

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Green Space Strategy 2021-2026

**Date:** 18 March 2021

**Author:** Head of Environment

### **Wards Affected**

All wards

### **Purpose**

To adopt the Gedling Borough Green Space Strategy 2021 – 2026

### **Key Decision**

This is a key decision as it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.

### **Recommendation(s)**

#### **THAT Cabinet:**

- 1) Approve the Green Space Strategy for Gedling 2021-2026 as set out in Appendix 1.**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 In 2012, Gedling Borough Council published its green space strategy, this lasted until 2017 when it was identified it needed a complete refresh and republication, that work has now been undertaken and a new all-encompassing revised Green Space Strategy document for the Borough's Green Spaces has now been produced.
- 1.2 Unlike Green Infrastructure Strategies, *Green Space* strategies work within the typology of public recreational, amenity and open spaces identified within policy LPD20 of the Gedling Local Planning document (2018).

- 1.3 They evaluate publicly accessible open space provision within set typologies at the local authority scale, noting issues in relation to condition, quality and access, this information informs the strategy and action plan that sets out future management and regeneration policies.
- 1.4 LDP20, is used to provide protection for parks and open spaces defined in the strategy in terms of development of those sites. LPD21 relates to the provision of new open space and the strategy assists in establishing need for open space and ensures there is robust evidence base to enable Section 106 (S106) monies to be used to improve a wider range of green spaces. It has also enabled standards to be set allowing for the monitoring of parks and open spaces over time.
- 1.5 The scope of the Green Space Strategy covers eight types of publicly accessible green space described in the Gedling Local Planning Document as:
- Parks and Gardens
  - Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces
  - Amenity Green Space
  - Provision for children and Young People
  - Outdoor Sports Facilities
  - Allotments and Community Gardens
  - Cemeteries and Churchyards
  - Green Corridors.

Audits of each based on quality, quantity and accessibility have been undertaken.

Standards have been set based on:

- a) An audit of the number and size of green spaces in the borough.
- b) Where possible site visits to assess the quality of each site.
- c) Community consultation to establish local views on the adequacy of what is provided at present.

In addition to this, the strategy sets out a vision for the Borough's Green Spaces and objectives and an action plan in terms of its delivery. It will also allow future work to be effectively prioritised.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 To approve the strategy and its action plan, instructing the Head of Environment to ensure the strategy is promoted and delivered. A full copy of the strategy is attached at Appendix 1.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 (a) Not to adopt the Green Space Strategy and manage green spaces in an ad-hoc manner

*Advantage:* Potential cost savings made due to reduced maintenance and closure of some play areas.

*Disadvantage:* The Borough's Green Space infrastructure deteriorates over time, through lack of investment and development.

- (b) Do nothing.

*Advantage:* Potential cost savings made due to reduced maintenance and closure of some play areas.

*Disadvantage:* The Borough's Green Space infrastructure deteriorates rapidly, through lack of investment and development. Furthermore, in light of the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030, the value of green spaces will be pivotal in helping to support this transition and therefore doing nothing will work against this commitment.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The implementation of the strategy will be supported by the Council and by partners involved in the delivery of the Action Plan using funding provided by external grant funding, Section 106 (S106) commuted sums from developers and via the new Community Infrastructure Levy. Such funds will be used to enhance and improve existing and create new, open spaces and play areas.
- 4.2 The current ongoing maintenance of Green Spaces detailed in this strategy is included within Parks and Street Care approved annual base budget of c£1.1m each year. Any additional investment to enhance or create new open spaces and play areas will be subject to the completion of a Business Case for each project, which will consider any match funding requirements.
- 4.3 Due to the economic downturn, there will be limited revenue and capital resource available over the next few years to deliver the strategy, so efficiencies will have to be made. In light of this, a review of the Parks and Street Care staffing structure has recently taken place and some

structural changes are shortly to be carried out. Existing revenue funding has been identified for a permanent 'Tree Officer' post to enable this strategy to be effectively delivered.

- 4.4 Entrepreneurial skills will be required in the future in order to determine available external community funding pots such as Environmental Grants and Nottinghamshire County Council Local Improvement Scheme Funding via working with 'Friends of' and other 'community groups' to identify funding streams.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Green space strategies are essential in terms of the planning process which is reflected through the local plan. The strategy however is significant in respect of other functions that the Council undertakes for example in relation to public health and wellbeing, carbon reduction and public protection. The strategy also provides operationally a clear plan for maintenance and management of provision.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 This strategy will have many equalities implications, especially in terms of providing access for all. Be it by private vehicle, public transport, cycle and on foot, when accessing the Borough's greenspaces. Any proposed new developments, improvement projects, maintenance works and events and activities, will need to take account of people with disabilities to ensure inclusivity within a group setting and quality of access for all users.

All works undertaken in the delivery of this Green Space Strategy should not have any adverse equalities implications.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 Many projects will be delivered in the lifetime of this strategy. Their design and construction should ensure that any greenspace and parkland either side the construction work is not affected and is protected as an ecological community. Tree roots will be identified and protected as appropriate. Carbon offsetting will be achieved by planting additional tree stocks in the greenspace concerned by way of mitigation.

On all projects, abatement of CO2 emissions will be achieved by using Green Power where available, and specific materials chosen, such as recycled materials. For example, recycled asphalt for path consolidation where appropriate.

Air quality assessments will be undertaken where necessary by calculating the changes in concentrations in nitrogen dioxide as a result

of changes to traffic at sensitive human receptor locations such as nearby homes, and business premises. Disturbance at sensitive ecological sites will be minimal. The impacts of dust from any construction phase will also be assessed, and water sprays used to damp down any arising dust where necessary. Trees will be identified as TPO'd or as growing in a Conservation Area, before any works are undertaken.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Gedling Borough Council Green Space Strategy & Appendices.

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 None identified.

## **10 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 10.1 To provide a future strategic framework against which to evidence, prioritise, consult upon and deliver Green Space improvements and developments in Gedling Borough.

### **Statutory Officer approval**

<b>Approved by:</b>	Tina Adams
<b>Date:</b>	24 February 2021
<b>On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer</b>	

<b>Approved by</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	26 February 2021
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	