

**Name of meeting: Economy & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel**

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Title of report: Greenspaces Policy**

**Purpose of report:**

To provide a status update on the development of the Greenspaces Policy

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not Applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	Key Decision – Not applicable for the purpose of this report  Private Report/Private Appendix – Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Karl Battersby – 25/02/2020
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Not Applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Not Applicable
Cabinet member <u>portfolio</u>	Cllr Rob Walker Cllr Naheed Mather

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** None

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?:** Not applicable for the purpose of this report

**1. Summary**

In 2018 the Parks and Greenspaces team, in collaboration with the Corporate Policy Office, began works to develop a Greenspace strategy. Due to capacity and organisational changes this process was placed on hold, however following the addition of a Programme Manager into the team capacity has been realised to recommence the works previously started.

We are bringing this to scrutiny at this point to gain feedback and direction as a useful cross-party forum between members of scrutiny and officers. The reason that we're developing a policy is to make it clear how the service will help the council deliver on its aims and objectives, principally but not explicitly issues with climate change and to support to the local economy. Ideally, our aim is to have a document which is collaborative between internal and external partners and to be used to inform service, team and individual work plans so that everyone is pulling in the same direction.

The document will be directly related to the Corporate Plan and will feed into and guide individual operational plans, policies and projects within the service. It will sit underneath the council's strategies and is intended to deliver the supporting infrastructure setting out how the greenspace service will achieve its aims and objectives.

This is an emerging piece of work so the linkages with corporate strategies require further development, however for example our proposals and plans will be guided by:

1. Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
  2. Economic Strategy
  3. Climate Emergency
  4. Walking & Cycling
  5. Emerging Waste Strategy
- ...and so on...

The following table highlights some of the live and emerging policies and projects within the service. As an illustration, the Playable Spaces strategy is an individual project that will sit under the overarching Greenspace Policy to contribute towards service and corporate aims and objectives.

Operational	Development	Regulatory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updating of GM delivery and standards</li> <li>- Future Landscapes Policy</li> <li>- District wide re-mapping</li> <li>- Apprentice Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing Pitch provision review</li> <li>- The White Rose Forest</li> <li>- Playable Spaces (development of)</li> <li>- Tree Policy</li> <li>- Biodiversity Management</li> <li>- Biodiversity Land Bank</li> <li>- Land KPIs for biodiversity indices</li> <li>- Natural Flood Management</li> <li>- Closed Carbon Economy</li> <li>- Green arising from waste streams to biofuel production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fly Tipping Clearance Squad</li> <li>- Street based enforcement programme</li> <li>- Integrated Pest Management</li> <li>- PROW Rights of Way Improvement Plan</li> <li>- Enhanced DMMO Delivery</li> <li>- BOAT Management</li> <li>- Review of parking ticket machines</li> </ul>

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Volunteering and community delivery</li> <li>– Third party partner relationships</li> <li>– Apprentice Programme</li> <li>– (Depot Portfolio)</li> </ul> |
| <p>Local Plan Linkages</p> <p>Succession Planning</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing</p>   |

## 2. Information required to take a decision

Previously this workstream was proposed as a “strategy”, however following guidance from the Policy & Strategy Team we would like to propose that this is developed as a Greenspace *Policy*.

- *A strategy is direction-setting, objective-achieving plan*
- ***A policy is the means for moving in that direction and achieving those objectives/outcomes i.e. what we will do to achieve the above***
- *Service or operational plans put those policies into practice*

As mentioned in the summary section above we are due to begin works with the Corporate Policy office to develop a Greenspace Policy, (or Strategy) which incorporates works in progress, projects in development and to identify any new proposals which could support the wider Kirklees corporate strategies. The results of this will be subject to a future submission to Scrutiny.

To aid us with progressing with this process we would like to understand:

1. Are you happy for us to progress with a Greenspace policy?
2. Is there a particular approach that you would recommend taking to develop the policy (or strategy, if that is your preference)?
3. Do you know of any emerging policies or strategies across the council that we should be aware of when developing?
4. Are there any additional projects that you feel we should be investigating to support wider council initiatives and strategies?
5. Do you know of any third-party groups that we should be developing relationships with?

## 3. Implications for the Council

### 3.1 Working with People

We will be working closely with officers within this service and throughout the council to ensure that the content is relevant and has the support to move forward. To date there has been an initial workshop with officers in Parks and Greenspaces and we are working with the Corporate Office who are providing their support and the Policy Tool to develop the document in line with corporate protocols. This co-development with team members and other council departments will continue throughout the process.

