

CABINET

23 March 2005

REVIEW OF THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY AND FUNDING SYSTEM

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Contact Officers: Stuart Dunbar-Dempsey Tel No: 01962 848425 & Margaret Kirby Tel No: 01962 848170

RECENT REFERENCES:

None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks Members' approval for the revisions to the Open Space Strategy, and reviews the operation of the Open Space Funding System. It provides information on schemes implemented in the last year using developers' contributions, and amounts existing in the Open Space Fund for the various parishes and Winchester. It also seeks the approval of the revised contribution levels for 2005/2006.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the District Open Space Strategy attached as Appendix 3 to this report be adopted as the relevant background paper to the Winchester District Local Plan, the Winchester District Local Plan Review, and the Open Space Funding System, for the period from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006, and thereafter subject to annual review.
- 2 That the Open Space Funding System should continue to operate throughout the District, using the procedures approved by the City Council on 16 November 1994, and subsequently amended on 26 March 1998.
- 3 That the updated contribution scales set out in paragraph 5.4 of this Report be approved for use with the System for applications determined between 1 April 2005 and 31 March 2006.

CABINET23 March 2005REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICESContact Officers: Stuart Dunbar-Dempsey Tel No:01962 848425 & Margaret Kirby 01962 848170DETAIL:1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Open Space Funding System has now been operating for nearly 14 years in the southern part of the District, and for more than 10 years throughout the District.
- 1.2 The District Open Space Strategy is reviewed annually, to ensure that the details of the provision of children's play areas and sports grounds remain accurate, and that proposals for improving provision remain relevant and up to date.
- 1.3 The Strategy identifies local deficiencies in play and sports provision throughout the District, and the improvements required to meet the Local Plan standard. It therefore complements Proposal RT.3 in the Winchester District Local Plan, which forms the basis of the operation of the Funding System.
- 1.4 The first part of this report provides an update on the planning policy background, and the changes proposed to the 2004/2005 Open Space Strategy. This is followed by a review of the operation of the System and the current contribution levels. Information is then given on the amounts currently held in the Open Space Fund, and schemes implemented during the last year.

2 Planning Policy Update

- 2.1 The Local Plan Inquiry into objections to the **Local Plan Review** was held between June 2004 and February 2005, and the Inspector's Report is expected to be received this summer.
- 2.2 The Local Plan Review will replace the Winchester District Local Plan when adopted, but, while it has been progressing through its procedures, the Open Space Funding System has continued to operate through Proposal RT.3 in the current adopted Local Plan. The Proposal has, however, been carried forward from the adopted Local Plan without any significant change, and the objections received only concerned minor matters of detail. It therefore seems likely that the System's main principles will be continued into the Local Plan Review without amendment.
- 2.4 The Local Plan Review reserves, through Proposal RT.4, a number of areas of land for future recreational use adjacent to the larger settlements, designed to meet identified land shortfalls. These areas are shown on the Strategy's maps and referred to in the accompanying schedules. Progress on their implementation may, however, need to await the Inspector's recommendations in his Report, as some of them have been subject to objection.
- 2.5 It has not been possible to complete a comprehensive assessment of open space and recreation facilities, as required by PPG 17, in time for incorporation into the Local Plan Review. Until a wider assessment is complete, the District will continue to

rely on the annual assessment of play areas and sports grounds contained in the Open Space Strategy, which accords with PPG 17 advice in that it assesses the quantity and quality of spaces and associated built facilities.

