

CABINET - 11 APRIL 2007

REVIEW OF THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY AND FUNDING SYSTEM

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

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

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 1276: Review of the Open Space Strategy and Funding System 21st June 2006; EN14 – Report of Open Space Fund Informal Scrutiny Group, 25th January 2006; Minutes of Cabinet held 1st March 2006.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks approval for the revisions to the 2007-2008 Open Space Strategy and reviews the operation of the open space funding system in the light of the recommendations of the Open Space Funding Informal Scrutiny Group (Report EN 014). It provides information on schemes implemented in the last year using developers' contributions, and amounts existing in the Open Space Fund for parishes and for Winchester Town. It also seeks the approval of the revised contribution levels for 2007/2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 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.
- 2 That the Open Space Strategy attached as Appendix 3 to this report be adopted as the relevant background paper to the Winchester District Local Plan Review for the period from 1st April 2007 to 31 March 2008, and thereafter subject to annual review.
- 3 That the updated contribution scales set out in paragraph 5.3 of this Report be approved for use with the System for applications determined between 11th April 2007 and 31st March 2008.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Open Space Funding System has now been operating for nearly 16 years in the southern part of the District, and for more than 12 years throughout the rest of 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 in accordance with Policy RT.4 in the Winchester District Local Plan Review, which sets out 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 2007/2008 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 play and sport projects implemented during the last year.

2 Planning Policy Update

- 2.1 The Open Space Funding System previously operated through Policy RT.3 in the Revised Deposit Winchester District Local Plan Review but this has now been re-numbered as Policy RT.4 in the statutory Local Plan Review, adopted in July 2007. It is, however, the same policy carried forward.
- 2.3 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17), published in July 2002, provides the latest relevant Government guidance on the provision for open space, sport and recreation through the planning system. This requires each authority to undertake a comprehensive assessment of open space and recreation facilities against which to measure future requirements. It was not possible to undertake the wider assessment and adopt local standards in time for incorporation into the Local Plan Review but the necessary assessment has been commissioned jointly between Winchester and East Hampshire Districts. This is being undertaken in accordance with the requirements of PPG 17 and covers a much wider range of types of open space than the current strategy, including indoor provision. The work commenced in June 2006, and it is expected that the final report will be produced in autumn 2007.
- 2.5 Once the work is complete and new local standards have been set for a wider range of facilities than those currently contained in the Local Plan's open space standard, the study will form part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Development Framework and particularly the Core Strategy which is currently being prepared. The conclusions of the study will inform the Core Strategy's Issues and Options paper, which will also be published in the autumn.

- 2.6 Following the completion of the PPG 17 Assessment, there may be a need for revisions to the Funding System and the Strategy, but this cannot be confirmed until the wider implications of any revisions can be considered. In the meantime, the District will continue to rely on the annual assessment of play areas and sports grounds contained in the Open Space Strategy.
- 2.7 Members will also be aware that the system operates using planning obligations, and Circular 05/05 now provides the relevant Government advice in this respect. However, the Council has recently been consulted on further details relating to the changes proposed with the intended introduction of a Planning Gain Supplement.
- 2.8 The proposed Planning Gain Supplement (PGS) was recommended in the Barker Report. PGS would capture a portion of the increase in land value created by the grant of planning permission, to help finance the infrastructure needed for additional housing. It would be payable to the Government as a tax on the increase in land value when planning permissions are granted, with a proportion (now specified as 70%) returned to local authorities to be used locally for infrastructure improvements. It is expected that PGS will be introduced in 2009, to cover all off-site infrastructure requirements with locally negotiated Section 106 agreements scaled back to include only on-site matters.
- 2.9 If the charge is introduced, off-site infrastructure would include a wide range of matters such as highway, transport, education and health facilities, as well as recreation and open space facilities. The Council's Open Space Funding System could not then continue to exist in its current form, but the need for recreation and open space improvements would have to compete with other off-site infrastructure needs to obtain funding. With the proposal for the PGS being considered, it is therefore even more important that the PPG 17 assessment is completed as soon as possible, so that there is the necessary knowledge about the need for improvements to facilities, so that appropriate funding can be secured.

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 of provision, quality of the facility or distribution. The Strategy sets out the nature of deficiencies in each parish and in Winchester Town, and then makes proposals for improvements to rectify any deficiencies identified.
- 3.3 A draft copy of the 2007 - 2008 Strategy is circulated to Members with this report. The children's play and sports facilities within each parish and Winchester Town have each been reassessed against the estimated current population (based on Hampshire County Council's forecasts).
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 Funding releases in Winchester Town for children's play generally follow the "Playground Five Year Refurbishment Plan" agreed by the Town Forum on the 13th January 2004.

