

CABINET - 7 APRIL 2010

REVIEW OF THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY AND FUNDING SYSTEM

REPORT OF HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND HEAD OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 1816: Review of the Open Space Strategy and Funding System 18 March 2009.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks approval for the adoption of the 2010-2011 Open Space Strategy and reviews the operation of the open space funding system since the last report. 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 2010/2011.

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 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011, 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 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Open Space Funding System has now been operating for nearly 19 years in the southern part of the District, and for more than 15 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 in order to meet the Local Plan standard in accordance with Policy RT.4 of 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 2010/2011 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 continues to operate through Policy RT.4 in the adopted Winchester District Local Plan Review.
- 2.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17), published in July 2002, also continues to provide 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. However, it was not possible to undertake the wider assessment and adopt local standards in time for incorporation into the Local Plan Review. Therefore the necessary assessment was commissioned jointly by Winchester and East Hampshire Districts in May 2006, with the work also being supported by Sport England.
- 2.3 An assessment in accordance with the requirements of PPG 17 has now been undertaken, covering a much wider range of types of open space than the current strategy, and including indoor recreation provision. The final report

was completed in March 2008, with the main conclusions being set out in the Winchester Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study: Part 1 report.

- 2.4 The report recommends new local standards for a wider range of facilities than those currently contained in the adopted Local Plan's recreational space standard, including new standards for different types of open space, green infrastructure, and built facilities. The Study forms part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Development Framework, and its conclusions were endorsed by the Local Development Framework Committee in April 2008. The recommended standards are therefore being promoted through the Core Strategy, through the Preferred Option Paper published in May 2009. The consultation responses showed widespread general support for developing new standards covering a wider range of facilities.
- 2.5 With the increased importance of securing a wide range of infrastructure improvements in association with new development, in the Preferred Option consultation there was also recognition that open space and recreation formed part of the wider infrastructure needs associated with new development. There is therefore likely to be a need for changes to the approach currently used in the Open Space System, in that a comprehensive approach to developers' contributions, covering all types of infrastructure, is likely to be needed.
- 2.6 Legislation and regulations allowing the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) have now been produced and will come into force in April 2010. There will be a period for Local Authorities to consider whether they wish to move over to the CIL system, or retain the existing system of using planning obligations.
- 2.7 The Council will need to consider its position on this in due course. Whilst the scheme is voluntary, if any contribution based on a tariff system of payment is to be retained (e.g. the Open Space Funding System) it will need to move over to CIL by April 2014. However, the Council would need an adopted, or very well-advanced, Core Strategy before being able to introduce CIL.
- 2.8 The recent publication of the final CIL Regulations gives some clarity over what CIL will cover, how and when it can be introduced and the relationship with 106 agreements. The approach recommended for the Core Strategy's policies is to not prejudice or undermine future Council decisions about whether to introduce CIL in the District
- 2.9 The CIL Regulations are clear that each authority's proposals to introduce a CIL would need to be robust and would be subject to independent testing. Therefore the infrastructure planning underpinning the CIL would need to be embedded in the development plan process, as was the case also when the open space funding system was first introduced.
- 2.10 Any assessment of whether to introduce a CIL will therefore need to be considered further through the continuing work on the LDF and, if considered appropriate for the District, will need to be supported by a special Local Development Document (LDD) setting out the charging schedule and the detail of how the CIL would operate.

- 2.11 Until the Core Strategy and accompanying LDD is adopted, and a CIL is introduced, the current Open Space Funding System will continue to operate, and the District will continue to rely on the annual assessment of play areas and sports grounds contained in the Open Space Strategy.

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 accessibility. 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 2010 - 2011 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 to overcome deficiencies 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 recently by the Town Forum on 20th January 2010 (WTF 143 refers).
- 3.6 Funding releases for sports related facilities in Winchester town have been the subject of consultation with the Town Forum via the Council's Sport and Recreation Manager and the Forum were consulted in the same way that Parish Councils are consulted at the time the Strategy is being revised each year in January (report WTF 144 20 January 2010 refers).