- 2.6 Members will also be aware that the System operates using planning obligations, and that the Government has published proposals to reform and improve the planning obligations system. These proposals were considered by the Local Plan Committee and Cabinet (see report WDLP 40), and comments on them were forwarded to the ODPM.
- 2.7 The Government has recently announced its intention to press ahead with non-legislative improvements, in advance of more major reforms to the system likely to come forward in the next 2 - 3 years, in response to the recommendations of the final report of the Barker Review of Housing Supply (March 2004). These more major reforms would require further consideration of the Planning-gain Supplement, recommended by the Barker Report, and the Optional Planning Charge proposed by the Government in the earlier consultation. However, in response to the need for interim short-term improvements, a draft revised Circular on planning obligations has recently been published. This sets out possible changes for improvements to the current system of planning obligations and these, if confirmed, will replace the current Circular 1/97.
- 2.8 The possible changes in the draft revised Circular should therefore be seen as proposed improvements to the current system in the shorter term, with more significant reforms expected at a later date. It is therefore likely that the current system of negotiated agreements will continue for the present time, with the proposed improvements if confirmed. The proposed improvements set out in the draft Circular are, however, already features of the operation of the Open Space Funding System, introduced to ensure that the System could be readily integrated with the development control process without causing significant delays. The proposed improvements include, for instance, pooling of contributions to mitigate the combined impact of a number of developments, the use of formulae and standard charges to speed up negotiations and ensure predictability, and the use of standard agreements and undertakings, which are all part of the current procedures of the System. When the final Circular is published, it is therefore unlikely to require any significant changes to the operation of the Open Space Funding System.

### 3 Proposed Changes to the Strategy

- 3.1 The Open Space Strategy must provide the detailed justification for seeking financial contributions for children's play and sports facilities for the next financial year.
- 3.2 Contributions may only be sought where facilities are deficient, although a deficiency may be in land area, standard, quality or distribution. The Strategy sets out the nature of any existing deficiencies in each Parish and Winchester, and then makes proposals for improvements to rectify any deficiencies identified.
- 3.3 A draft copy of the 2005-2006 Strategy is circulated to Members with this report.
- 3.4 The children's play and sports facilities within each Parish and Winchester City have each been reassessed, using the 2001 NPFA standards, against the estimated current population (based on Hampshire County Council's forecasts).
- 3.5 This information has been supplemented by a consultation with all the Parish Councils, requesting their views on:
- any improvements that need to be made to their local facilities; and

- The details of any schemes they propose to implement in the near future, using funds held for their Parish.

#### 4 The Operation of the System

- 4.1 The Open Space Funding System has continued to operate during the year without any significant problems for planning application or appeal procedures. No changes have therefore been proposed to its method of operation.

#### 5 Level of Contributions

- 5.1 It had been agreed by the then Planning (Policy) Committee that a full review of the contribution levels sought, and the costs incorporated, would be undertaken every five years. This last full review took place in 2001, and therefore the next full review will be needed next year, in 2006. In the intervening years, the Retail Price Index figure for December of the previous year is applied to the contribution scales to apply for the subsequent financial year.
- 5.2 There are separate contribution scales for children's play and sports provision, with a Scale A (High) and Scale B (Low) applying to each type of facility. The scale of contributions is determined by whether there is a need for additional land for a facility (which justifies the high scale A), or the need for improvements to facilities on existing recreational land (justifying the lower scale B). Where no additional land or improvement can be justified, no contribution will be sought in the coming year.
- 5.3 Currently 5% of the Open Space Fund is reserved to cover project management costs and this will be sufficient to fund the post of the Open Space Project Officer this year. It has previously been agreed that up to 6% of the Open Space Fund could be reserved to cover such costs, and therefore the need to increase this cost will be considered in future reviews of the Open Space System.
- 5.4 The contribution scales proposed for 2005/2006 have been increased by 3.5 % in accordance with the Retail Price Index. The new contribution scales proposed are therefore:

##### For Children's play

Dwelling Size	A (High)	B (Low)
	£	£
1 Bed	507	460
2 Bed	847	762
3 Bed	1017	911
4+ Bed	1355	1219

##### For Sports Grounds

Dwelling Size	A (High)	B (Low)
	£	£
1 Bed	507	460
2 Bed	847	762
3 Bed	1017	911
4+ Bed	1355	1219