- 3.6 Subject to Cabinet's decision on report WTF 90 (for approval elsewhere on this agenda), funding releases for sports related facilities in Winchester Town will need to be the subject of ongoing consultation with the Town Forum and in future it is proposed that the Forum will be consulted in the same way that Parish Councils are consulted at the time the Strategy is being revised each year.

4 The Operation of the System

- 4.1 No changes are proposed to the operation of the system.

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 is overdue and should be undertaken as soon as possible. However, this task cannot be accommodated this year due to time constraints and will have to be postponed until next year. In the intervening years, the annual increase in the Retail Price Index (as measured in December of the previous year) is applied to the contribution scales to set the scale 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 The contribution scales proposed for 2007/2008 have been increased by 4.4 % in accordance with the change in the Retail Price Index. The new contribution scales proposed are therefore:

For Children's play

Dwelling Size	A (High)	B (Low)
	£	£
1 Bed	541	491
2 Bed	904	813
3 Bed	1085	972
4+ Bed	1446	1301

For Sports Grounds

Dwelling Size	A (High)	B (Low)
	£	£
1 Bed	541	491
2 Bed	904	813
3 Bed	1085	972
4+ Bed	1446	1301

- 5.4 These contribution levels should be sought for all permissions for new dwellings determined between 11th April 2007 and 31 March 2008, in accordance with the appropriate scale recommended for each Parish or Winchester Town. It will then be subject to further review.

6 The Open Space Fund

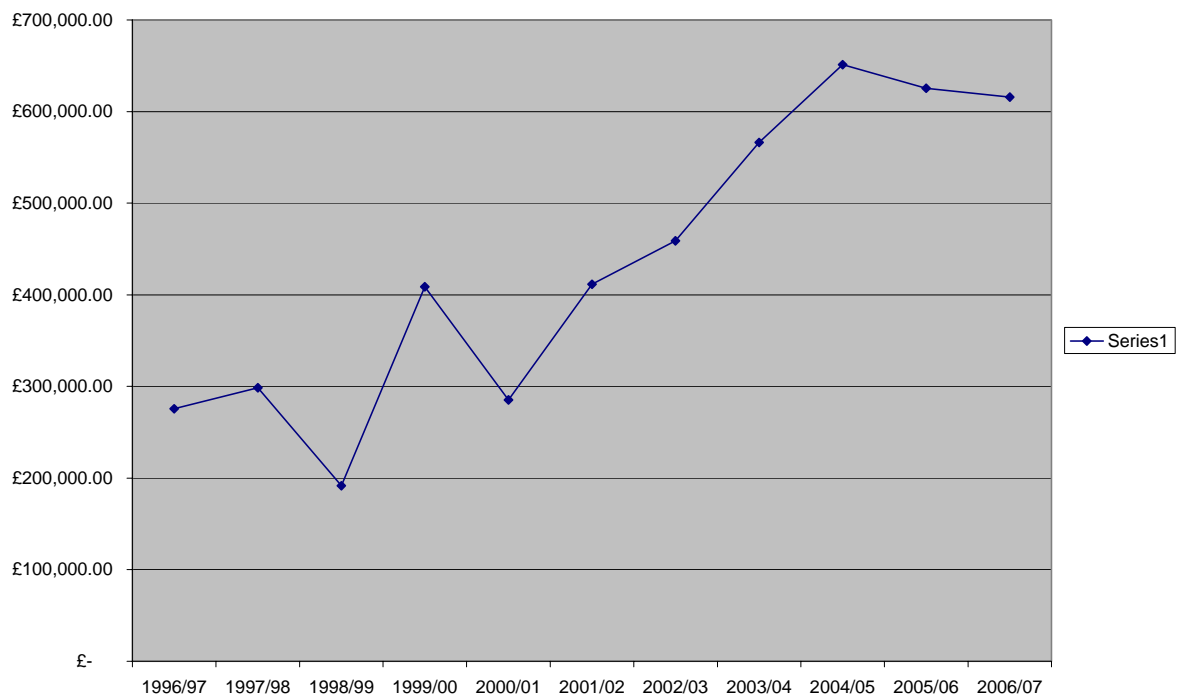
- 6.1 A total of £615,700 has been contributed to the Open Space Fund between 1st March 2006 and 28th February 2007. This is a 2% reduction compared with last year

but is still a large amount reflecting the continued high level of house building in the District.

Figure 1a: Open Space Fund Receipts 1996-2007: 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
2005/06	£ 625,374.00
2006/07	£ 615,669.55

Figure 1b: Open Space Fund Receipts 1996-2007: Graph



- 6.2 Details of the amounts held for each parish and for Winchester Town, up to 28th February 2007, 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 and Winchester City Council's Communities Directorate to implement play and sport improvement schemes in the last year is attached at Appendix 2.

- 6.4 A total of £553,082 has been released from the Open Space Fund between 1st March 2006 and 28th February 2007. This represents 90% of the contributions received over the same period.

