

Report of the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Healthy City

Cabinet - 19 January 2017

SWANSEA OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Purpose:	To seek approval to adopt and implement the Swansea Open Space Strategy and develop an Action Plan following an extensive consultation exercise
Policy Framework:	Council Corporate Plan; Local Development Plan; Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Reason for Decision:	To adopt and implement the Swansea Open Space Strategy and develop an Action Plan
Consultation:	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: - 1) Approval is given to the draft open space strategy to move to public consultation, following which a final version will be brought for adoption and an action plan be developed.
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 One of the principal aims of The City & County of Swansea is to improve the quality of life of its residents. Our open spaces are key to this, as they are valued community assets which help improve public health, mental and physical well-being and quality of life, and which bring biodiversity and regeneration benefits.

Open space is defined as land in public ownership that is regularly available for recreational or sporting use by the community and can also act as a visual amenity.

- 1.2 Swansea's diverse and extensive open space and green infrastructure network needs to be maintained, protected and enhanced to ensure that

it is safeguarded and sustainably managed for the use and enjoyment of all residents and visitors into the future.

- 1.3 The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE Space) recommends that public bodies produce an Open Space Strategy, to assist in understanding supply and demand for its open spaces, to identify deficiencies, to secure new provision, and to improve quality through better management.
- 1.4 As a result the Authority has produced its Open Space Strategy, which sets out a strategic vision and a series of aims and objectives for all types of open space in its ownership or management.
- 1.5 The spatial elements of the strategy will also feed into the local development plan (LDP) and can be a material consideration and used as guidance in the determination of planning applications. The intention is that when the LDP is adopted that the Open Space Strategy will become formal Supplementary Planning Guidance.

2.0 Open Space Strategy for Swansea

- 2.1 The Strategy signifies Swansea's commitment to maintaining, protecting and enhancing Authority owned and managed open space.
- 2.2 The Strategy sets out a vision, that 'by 2025 the City & County of Swansea will have a vibrant and diverse range of quality parks and open spaces, well distributed across the County. Sites will reflect local needs and historical, recreational and natural characteristics. The spaces will form a network which maximises opportunities for everyone to enjoy and interact within their local community and the wider area whilst also attracting people into the City and County'.
- 2.3 The Strategy focusses on five key priorities;
 - Increasing accessible open space and people's access to it
 - Delivering new developments - Based on LDP sites
 - Designating and protecting open space
 - Encouraging Community involvement/management
 - Promoting biodiversity and nature conservation
- 2.4 The Strategy also provides a strategic framework for the protection, development and improvement of existing open spaces and to increase the provision of, or access to such facilities, where it is shown there are deficiencies against the agreed standards.

3.0 Open Space standards and statutory duties

- 3.1 The Strategy has adopted a number of standards and statutory obligations to determine whether Swansea meets nationally recognised guidelines. These include;

- 3.1.1 Fields in Trust 'Benchmark Standards' which recommend minimum standards of provision per 1,000 population for playing fields, outdoor sports and Children's playing space
- 3.1.2 Natural Resources Wales' toolkit to ensure everyone has access to Accessible, Natural Green Spaces (ANGS)
- 3.1.3 A statutory responsibility to assess Play every three years to ensure sufficient play opportunities
- 3.1.4 A statutory duty to provide a sufficient number of allotment plots under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908
- 3.1.5 A duty under the Environment Act 2016 to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' and to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'

4.0 Action Plan

- 4.1 Following the adoption of the Strategy an Action Plan will need to be developed, based on the strategic objectives and an assessment against the agreed national standards. The Action Plan will identify areas for prioritisation, together with level of priority and recommended action. The Action Plan will be a working document with the priority actions regularly monitored and updated.

5.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 5.1 An EIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full EIA report was required. The outcome of the report was that there was no concern and an EIA Action Plan has been developed accordingly. The full report has been attached as Appendix B.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 It is likely that there will be financial implications for the Authority in relation to delivering the actions to be identified in the Action Plan. However at this stage it is impossible to determine what these implications are.
- 6.2 Any future costs arising as a result of implementing the Swansea Open Space Strategy will be met from existing service budgets, new grant funding opportunities or other relevant funding sources available.

7.0 Property Implications

It is likely that there will be Property implications for the Authority in relation to delivering the actions to be identified in the Action Plan, particularly in relation to new development, disposal and Community Asset Transfer. However at this stage and until the Action Plan is developed it is impossible to determine what these implications are.

8.0 Planning Implications

- 8.1 The spatial elements of the strategy and action plan will feed into the local development plan (LDP) and can be a material consideration and used as guidance in the determination of planning applications. The intention is that when the LDP is adopted that the Open Space Strategy will become formal Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 8.2 Swansea's Open Space Assessment will be used to inform the Strategy and action plan as it highlights actual provision and identified deficiencies on a ward by ward basis.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Article 4 of the Council Constitution under Policy Framework recommends by guidance that certain policies, strategies and plans are adopted by Council.

Background papers: None.

Appendices: Appendix A – Open Space Strategy
Appendix B – EIA Report