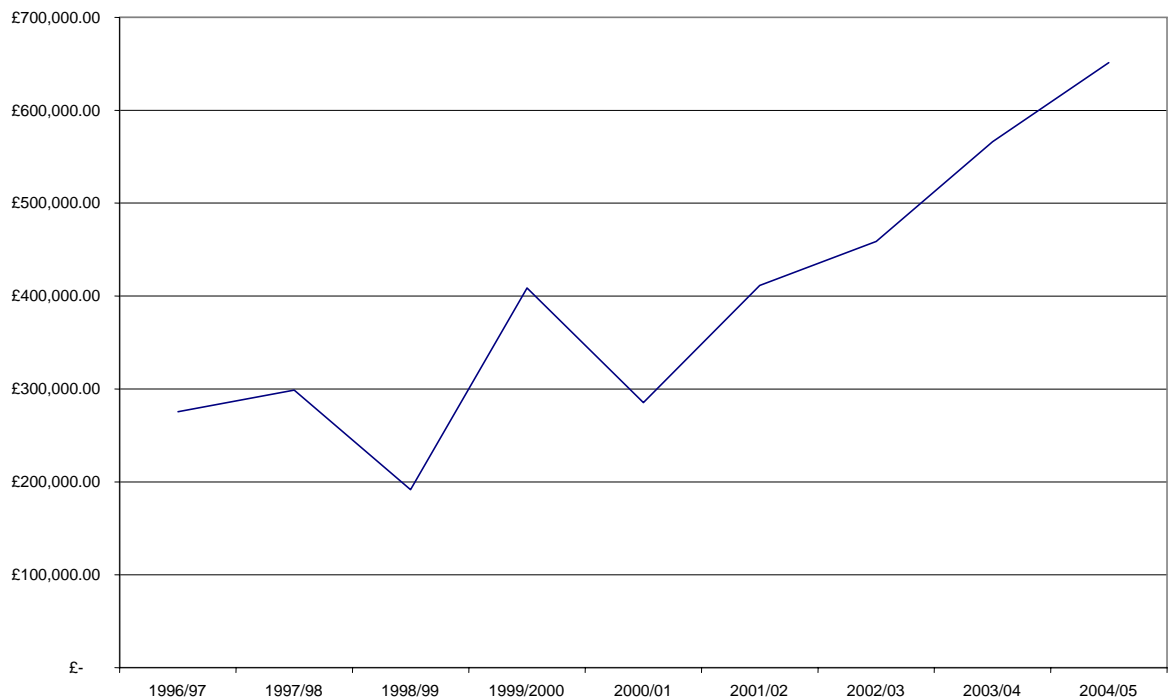
- 5.5 These contribution levels should be sought for all permissions for new dwellings determined between 1 April 2005 and 31 March 2006, in accordance with the appropriate scale recommended for each Parish or Winchester. It will then be subject to further review.

6 The Open Space Fund

- 6.1 There has been a total of £651,221 contributed to the Open Space Fund over the past 12 months, between 01 March 2004 and 28 February 2005. This is another significant increase of 15% compared to the amount received over the same period in the previous year, when £566,156 was received.

**Figure 1a: Open Space Fund Receipts 1996-2005: Table**

Financial Year	Open Space Fund Receipts (excluding admin. and receipts subject to Planning Appeals)
1996/7	£ 275,636.10
1997/8	£ 298,655.38
1998/9	£ 191,647.81
1999/2000	£ 408,807.20
2000/1	£ 285,232.30
2001/2 (to 28 Feb 2002)	£ 411,451.40
2002/3	£ 458,850.00
2003/4	£ 566,156.00
2004/5	£ 651,221.78

