

## Appendix 5

### What is different about the Open Spaces Strategy 2016 - 2021?

- 5.1 In this section it should be noted that the consultee responses have been incorporated into the Open Spaces Strategy 2016 – 2021. The reference to responses from the First Issues consultation have been included in brackets indicating which consultee response has been accounted for; (the summary of responses can be found in **Appendix 6**)
- 5.2 The Open Spaces Strategy 2009 was a document that retained a strong element of open space management. The Open Spaces Strategy 2016 -2021 now provides a strategic policy framework as it has been prepared by officers with responsibility for strategic oversight of open space rather than direct management.
- 5.3 The supporting document called ‘Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation 2015’ deals with the delivery mechanism for new open space through development. This document uses the minimum provision thresholds and accessibility thresholds that were consulted upon in the First Issues consultation to determine when and where open space should be provided through new development (**Response 1**.- Location of Open Spaces is important **2** - Easily accessible Open space is required, **30**- Open space on bus routes is good, although some respondents did not use buses)
- 5.4 The three strands of the Open Spaces Strategy vision are to **Protect, Enhance and Enable** open space in the District.
- The proposed vision: **‘To work in partnership to protect, enhance and enable quality open space that is safe, supports wildlife, is valued and enjoyed by people and contributes to their health and well being’** (*response 6 - Public Health and Wildlife should be brought into the vision. 3 - Biodiversity and habitat provision needed*)
- 5.5 There is a single and updated statement of vision for quality of open space. Feedback from consultees suggested that a single quality vision encompassing all the typologies of open space was not feasible, so we have developed a general quality statement with supporting quality statements for each typology of open space. (**response 11** - A series of quality visions was suggested for different typologies)
- 5.6 There is a need going forward to ensure that open spaces in future shall be owned and managed by the most appropriate, locally accountable organisation. One of the key actions of the strategy is to try and build capacity within Parish Councils to enable this to happen by putting in place further support or resources. (**response 8** - Assurance that an open space will be suitably maintained in the future is required, **15**.- Many local respondents supported that the District Council should adopt and maintain open space. **16**. - Some local respondents supported community management where the community is able to undertake this responsibility.)

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- 5.7 By transferring responsibility of existing open space to other providers, or not adopting new open space from developers, Harborough District Council should reduce the overall costs of the contract. It should be recognised that the new contract must be written to allow these cost reductions.
- 5.8 The aims of the Strategy have been refreshed to reflect new priorities of the Council. The aims are:
- **The provision and maintenance of appropriate and good quality open space that is open to all and protected for future generations** (*response 13 - Protection of Open Space against development is paramount*)
  - **Conservation and habitat is enhanced and protected** (*response 3 - Biodiversity and habitat provision needed*)
  - **To ensure open spaces are safe and litter free, and contribute towards a safe environment** (*response 26 - Make sure that routes are safe, 27 - Teenage provision is generally poor, 28 - Dog fouling is a nuisance – more dog walking areas, 31 - Vandalism and graffiti is bad at some parks; makes youngsters feel unsafe, 32 - Broken play equipment is disappointing*)
  - **Voluntary groups are supported to use and manage open spaces** (*response 16 - Some local respondents supported community management where the community is able to undertake this responsibility. 17 - Recognition from external agency respondents that community management of open space should be considered where possible, 18 - The wishes of the community are paramount in the decision making process for open space provision.*)
  - **Deliver value for money services when managing open space**
  - **Open Space supports business and income is maximised**
  - **Ensure that open spaces support health and wellbeing of local people** (*response 23 - Cycle ways are a good idea for exercise, health and as a safe route. 6 - Public Health and Wildlife should be brought into the vision.*)
- 5.9 The emphasis placed on volunteering has been increased. The Open Spaces Strategy will allow volunteers to take a greater role in managing and taking responsibility for open spaces throughout the District. The Strategy seeks to reduce the bureaucracy and time taken for decisions when volunteer groups want to start projects or take long term responsibility for open space. (*response 16 - Some local respondents supported community management where the community is able to undertake this responsibility. 17 - Recognition from external agency respondents that community management of open space should be considered where possible, 18 - The wishes of the community are paramount in the decision making process for open space provision.*)
- 5.10 The emphasis on the opportunity for open spaces to contribute to flood mitigation and sustainable drainage systems, biodiversity and habitat creation has been improved in the 2016 - 2021 Strategy. The use of multifunctional open spaces to help deliver the aspirations of many County or Regional partners has been focussed on. This will enable to the District Council to work effectively with others to help deliver their aims and objectives (*response 4 - Provision of SUDs on open space and for wildlife is important*)

