

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Open Spaces Strategy – update on Action Plan</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> June 2017</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director Environment, Economy &amp; Culture</b>		
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The Open Spaces Strategy was approved by the Committee at the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and the purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the progress already made on the Action Plan. As a consequence the information is provided principally within the appendices, with individual updates provided for each topic area. In addition, Members are asked to give approval for specific actions as indicated in the recommendations.
- 1.2 Parks and open spaces are highly valued by residents and visitors to the city and very important to the economy, quality of life and environment of the city. However, within the context of significantly reduced financial resources available to the council, the need to achieve specific savings from the Cityparks budgets, and the huge number of consultation responses to “The Big Conversation”, the future provision and maintenance of parks and open spaces was set out in the Strategy.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the establishment of a Brighton & Hove Parks Foundation as set out at Section 3.2 and Appendix 6 to lead creative and innovative fundraising which would be invested in the council’s parks and open spaces.
- 2.2 That the Committee recommends to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee that it approve the appointment of the Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability as the Chair of Brighton & Hove Parks Foundation.
- 2.3 That the Committee approves the direction of travel on new management arrangements for the tennis courts in the city council’s parks as per paragraphs 3.7-3.12 of this report. A further report will be brought to a future Environment,

Transport & Sustainability Committee for a decision on the management arrangements.

2.4 That the Committee notes the updates provided in the appendices in relation to:

- Allotments
- Cemeteries and Churchyards
- Heritage
- Open Space Hire
- Outdoor Sport & Physical Activity Facilities
- Parks Foundation
- Parks & Gardens
- Parks Trust
- Small Grassed Areas
- Sponsorship, Advertising and Donations
- Volunteering

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3.1 The Committee approved the Open Spaces Strategy on the condition that the actions from the Strategy return to the Committee for final approval and will have been consulted on with stakeholders. There are two initiatives that have been developed that now require Member approval to progress further:

#### Brighton & Hove Parks Foundation

3.2 The establishment of a parks foundation offers an independent fundraising vehicle with the benefits of charitable status. The model offers flexibility, innovation and the ability to stand side by side with Cityparks, as a mechanism to generate additional financial income and supporter commitment to improve the city's parks and open spaces. Ownership and management of parks and open spaces will remain with Brighton & Hove City Council.

3.3 Research into the feasibility of setting up a Foundation has concluded that limited financial commitment is required from local authorities and foundations can be established at pace and with ease. More detailed information on the Bournemouth Parks Foundation was provided as an appendix to the report to the E,T,S Committee in January 2017 on the Open Spaces Strategy.

3.4 Based on this, the officer Open Spaces Strategy Implementation Group has developed a project plan. Subject to approval from Members, activities will be delivered in line with the project plan and the aim would be to establish the Foundation by November 2017. An indicative timetable of actions include:

- Complete trustee role description / profile (end of June)
- Advertise posts (during July and August)
- Appoint trustees (September)
- Set up charity and submit application (September and October)

3.5 It is proposed the Chair of the E,T,S Committee becomes the Chair of Brighton & Hove Parks Foundation. A further three independent trustees would be appointed

through a recruitment process. The Foundation Board and trustees would be supported by Brighton & Hove City Council officers, as appropriate.

3.6 The work is being led by the Assistant Director, City Environment Services with support from the Corporate Programme Management Office. Links are in place with the Royal Pavilion & Museums (RPM) Foundation to ensure relevant information is shared. Key points of learning from the considerable experience gained from the operation of the Royal Pavilion & Museums Foundation include:

- The appointment of trustees with the appropriate skills and enthusiasm is fundamental to the success of the Foundation. Active trustees who are able to lead fundraising campaigns have proved key to the success of the Foundation.
- The success of the RPM Foundation is illustrated by the financial position over the 5 financial years ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Over this period the Foundation received income of £2.47M with expenditure of £1.6M.
- A Foundation gives the opportunity to apply for grant funding not available to local authorities.
- The RPM Foundation has been very successful in receiving bequests to be used for specific projects.
- A Foundation can be established with minimal cost and developed to include contributions to additional costs such as staffing when feasible.
- The identity of the Foundation as a legally separate entity from the council is important to encourage donations to specific projects rather than on-going costs.

#### Management of Tennis Courts in the City Council's Parks

3.7 Following consultation with representatives of the City's tennis community carried out through clubs and coaches along with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) there is broad agreement that there would ideally be some form of city-wide approach to the provision of tennis. Two city-wide proposals have been put forward by groups of tennis players in the City. These proposals have been presented to representatives of the city's tennis coaches and clubs along with the LTA.