**Figure 1b: Open Space Fund Receipts 1996-2005: Graph**

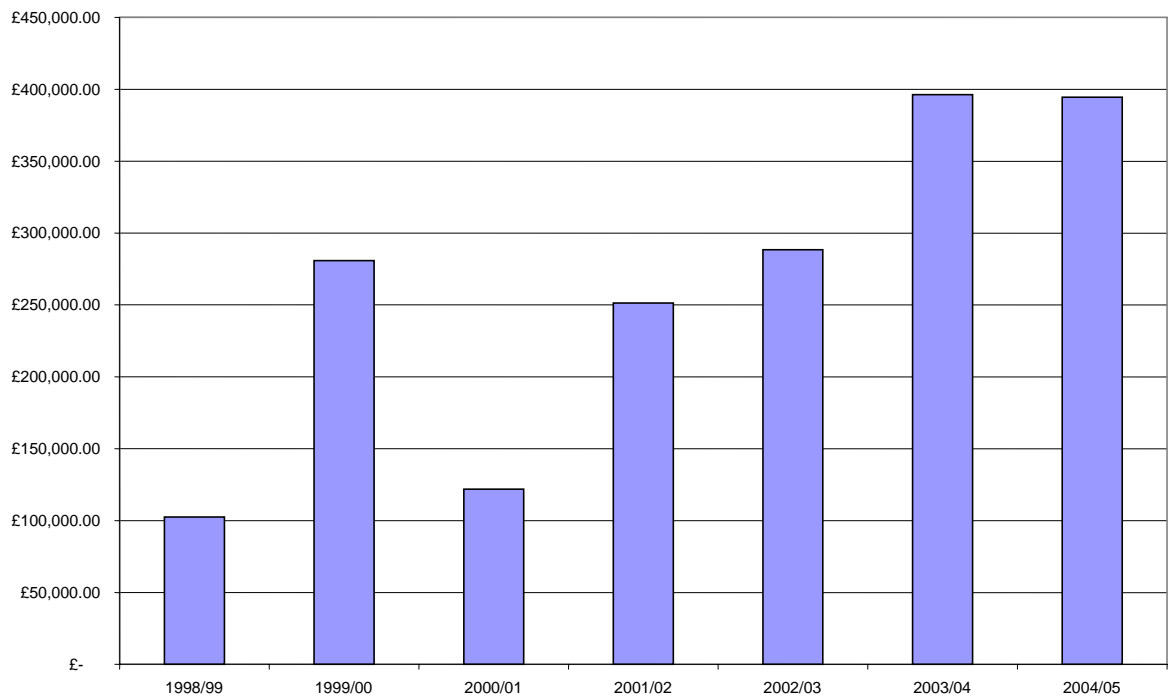
- 6.2 Details of the amounts held for each Parish and for Winchester City, up to 28th February 2005, are set out in Appendix 1. They include the amounts of interest that have accrued.
- 6.3 A list of the amounts released to the various Parish Councils to implement schemes in the last year is attached at Appendix 2.

- 6.4 A total of £394,516.90 has been released from the Open Space Fund between 1st March 2004 and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

**Figure 2a Amount Released from the Open Space Fund 1998-2005: Table**

Year	Amount Released
1998/9	£102,390.62
1999/2000	£280,875.10
2000/1	£121,758.86
2001/2	£ 251,318.26
2002/3	£288,435.13
2003/4	£396,304.34
2004/05	£394,516.90

**Figure 2b: Amounts Released from the Open Space Fund 1998-2005: Graph**



**Figure 2c: Proportion of receipts that have been spent 1998-2005: Table**

Year	% of Funds received that are spent each year
1998/9	53%
1999/2000	69%
2000/01	43%
2001/02	61%
2002/03	63%
2003/04	70%
2004/05	60%

- 6.5 The proportion of funds received that were spent is lower than the previous year. This should not be a cause of concern. Spending does become delayed for a number of reasons. Parishes often need to save their Fund to spend on a larger scheme when enough money has been collected. This year has also seen once again the highest level of developer contributions paid into the Fund.
- 6.6 The need for public consultation as well as the need to carry out additional fund raising also delays projects. Again, given the lack of new housing development in rural parishes, the amount held in the Open Space Fund is often insufficient to cover the work required. The majority of parishes are therefore having to carry out their own fund-raising to supplement the amount held in the Open Space Fund, and this can take much time and effort, especially for larger projects such as sports pavilions. It is therefore important that contributions be allowed to build up in the Open Space Fund to cover the larger projects. To this end, the sum of £300,000 continues to be reserved in the Open Space Fund for the possible Bushfield Camp sports ground proposals.