Previously there have been discussions with principal council internal stakeholders; communities, public health, children’s services to understand how the greenspace offer could be tailored to support their objectives. We will return to these conversations to ensure they are still relevant.

A public engagement and consultation programme will be designed into the process. It is expected that some of our landscapes will start to look different as operational models adapt to a changing climate and the need to support pollinator species or adaption to extreme weather events. Therefore,

it is essential that we communicate with and inform Kirklees' citizens and communities to ensure they are engaged and knowledgeable of how their district and landscape will look and function and the reasons why these changes have been put in place.

### **3.2 Working with Partners**

The service has and continues to develop strong relationships with partners as we are acutely aware of the importance of working together to support shared goals. As an example, our relationship with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has strengthened this year as we deliver a common cause agreement that covers the creation and management of woodlands in the district, educational programmes to support landscape change, and a mutually supportive development programme for apprentices. We have existing relationships with the Yorkshire and Humber Enforcement Officers Group and with West Yorkshire Ecology, amongst others. We will continue to work with and support volunteer groups across the district who will be fundamental to the future of our landscape, with a principal partner Natural Kirklees, which is the vehicle used to deliver free insurance to groups enabling them to work on our sites.

### **3.3 Place Based Working**

Place based working will be inbuilt into future developments for the look, feel and functionality of our greenspaces across the district.

We already work closely with ward members, the communities and third parties to ensure policies and plans are fit for purpose and suitable the local area, and we will continue to build upon these relationships.

### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

A key objective of the Greenspaces Strategy will be to tackle climate change and improve air quality. This is principally by operational and landscape level changes to deliver reductions, adaptation and mitigation.

- **Reduction** will be supported by changes in fleet, tools and improvements in energy efficiency. Additionally there will be support to the EV charging programme in our carparks and ancillary areas.
- **Mitigation** includes natural flood management measures in partnership with the National Trust and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, planting of large amounts of trees (estimated to be around 2.5million to meet the objectives of the White Rose Forest), changes in management practices to sequester carbon within soils and improve habitat connectivity and type to support a wider range of species.
- **Adaptation** – this is linked to mitigation within landscape terms, but in addition ensuring habitat corridors.

### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

The Playable Spaces project aims to improve outcomes for children by providing places for them to play, learn and develop. However, we would also like this to have a positive impact on parents/carers, siblings, grandparents etc. therefore improving outcomes for all.

## **4. Consultees and their opinions**

Other than the workshop which has taken place with the Parks and Greenspaces officers and general discussions with our portfolio lead we haven't yet carried out wider consultation on this iteration of the policy.

## **5. Next steps and timescales**

- Develop and present the Greenspace vision statement and policy
- Develop the full programme of works for the roll out of projects to support the strategy, including milestones and project plans
- Carryout consultation and engagement for the longer-term future landscapes policy

With reference to timescales; as a policy that sits over the operational plans, the delivery of the document would be expected to mirror some firming up of delivery timescales themselves. The core deliverables are effectively clustered into three areas:

- internal delivery for welfare / wellbeing – which includes the physical asset, successional planning and staff wellbeing and development
- climate change response – which encompasses the biodiversity and carbon agendas as well as eco system service delivery to issues such as water management
- enhanced delivery to meet the district's needs – this supports the economic and cultural vibrancy of the district, an underlying wellbeing agenda with direct support via the playable spaces work and the interlinked delivery to support the cycling and walking strategy, for example.

As such we would aim to produce the cover policy quite quickly (3 months) but the development and delivery of some of the operational plans will be a longer process, with the definition at a high level being impacted by the interlinked complexities underneath.

## **6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

Our recommendations would be to produce a Greenspace Policy that is designed and developed in conjunction with a cross section of the service and with ward members, incorporating results from community engagement. This will be key to obtaining buy-in from those key stakeholders to successfully implement operational plans and achieve the Council's and the services objectives.

## **7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

Cllr Walker is happy with the suggested approach of producing a policy document rather than a strategy. We can then back this up with more detailed policies and action plans. Cllr Mather also supports developing a policy framework to support the overarching strategies.

## **8. Contact officer**

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## **9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

n/a

## **10. Service Director responsible**

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