

**Wards Affected:**

All Wards

**Title:** Open Space Strategy Consultation Process**Author:** Phil Snell, Project Manager - Tel: 01908 253606**Executive Summary**

A joint Open Space Strategy between MKC, the Parks Trust, and HCA has been developed (limited to publicly accessible land, but not limited to any particular land manager or owner). The establishment of this partnership framework strategy will ensure that the quality of open space is maintained and that it continues to contribute and enhance the communities' quality of life and well being.

**1. Recommendation(s).**

- 1.1 That approval be given to the commencement of external consultation on the Draft Public Open Space Strategy using the Council's consultation toolkit.

**2. Key Points**

- 2.1 The Draft Public Open Space Strategy has been prepared as part of the engagement and consultation process to ensure public open space in Milton Keynes (MK) is fit for purpose. The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a compelling vision for public open space in MK for the next 10 years; in which key stakeholders share common values and deliver the identified strategic objectives.

- (a) This strategy (Public Open Space Strategy), once adopted, will replace the previous Open Space Strategy<sup>1</sup> (2007). The reasons being;

- The outgoing Open Space Strategy was in need of a refresh in some areas (policy papers, partnerships, well being etc).
- The outgoing Open Space Strategy does not reflect current economic and political challenges.
- The Public Open Space Strategy focuses on public open space rather than the broader concept of open space. However, it acknowledges the interconnected nature of Public Open Space and identifies the need to

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/parks-and-open-space/documents/OSS.pdf>

work with other groups and organisations to realise the holistic and ecological benefits.

- 2.2 As Milton Keynes continues to develop new challenges and opportunities will be encountered. The policy agenda and context for delivering quality open space is undergoing change. This strategy therefore integrates and proposes partnership working and effective community involvement as key to an efficient, sustainable and effective public open space network.
- 2.3 The strategy has adopted several approaches in the consulting, drafting and logical layout. These approaches have been adapted to facilitate the strategy. The strategy sets out a framework through which the local authority and its partners can work with each other and develop their shared vision for public open space for their areas.
- The initial process to inform the strategy was carried out over two facilitated workshops and the subsequent reports written by Big Green Campus facilitators.
  - A project board has been established, comprising two managers from the Milton Keynes Council and one manager from the Parks Trust to draft the strategy.

### 3. **Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The Council can decide not to proceed with the draft strategy, however this has been identified as a key component of the Organisational Transformation Programme and without the strategy Public Open Space may be left vulnerable to changing local and national policy objectives.
- 3.2 The Council can decide not to carry out consultation on the draft strategy, however this would not be compliant with the Parish Protocol or the transparency agenda.

### 4. **Implications**

#### 4.1 Policy

4.2 The production of the draft strategy is in line with the Organisational Transformation Programme (Alternative methods of service delivery), Localism Act (2011) and National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

#### 4.3 Resources and Risk

The resources to fund the strategy exist as part of the Organisation Transformation Programme 2012/13 programme. The main risks to strategy are:

- A substantial number of respondents reject the whole premise of the strategy.

- There is a failure to engage significantly with stakeholder

Y	Capital	N	Revenue	N	Accommodation
N	IT	Y	Medium Term Plan	N	Asset Management

#### 4.4 Carbon and Energy Management

The Draft Public Open Space Strategy recognises the important role that parks and open space can play in capturing carbon, reducing heat island effects and the general principle of ecoservice functioning.

#### 4.5 Legal

The power of public authorities to change policy is constrained by the legal duty to be fair (and other constraints which the law imposes). 1) A change of policy which would otherwise be legally unacceptable and may be held unfair by reason of prior action, or inaction, by the Authority. 2) If it has distinctly promised to consult those affected or potentially affected, then ordinarily it must consult.

#### 4.6 Other Implications

None

N	Equalities / Diversity	Y	Sustainability	N	Human Rights
N	E-Government	Y	Stakeholders	N	Crime and Disorder

Background Papers:        Draft Open Space Strategy