## 7 Increasing the use of the Fund

- 7.1 The acting Director is looking at ways the rate of spending can be improved and will report back in due course.

## 8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposed revisions to the Open Space Strategy reflect current deficiencies identified in the District, and the improvements proposed will therefore provide the basis for assessing schemes implemented through the Funding System in the next financial year.
- 8.2 The System has continued to operate without any significant problems for planning applications or appeal procedures.
- 8.3 The contributions sought from developers are proposed to increase in accordance with the RPI for December 2004. These would apply to planning decisions taken between 1 April 2005 and 31 March 2006.
- 8.4 In 2001 the amount required to cover the management of open space schemes by the Open Space Project Officer was increased from 2.5% of the contribution levels to 5%. This increase is currently sufficient to fund the Open Space Project Officer's work for the next financial year, but the proportion will need to be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 8.5 The Open Space Officer will continue to work with parish councils and Winchester City Council's Community Services department in an effort to make full use of the amounts held in the fund over the coming year.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

### CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

Consistent with the aims and the intention to take action to improve the recreational facilities in Winchester, and to use Local Plan policies to protect the quality of life in rural areas.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The Open Space Project Officer spends 50% of his time assisting with schemes implemented through the System, allowing other officers to concentrate more on their primary tasks. Each contribution received includes a project management fee, which funds this part of his work. Other aspects of the System's operation are carried out within current resource levels.

APPENDICES:

1. Amounts held for each Parish and Winchester City at 28th February 2005
2. Amounts released to Parish Councils for Schemes March 2004-February 2005
3. Open Space Strategy 2005/06 (because of its size, the Strategy is included for Members only. Copies have also been issued to the main District libraries).



Appendix One: Total Amount Held in the Open Space Fund, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005

Badger Farm	1009.42
Beauworth	44.66
Bighton	5,224.08
Bishops Sutton	15,411.33
Bishops Waltham	271,551.54
Boarhunt	10,783.75
Bramdean	2,602.72
Cheriton	3,423.52
Chilcomb	2,722.05
Compton&Shawford	24,852.24
Corhampton & Meonstoke	13,886.70
Colden Common	13,899.71
Curdrige	26,398.20
Crawley	5,017.47
Denmead	227,642.41
Droxford	9,394.88
Durley	8,264.72
Exton	92.68
Hambledon	10,735.97
Headbourne Worthy	9,502.50
Hursley	4,797.97
Itchenske&Ovington	10,313.37
Itchen Valley	21,001.64
Kilmeston	117.96
Kingsworthy	173,069.37
Littleton	7,662.83
Micheldever	21,530.46
New Alresford	6,446.60
Northington	92.26
Old Alresford	800.49
Olivers Battery	7,803.49
Otterbourne	28,106.57
Owlesbury	5,063.82
Shedfield	34,863.76
Soberton	24,000.79
Southwick	6,088.87
South Wonston	6,104.27
Sparsholt	5,119.52
Swanmore	81,811.96
Titchborne	67.41
Twyford	25,745.20
Upham	21,199.21
Warnford	3,301.68
West Meon	1,107.11
Wickham	168,872.98
Wonston	48,866.53
Winchester	913,171.06
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,289,588.71</b>

