

 <b>Executive Committee</b> <b>7th March 2018</b>		<b>Agenda Item No.</b>  <b>6</b>
<b>Title</b>	A review of the Green Space Strategy and to seek approval of a revised Green Space Action Plan	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	David Anderson Green Space Manager 01926456214 <a href="mailto:david.anderson@warwickdc.gov.uk">david.anderson@warwickdc.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	All	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	Executive Report 12th December 2012	
<b>Background Papers</b>		

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes/
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	Yes - 914
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>	No
These are undertaken as part of the design and planning stage of each project.	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	13/02/2018	Andrew Jones
Head of Service	13/02/2018	Robert Hoof
CMT	13/02/2018	Chris Elliot, Andrew Jones, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	13/02/2018	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	13/02/2018	Andrew Jones
Finance	13/02/2018	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	21/02/2018	Cllr Grainger
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Each green space project goes out to consultation to relevant officers, Portfolio Holder, Ward Councillors, Town Councillors, local residents and all other relevant stakeholders.		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

## 1. **Summary**

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the progress made in delivering the Warwick District Green Space Strategy and its action plan since its adoption in December 2012. It highlights the number of the green spaces that have been improved and details the green spaces that require investment as set out in the next Green Space Action Plans with estimated costings and timescales.

## 2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive notes the progress made in delivering Warwick District Green Space Strategy and its associated Green Space Action Plan.
- 2.2 The Executive approves the next green spaces that require improving as identified in the Green Space Action Plan Phase 2, as set out in paragraph 3.11, and which are funded through the Public Amenity Reserve.
- 2.3 The Executive notes that officers will be working with the Portfolio Holder and Ward Councillors to bring forward proposals for the next phase of the Action Plan.

## 3. **Reasons for the Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 2.1**

- 3.1 The Executive approved the Warwick District Green Space Strategy and the Green Space Action Plan in December 2012. The purpose of the strategy is to enable the Council to have a more strategic overview of the provision, management and enhancement of its green spaces up until 2029
- 3.2 The strategy sets an ambitious vision for green space in Warwick district:
- By 2026 there will be a well-planned and managed network of integrated, accessible and diverse green spaces within Warwick district; creating a sustainable environment for the benefit of people, wildlife and our natural heritage.*
- 3.3 The overall aim of the strategy is that all green spaces owned and managed by Warwick District Council will be welcoming, safer, cleaner and more sustainable and that they would all be of 'Good' quality by 2026. The definition of what is 'Good' quality and how it is measured is explained in Section 8.6 and is based on the nationally recognised Green Flag Award self-assessment.
- 3.4 It is acknowledged that to raise the quality of green spaces across the district there must be a managed programme. Therefore to achieve the greatest impact in improving the quality of green spaces the following criteria have been used for prioritising green spaces which has then informed those sites listed in the Green Space Action Plan.
- Sites which have been previously judged to be valuable to local communities, but for which are currently poor or average quality.
  - Neighbourhood parks and gardens which have the lowest range of quality scores.

Further details of prioritising investment can be found in the strategy.