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5.11 Some of the actions in the Open Spaces Strategy are dependent on a number of teams in the District Council as part of their day to day activity:

- the Contracted Services team will need to ensure that new contracts fit for the future scenario for open space ownership and management throughout the district (**response 18** - *The wishes of the community are paramount in the decision making process for open space provision.*, **8** - *Assurance that an open space will be suitably maintained in the future is required*)
- Safety inspections will need to be delivered on both HDC play areas, but also Parish Council play areas. This makes the requirement for delivery of play safety a district wide requirement. (**response 31** *Vandalism and graffiti is bad at some parks; makes youngsters feel unsafe*, **32** - *Broken play equipment is disappointing*)
- Asset Management Team, Strategic Planning Team and other HDC teams will need to assist in community requests for more involvement in management of open spaces. (**response 14** - *Provision of on site open space except in extenuating circumstances*, **15** - *Many local respondents supported that the District Council should adopt and maintain open space.*, **16** - *Some local respondents supported community management where the community is able to undertake this responsibility*, **17** - *Recognition from external agency respondents that community management of open space should be considered where possible*, **18** - *The wishes of the community are paramount in the decision making process for open space provision.*)
- Dog fouling problems is enforced by Regulatory Service officers, (**response 28** - *Dog fouling is a nuisance – more dog walking areas*)

5.12 The biggest change within the list of typologies for the new Strategy is the addition of Green Corridors or Greenways and Civic Spaces. It is acknowledged that town squares and centres are becoming more important for the success of market towns that are attempting to attract residents and visitors. A thriving business community is important to a Town Centres offer, but groups such as Sustainable Harborough continue to highlight the importance of the environment in our town centres. The Open Spaces Strategy seeks to enable these groups to realise outcomes that can influence the regeneration of the town from an environmental perspective. A series of greenways is proposed as an aspiration in the 2016 - 2021 Strategy and is a major change for the new document. The Strategy will give the policy framework for officers to work with partners and the development industry to deliver sustainable cycling and walking routes on an opportunity basis. Over many years in is the intention that Harborough District becomes much better connected, by building on the existing cycling and walking network and filling in gaps. (**response 23** - *Cycle ways are a good idea for exercise, health and as a safe route*, **23** - *Cycling on paths in parks is a problem – have proper cycling places*, **25** - *Good signage and promotion of cycle routes/ open spaces needed as some respondents did not know about existing provision*, **26** - *Make sure that routes are safe*, **9** - *An aspiration to provide a series of greenways for walking and cycling is well supported*, **10** - *Improvement and connecting up of existing 'greenways' was considered important*)

5.13 The Strategy sets out the accessibility standards and minimum provision standards that we aspire to in the District and recognises the need for additional woodland in the district. These standards are used to determine

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whether open space is oversupplied or in deficit when a housing development is proposed. The standards are the same as the 2009 Strategy and specific questions asked through the First Issues Consultation did not suggest that communities or partners considered they needed to be changed.

While the standards have not changed they are backed up by 'live' data that is used to inform developers and others about shortfalls or over supply in open space on a typology basis. (**response 20.** *Standards for woodland accessibility were suggested, 21. Accessibility and provision thresholds were supported*)

- 5.14 Within the Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation 2015 is the delivery mechanism for new open space through new development. This document has been updated to consider the changes to pooling of S106 contributions and the CIL rules that must be considered before any developer contributions are requested.
- 5.15 In response to consultee comments the minimum period for commuted sum payments has been increased from 15 years to 30 years. However, the Open Space Strategy and the Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation sets out clearly that the District Council will not be obliged to own and manage new open space, but will seek to work with the most appropriate organisation to deliver local management of new sites. (**response 19.** *Consideration should be given to increasing the commuted maintenance time period*)
- 5.16 The Open Spaces Strategy document will provide a new refreshed 'look'. It will be easy to read and understand with important points on each page captured in highlight boxes in the margin. It will however, be sufficiently short to make it a useable document but will have many appendices to support the main Strategy (**response 22** -*The consultation document was considered too long and detailed. The public respondents and Parish Council much preferred the easy to read version, and encourage the District Council to take this approach in the future*)