3.8 Officers have received a lot of detailed feedback on the proposals and appreciate the work that the teams behind each proposal, LTA, clubs and coaches have undertaken. Unfortunately, neither proposal has a consensus of support from tennis clubs and coaches, with some clubs questioning the practicality of a city-wide approach run by volunteers.

3.9 Both proposals are volunteer lead and to be successful require the support of the city's tennis players. At present, officers do not believe either proposal would get the level of such support required to proceed.

- 3.10 The LTA also state that the two city wide proposals should not be accepted in their current form, but that they are happy to work with the two parties to improve viability. This will take the form of support and guidance for:
- a) Feedback / support to both parties so that their proposals are improved ahead of re-submission.
  - b) Support to one of the parties so that it reaches LTA minimum standards or a standard that would be reasonable to accept.
  - c) A collaborative combined approach of both parties, supporting elements within this so that it reaches LTA minimum standards or reasonable standards.
- 3.11 The LTA also suggest that the Committee considers two other approaches:-
- a) Open up the city wide opportunity to other interested groups such as local/community and professional organisations.
  - b) Split the sites (potentially working under one umbrella group as per a) above and open up a new tender process.
- 3.12 Members are being asked to agree the direction of travel outlined above. A further report will be brought to a future Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee for a decision on the management arrangements.
- 3.13 Further updates are planned to be provided to the Committee at the end of the year with potential topic areas including:
- Anti-social behaviour, Safety & Crime
  - Development Funding
  - Finance and Asset Management
  - Health & Well-being
  - Litter and Dog Fouling
  - Natural and Semi Natural Green Space
  - Playgrounds
  - Public Realm
  - Trees

## **4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The analysis and consideration of alternative options was fundamental to the development of the Open Spaces Strategy.
- 4.2 A number of options have been identified in the Strategy in relation to potential delivery models and resources.

## **5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Big Conversation consultation exercise underpinned the development of the Open Spaces Strategy. Further consultation is being undertaken on an on-going basis in relation to specific actions.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The establishment of a Parks Foundation is seeking to realise the potential support available from the large number of residents and visitors who highly value the city's open spaces, as well as the culture of donations within the city's business community.
- 6.2 Further development of potential proposals for the management of tennis courts in parks in the city is required prior to a final decision being made.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The establishment of a Brighton & Hove Parks Foundation will require funding toward the cost of the establishment of the Foundation as set out in paragraph 3.4 above and a sum of £50,000 was approved at Policy, Resources & Growth Committee on June 2017 as part of Environment, Economy and Culture 2016/17 carry forward budget to meet these initial set up costs. Any costs associated with officer time will be met from existing staffing costs for Environment, Economy and Culture budgets.
- 7.2 At this point in time there is no direct financial impact for the proposed management of tennis parks within the city. Any changes that involve financial consequences will be reported back to this Committee.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen Date: 25/05/17

### Legal Implications

- 7.3 The recommendations propose amongst other things that the Council set up an independent parks foundation for fundraising purposes. The fact that the new vehicle's functions are limited to fundraising is relevant. In the absence of proposals to establish a vehicle to for instance manage the city's parks (an option which as indicated in Appx 8 to the Report as being kept under review but not actioned currently), there is no current proposal to transfer staff or assets. The legal processes required to set up a charitable foundation are therefore relatively straightforward, assuming that a standard approach is applied. They will involve establishing a company limited by guarantee and applying to the Charities Commission for it to be accorded charitable status: work which it is anticipated may be carried out within existing budgets.'

Lawyer Consulted: Victoria Simpson Date: 13/6/2017

### Equalities Implications

- 7.4 The importance of a wide range of parks and open spaces across the city to provide for the diverse local community and visitors to the city has underpinned the development of the new strategy.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 The city's parks and open spaces are of significant importance to the city's environmental and economic sustainability, and form a key element of the region's Biosphere. The strategy seeks to enhance the sustainability of these resources.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Allotments
2. Cemeteries and Churchyards
3. Heritage
4. Open Space Hire
5. Outdoor Sports and Physical Activity Facilities
6. Parks Foundation
7. Parks & Gardens
8. Parks Trust
9. Small Grassed Areas
10. Sponsorship, Advertising & Donations
11. Volunteering

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

**Background Documents**

1. Reports to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee in October 2014, March 2015 and January 2017.