- 3.5 To help determine priority sites the Green Space Team carry out a quality audit of green spaces on a regular basis. In the last quality audit in 2016, 175 sites were assessed for quality. This audit has shown large variations in the quality of green spaces across the district and that neighbourhood parks and gardens have the lowest range of quality scores when compared to other types of green spaces.
- 3.6 However it should also be noted that there is an improving trend of quality across the district since the first quality audit was undertaken in 2010. The following percentage scores are taken as the average quality scores of all the Councils green spaces across the district. In 2010 the quality was 51%, in 2012 it was 53% and 2016 the quality was 57%. As welcome as this improving trend is the overall quality is still 'Average' for the district. To achieve 'Good' quality for the district a score of at least 61% is required as set out in the Green Flag Award scoring system, see Section 8.6. The aim of the strategy is that all green spaces with the district will be of a 'Good' quality standard by 2026.
- 3.7 The current fully funded approved Green Space Action Plan has been necessary to deliver the vision and recommendations as set out in the strategy. It has 16 sites for improvements, as identified through prioritisation process detailed in section 3.4 above. The plan has been funded through the Public Amenity Reserve. The 16 sites identified in the plan have been embedded in Service Planning and Team Operational Plans and have been delivered by the Green Space Team since 2013.
- 3.8 The following is a summary of the progress made on the 16 sites identified in the current Green Space Action Plan. All the sites have been completed apart from Mason Avenue and Saltisford Common, which are to be completed by June 2018 and Campion Hills which is to be completed by August 2018.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	St. Johns Playing Field	Kenilworth St. Johns	Complete
2	Cox's Orchard	Whitnash	Complete
3	Eagle Recreation Ground	Leamington Brunswick	Complete
4	Roxborough Croft	Leamington Manor	Complete
5	Cubbington Waterworks	Leamington Manor	Complete
6	Dragon Cottage	Leamington Milverton	Complete
7	Redland Road Rec	Leamington Brunswick	Complete
8	Villiers Street	Leamington Clarendon	Complete
9	Priory Pools	Warwick Saltisford	Complete
10	The Holt	Leamington Manor	Complete
11	Bates Memorial	Kenilworth St. Johns	Complete
12	Farmerward Open Space	Kenilworth St. Johns	Complete
13	Shrublands open space	Leamington Brunswick	Complete
14	Mason Avenue	Leamington Crown	June 2018
15	Saltisford Common	Warwick Woodloes	June 2018
16	Campion Hills	Leamington Clarendon	August 2018

- 3.9 All of the sites are measured for quality immediately once they have been completed. Of the 13 complete sites detailed in the table all of them have scored 'Good' in quality. All completed sites are then measured as part of the wider quality audit to ensure that quality is sustained and to identify any quality issues following their improvement.

- 3.10 It should be noted that there are a number of other green space projects that have been delivered or are being delivered by the Green Space Team that were not originally set out in the Green Space Action Plan. Most significantly these have included the Pump Room Gardens project and Victoria Park skate park project. These projects have arisen from where local community groups and other interested parties have developed improvement plans with the Council, which have been used to attract external funding. A summary of these projects can be found in section 8.7.

### **Recommendation 2.2**

- 3.11 The following is the Green Space Action Plan Phase 2 and covers 9 identified green spaces for the next 2 years and requires Executive approval. It has been based on the methodology used to identify and prioritise sites. All of these green spaces are to be funded through the Public Amenity Reserve.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Estimated cost (£)</b>
<b>2018/19</b>			
1	Midland Oak	Leamington Manor	35,000
2	Othello Avenue	Warwick Myton and Heathcote	50,000
3	Ophelia Drive	Warwick Myton and Heathcote	30,000
4	Rushmore Street	Leamington Leam	40,000
5	Mander Grove	Warwick Aylesford	30,000
6	Glendale Avenue	Kenilworth Park Hill	30,000
7	Sabin Drive	Cubbington	40,000
8	Twycross Walk	Warwick Woodloes	40,000
<b>2019/20</b>			
9	Canalside	Warwick Woodloes	20,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>315,000</b>

All of these projects will follow the same project management processes that have been done previous projects. They will fall in line with the Councils policies and procedures with regards to consultation, procurement, project management and budget management.

### **Recommendation 2.3**

- 3.12 Further green space sites have been identified through the parks audit and prioritisation process. Officers will work with the Portfolio Holder and relevant Ward Councillors to bring forward proposals for the next phase of the Action Plan. Many of these sites include Destination Parks as well as Neighbourhood Parks and their focus is more to do with upgrading play areas rather than wider improvements to the parks. Some sites including Newbold Comyn and St. Nicholas Park that have play areas with play equipment which are at least 15 years old and need replacing due to their condition.