Figure 2a: Amounts released from the Open Space Fund 1998-2007: Table

Year	Amount Released
1998/99	102,390.62
1999/00	280,875.10
2000/01	121,758.86
2001/02	251,318.26
2002/03	288,435.13
2003/04	396,304.34
2004/05	394,516.90
2005/06	921,829.00
2006/07	553,081.90
TOTAL released to date	£3,310,510.10

Figure 2b: Amounts Released from the Open Space Fund 1998-2007: Graph

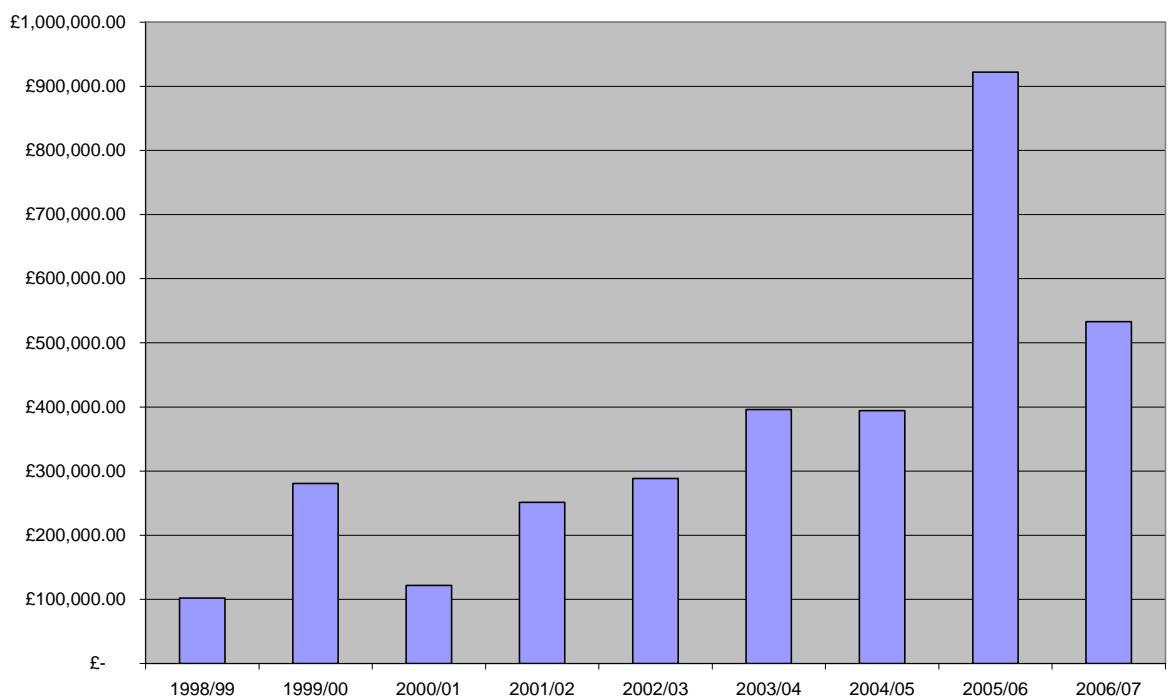


Figure 2c: Proportion of receipts that have been spent 1998-2007: Table

Year	% of funds received that are spent each year
1998/99	53
1999/00	69
2000/01	43
2001/02	61
2002/03	63
2003/04	70
2004/05	60
2005/06	147
2006/07	90%

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The system has continued to operate without any requirement for changes arising from planning applications or appeal procedures.
- 7.3 The contributions sought from developers are proposed to increase in accordance with the annual increase in the RPI for December 2006. These would apply to planning applications determined between 11th April 2007 and 31 March 2008.
- 7.4 The Open Space Officer will continue to work with parish councils, the Town Forum and Winchester City Council's Communities Directorate in an effort to make full use of, and to ensure the proper 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 District, and to use Local Plan policies to protect the quality of life in rural areas.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no indirect resource implications arising from the report. Detailed financial information is shown at section 6. The balance of receipts held in the fund as at February 2007 was £2.174m.

APPENDICES:

1. Amounts held for each Parish and Winchester Town at 28th February 2007.
2. Amounts released to Parish Councils and Winchester City Council's Communities Directorate for Schemes between March 2006 and February 2007.
3. Open Space Strategy 2007/08 (because of its size, the Strategy is included for Members only. Copies will also be issued to the main District libraries and on the Council's website: www.winchester.gov.uk).