**Appendix Two:****Funds Released for Schemes: March 2004 – February 2005**

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Scheme Details</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount Released</b>
Bishops Waltham	Albany Road: fencing, gates and hedge planting to recreation area	July 04	£5,951.40
	Priory Park: tree work to play area	July 04	£650.00
	Hermitage Heights Rec. fencing	Dec 04	£1,075.00
Boarhunt	New car park extension to Rec.	Sept 04	£915.00
			£915.00
Cheriton	New play and sport facilities	Sept 04	£4731.50
		Aug 04	£4731.50
Cheriton	New Safer surfacing to play area	March 04	£2960.00
Colden Common	Toddler Play facilities	July 04	£4111.50
		April 04	£4111.50
Compton & Shawford	Fencing to Compton Street Rec.	Feb 05	£185.11
		Oct 04	£185.11
Compton & Shawford	New slide at Compton Street play area	Jan 05	£4330.50
		Oct 04	£433.50
Curdrige	Drainage to junior football pitch	Oct 04	£975.00
		Sept 04	£975.00
Denmead	Play area at Mill Close	Jan 05	£6,201.66
Droxford	Slide in play area	May 04	£729.00
Durley	Fencing to play area + extra £389.50	Aug 04	£1414.50
		March 04	£1025.00
Itchen Valley	2nd half of boules pitch	June 04	£1042.00
		April 04	£992.00
Itchen Valley	Fencing to football pitch	March 04	£750.00
Kilmeston	Transfer to Cheriton's open space fund	May 04	£5000.00
Kings Worthy	Seats for recreation area Hinton Park	Feb 05	£1194.50
		Oct 04	£1194.50
Kings Worthy	Map boards for recreational footpaths	Jan 05	£792.00
Kings Worthy	Bollards at Eversley Park	July 04	£1862.00
Littleton & Harestock	Play & sport improvements at Bradley Road	Jan 05	£4500.00
Littleton & Harestock	Sport facilities	April 04	£1340.00
Micheldever	Football pitch dugouts	Aug 04	£200.00
Micheldever	Play facilities	July 04	£4150.00
New Alresford	Skate park	July 04	£28,155.57
		April 04	£22,058.00
Old Alresford	Play & sport Kiln Lane improvements	Sept 04	£3,044.50
		July 04	£3,044.50
Otterbourne	Clearance of over grown land of Rec	Oct 04	£2900.00
		July 04	£2900.00
Owslebury	Basketball facility	Oct 04	£1000.00
		June 04	£1000.00
Shedfield	Ditch clearance & hedge planting Shirel Heath Rec	Oct 04	£520.00
		March 04	£520.00
Soberton	Skate park equipment	Nov 04	£13,216.84

Southwick & widley	Basketball facility	July 04	£2,810.17
		May 04	£2,810.16
Twyford	Various improvements and fencing	Feb 05	£2,981.50
West Meon	Play and Sport facilities	Dec 04	£3,191
		Nov 04	£3,091
Wickham	Play and Sport facilities	July 04	£5,165
		March 04	£5,165
Wonston	Play facilities	April 04	£2,700
Winchester	Orams Arbour play improvements	Dec 04	£6,717.50
	Abbotts Barton play improvements	Dec 04	£2,254.00
	Play equipment at fairdown Close	Nov 04	£18,545.45
	Play equipment at Teg Down Meads	Nov 04	£4,157.19
	Drainage & re surfacing @ St Giles Hill Park	Oct 04	£10,000.00
	Hyde Abbey Garden	Sept 04	£22,500.00
	Various fencing work to parks & playgrounds	Oct 04	£6,168.50
		July 04	£6,168.50
	Abbotts Barton play area	Oct 04	£25,813.50
		July 04	£25,813.50
	Edging to bowls green North Walls Rec	Oct 04	£2,378.00
		May 04	£2,378.00
	Re surfacing paths in North Walls Rec	Oct 04	£3,650.00
		May 04	£3,650.00
	Play equipment at Orams Arbour	May 04	£3,2291.50
	Bowling Green North Walls Rec	Oct 04	£3,485.00
		May 04	£3,485.00
	Abbey Gardens play refurbishment	Oct 04	£12,266.00
	TOTAL RELEASED 1st March 04 - 28th Feb. 2005		<b>£394,516.90</b>
	Total released since start of system		£1,952,378.40