## 4. Policy Framework

### 4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. The provision of high quality green spaces makes a significant contribution to making Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit.

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

<b>People</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Money</b>
<b>External</b>		
<b>Health, Homes, Communities</b>	<b>Green, Clean, Safe</b>	<b>Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment</b>
Intended outcomes: Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	Intended outcomes: Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	Intended outcomes: Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
<b>Impacts of Proposal</b>		
<i>The overall proposals will contribute toward improved health outcomes; impressive play, sport and recreational facilities and to a more cohesive and active community by way of improving the area and its facilities.</i>	<i>It will deliver safe, accessible and sustainable green space to a large part of the District. Potentially sites become of Green Flag standard.</i>	<i>It will have a beneficial effect on the local economy in terms of attracting visitors.</i>
<b>Internal</b>		
<b>Effective Staff</b>	<b>Maintain or Improve Services</b>	<b>Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term</b>
All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the	Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money

right skills and right behaviours		
<b>Impacts of Proposal</b>		
<i>The scheme will offer the opportunity for some staff to become involved in developing and delivering many of these projects.</i>	<i>Any revenue generated will help the Council to maintain or improve its services.</i>	<i>The financial implications will be addressed when the scheme design work and options has been completed.</i>

## 4.2 Supporting Strategies

Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies and the relevant ones for this proposal are explained below.

### Local Plan

- 4.2.1 The Council has an agreed a strategy statement "The future and sustainable prosperity for Warwick District" which amongst other things seeks to:
- Support the growth of the local economy; and
  - Maintain and promote thriving town centres.
- 4.2.2 The Council acknowledges the value of green spaces to the district and that they are an essential community amenity that needs to receive the necessary investment to enable it to attract visitors and businesses to the district.
- 4.3 Changes to Existing Policies - None
- 4.4 Impact Assessments – Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the design process for each project.

## **5. Budgetary Framework**

- 5.1 Currently it is forecasted that the Public Amenity Reserve will fund all the work set out in 2018/19 and one other site in 2019/20 at an estimated cost of £315,000. The balance as at 31 March 2018 on this reserve is forecast to be £313,400.
- 5.2 The Public Amenity Reserve will not fund the remaining sites in 2019 and beyond. Options over how this funding shortfall can be met will need to be considered within future reports, notably the Budget/Council Tax setting report in February 2019.
- 5.3 Capital improvements could be funded from a range of sources including s106, the emerging Community Infrastructure Levy, New Homes Bonus monies, external grants and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget. The Council has developed an Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the Local Plan Process, which will include green infrastructure requirements for the district and that of green spaces.
- 5.5 Bids for capital funding will be made as part of the usual bidding process.

## 6. Risks

In accordance with good project management practice, a risk register will be developed for each project and will be actively managed and updated by the Project Manager. A project Initiation Document will be completed to support the delivery of the project. Some of the risks are identified here.

Reference	Risk Assessment			
	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
1	Failure to complete on time	Low	High	Project plan has identified key milestones which will be monitored weekly
2	Insufficient budget	Low	High	Costs will be monitored at every stage. Contingency will cope with any overspend
3	Funding being withdrawn	Low	High	Budget committed for financial year
4	Residents not happy with proposals	Medium	Medium	Thorough consultation with residents and clear goals
5	Weather conditions affecting project delivery timescale	Medium	Medium	Try and programme according to ground conditions

## 7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 The Council could decide not to continue with a Green Space Strategy. However without the strategy the Council would lack the clarity, direction and prioritisation needed to deliver accessible high quality green spaces, and for these green spaces to be fit for the future. Without a strategy we will fail to address the deficiencies in green space, and the concerns raised by the people of Warwick district. Having a Green Space Strategy will maximise the benefits of green space.
- 7.2 Without a detailed action plan it would be difficult to implement many of the principles and recommendations set out in the Green Space Strategy. If the programme is not funded in future years we would have to decommission sites as the various elements became unsafe e.g. play equipment.