Appendix One: Total Amount Held in the Open Space Fund, 28th February 2007

Badger Farm	£	-
Beauworth	£	-
Bighton	£	9,565
Bishops Sutton	£	16,771
Bishops Waltham	£	259,532
Boarhunt	£	7,159
Bramdean	£	2,293
Cheriton	£	140
Chilcomb	£	2,971
Compton & Shawford	£	66,465
Corhampton	£	3,519
Colden Common	£	35,898
Crawley	£	1,390
Curdrige	£	35,154
Denmead	£	55,855
Droxford	£	3,146
Durley	£	29,665
Exton	£	6,252
Hambledon	£	7,887
Headbourne Worthy	£	10,343
Hursley	£	2,567
Itchen Stoke & Oving'n	£	11,326
Itchen Valley	£	28,761
Kilmeston	£	11,643
Kingsworthy	£	134,756
Littleton & Harestock	£	17,336
Micheldever	£	102,297
New Alresford	£	124,347
Northington	£	-
Old Alresford	£	110
Olivers Battery	£	14,952
Otterbourne	£	4,614
Owslebury	£	6,220
Shedfield	£	16,131
Soberton	£	43,406
Southwick & Widley	£	3,935
South Wonston	£	22,838
Sparsholt	£	1,899
Swanmore	£	22,614
Tichborne	£	-
Twyford	£	4,461
Upham	£	3,746
Warnford	£	5,278
West Meon	£	4,177
Wickham	£	178,878
Winchester	£	792,295
Wonston	£	61,358
TOTAL	£	2,173,971

Appendix Two:

Funds Released for Schemes: March 2006 – February 2007

Parish	Scheme Details	Date	Amount Released
Bishops Waltham	Disability access improvements to Hermitage heights recreation ground	March 06	325
	Signage for Hoe Road Recreation ground.	March 06	668
	Access improvements to Priory Park pitches	August 06	11,128
	Water supply to pavilion, Priory Park	October 06	336
	Signage for play areas	November 06	771
	Fencing, gates and goalposts at Oak Road recreation ground	February 07	9,864
	1 st 50% of funding for skatepark	February 07	38,684
	Play area refurbishment Hoe Road	February 07	35,043
Boarhunt	Safety surface for play area	March 06	6,623
Bramdean	Fencing at Jubilee Recreation Ground	November 06	328
Cheriton	Play area improvements – Recreation Ground.	July 05	3,154
Colden Common	Youth Shelter, The Green	March 06	1,800
Colden Common	Footpath in toddler play area, The Green	March 07	1,386
Corhampton	Improved disabled access to sports changing rooms	July 06	2,000
Crawley	New basketball facility	October 06	4,000
Droxford	Re-cladding of cricket pavilion	May 06	27,552
Hambledon	Practice football pitch	February 07	2,500
Itchen Valley	New swings at Old School Field, Easton	March 06	3,967
	New football nets, Old School Field, Easton	May 06	63.83
	Fencing at KGV Recreation Ground	July 06	789
	New play equipment at Couch Green	March 07	6,500
Kings Worthy	Dog walk area at Eversley Park	Sept 06	5974
	Firs Crescent design work	May 06	1,075
	Purchase of Church Green (Peeks Field)	July 06	36,600
	Football nets and corner flags	July 06	1,140
	Purchase of lease at Broadview Recreation Ground	Sept 06	616
Littleton and Harestock	Cricket training nets and surfacing at recreation ground	July 06	2,200.00
	New play equipment at Bradley Road	July 06	7,283
	Boundary hedge and raised planter at recreation ground	July 06	2,414
New Alresford	Extension to children's play area, Stratton Bates Rec.	March 06	24,528
Otterbourne	Youth facilities at Oakwood Park (2 nd inst)	June 06	16,171
Owslebury	Play area improvements	March 07	1,575
Shedfield	Shedfield Recreation Ground play area	May 06	14,010
	New artificial cricket strip	October 06	6,230
	Shedfield rec. pitch improvements	November 06	3,728
Shedfield	Play equipment, Waltham Chase Rec.	November 06	9,132
Southwick & Widley	Goal posts for recreation ground	July 06	737

Swanmore	Play equipment and kick wall, Broad Lane Rec.	December 06	14,941
Twyford	Play equipment at Northfields playground.	July 06	26,000
Upham	Recreation Ground, new sports pavilion	July 06	22,987
Wickham	Play equipment at The Circle	September 06	71,201
	Play equipment at Fareham Road Recreation ground	September 06	40,475
Winchester:			
St Bartholomew	Safety surfacing, North Walls playground	July 06	8,612
	Electric supply to tennis courts North Walls Park, 1 st 50%	May 06	13,687
	Floodlights to tennis court/ATP court, North Walls Park, 1 st 50%	May 06	27,225
	Re-bound boards for ATP court, North Walls Park, 1 st 50%	May 06	3,112.00
	New bowling green edging, North Walls Park, 1 st 50%	May 06	1,228
St Johns	Gordon Avenue play area safety inspection	October 06	464
	Security fence to Gordon Avenue play area	November 06	5,409.58
	Gordon Road play area tree planting	April 06	926
	Imber Road play area play equipment	March 06	2,383
	Total released		£553,082