Report 2010
5. Planning Advice Note PAN 65
6. Proposed Draft Open Space Supplementary Guidance March 2011
7. Scottish Planning Policy

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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APPENDICES

1. Draft Aberdeen Open Space Strategy
2. SEA Consultation Authorities Response