## 8. Background

- 8.1 The 'Green space strategies – a good practice guide' provides a template for Green Space Strategies and this has been used to provide the structure of the Warwick District Green Space Strategy.

- 8.2 The Strategy considers the current level of provision, public opinions and perceptions on green space, other related policy and sets out a vision for the future along with an action plan to deliver this.
- 8.3 The strategy sets out how the Council will provide, manage and develop green space in the future. It brings together various research work undertaken, set out a long term vision for green space and will include the establishment of a number of principles and local standards to manage and enhance green space.
- 8.4 Due to the complex nature of the district's green space with respect to the number, size, type, distribution and quality there is a need to develop a strategy that can;
- Establish and communicate a clear vision.
  - Improve quality, quantity and accessibility.
  - Establish policy and prioritise future investment.
  - Ensure the green space needs of the whole community are met.
  - Encourage the community to use green space and participate in local decision making.
- 8.5 The Green Space Action Plans have been prioritised using the quality audit. The most recent quality audit looked at 175 Warwick District Council sites using the field assessment criteria used for the Green Flag Award, the national quality standard. There are 8 key criteria for the Green Flag Award, under which there are 27 field assessment criteria. Of these 6 key criteria and 19 field assessments can be judged on site without a management plan or other documentation and are listed in the table below.

<b>Key quality criteria</b>	<b>Fields assessment criteria</b>
<b>A Welcoming Park</b>	Welcoming
	Good and Safe Access
	Signage
	Equal Access for All
<b>Health, Safe and Secure</b>	Safe equipment facilities
	Personal security in parks
	Dog fouling
	Appropriate provision of facilities
	Quality of facilities
<b>Clean and Well Maintained</b>	Litter and waste management
	Grounds maintenance and horticulture
	Buildings and Infrastructure maintenance
	Equipment maintenance
<b>Sustainability</b>	Arboriculture and woodland management
<b>Conservation and Heritage</b>	Conservation of wild fauna and flora
	Conservation of landscape features
	Conservation of buildings and structures
<b>Marketing</b>	Provision of appropriate information
	Provision of appropriate educational interpretation

- 8.6 The quality audit is undertaken by an independent surveyor who is fully qualified and is experienced in carrying out these audits. Once the field self-assessment has been undertaken for each criterion and for every green space an overall percentage score can be calculated for each green space. The



percentage scores for each green space can then defined by the following Green Flag Scoring Line.

<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
0%-15%	16%-30%	31%-45%	46%-60%	61%-75%	76%

As stated before the long term aim of the strategy to get all of Warwick District Councils green spaces to be of at least a 'Good' quality.

- 8.7 Other projects outside of the Green Space Action Plan have come forward for a number of reasons. These include where local community groups have come to the Council with certain projects, the opportunity and availability of external funding targeting certain projects and finally through changing priorities of the Council. The following is a list of those projects.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Stage</b>
Abbey Fields play area	Kenilworth Abbey	£120,000	Complete
Pump Room Gardens restoration	Leamington Clarendon	£1.4m	Being delivered
Victoria Park skatepark	Leamington Clarendon	£130,000	Complete
Bishop Tach Brook Country Park	Bishops Tachbrook and Warwick Myton & Heathcote	£2.4m	Being developed
Victoria Park improvements	Leamington Clarendon	£200,000	Being developed
Newbold Arms play area	Leamington Clarendon	£50,000	Being developed
Dragon Cottage open space and play area improvements	Leamington Milverton	£28,000	Complete
Avonside open space play area development	Leamington Milverton	£33,000	Complete
Fieldgate Lane play area	Whitnash	£70,000	Complete
Hawkes Meadow play area	Warwick Myton & Heathcote	£70,000	Being delivered
Securing green spaces	District wide	£175,000	Being delivered
New Street burial ground	Leamington Leam	£12,000	Being delivered
All Saints churchyard	Leamington Leam	Tbc.	Being developed