4 Level of Contribution

- 4.1 In view of the Government's proposals to change the way infrastructure is funded, it is considered that it is not an efficient use of officer resources to undertake a full review of the contribution levels sought, at this time. The last full review took place in 2001, and in the intervening years the Retail Price Index figure for December of the previous year has been applied to the contribution scales to apply for the subsequent financial year.
- 4.2 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.

- 4.3 The contribution scales proposed for 2010/2011 have been increased by 2.4 % in accordance with the Retail Price Index (RPI) for December 2009. The new contribution scales proposed are therefore:

For Children's play

Dwelling Size	A (High)	B (Low)
	£	£
1 Bed	582	528
2 Bed	971	875
3 Bed	1165	1044
4+ Bed	1554	1398

For Sports Grounds

Dwelling Size	A (High)	B (Low)
	£	£
1 Bed	582	528
2 Bed	971	875
3 Bed	1165	1044
4+ Bed	1554	1398

- 4.4 These contribution levels would be sought for all permissions for new dwellings determined between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011, in accordance with the appropriate scale recommended for each Parish or Winchester Town.

5 The Open Space Fund

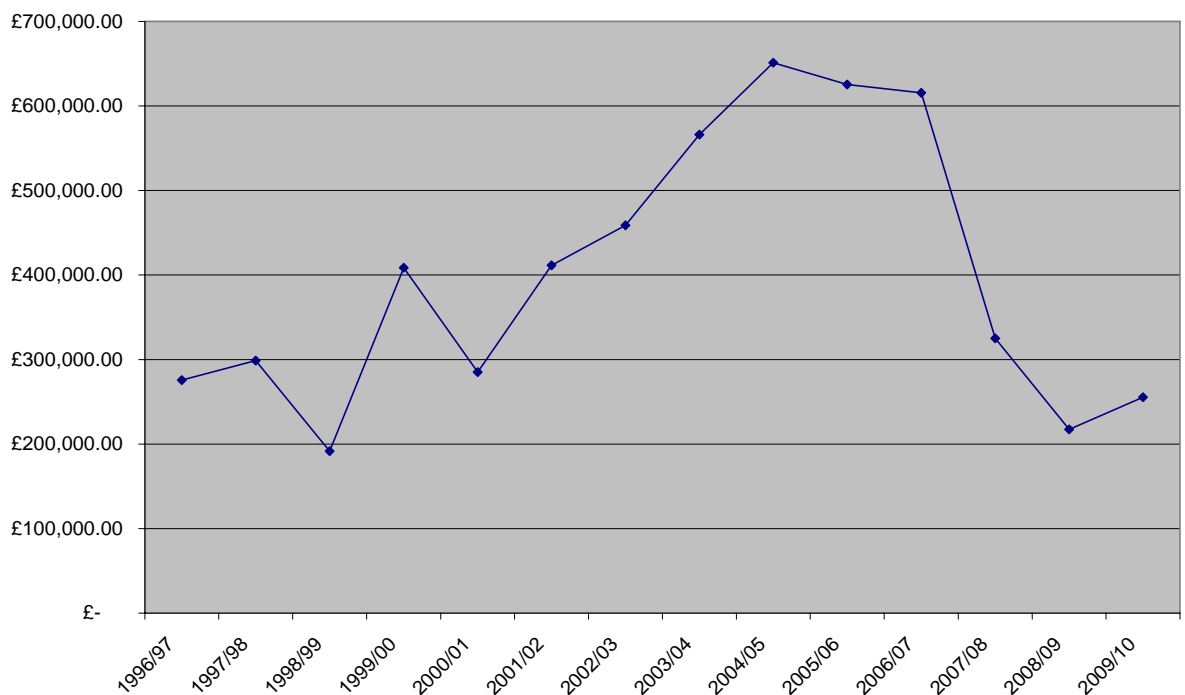
- 5.1 A total of £255,350.39 has been contributed to the Open Space Fund between 1 March 2009 and 28 February 2010. This is a significant small increase on last year's income and represents the first time in four years that the income has not fallen. This could be an early sign of a recovery in the housing market.

Figure 1a: Open Space Fund Receipts 1996-2010: 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

Financial Year	Open Space Fund Receipts (excluding admin. and receipts subject to Planning Appeals)
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
2007/08	£ 325,109.00
2008/09	£ 217,399.12
2009/10	£ 255,350.39

Figure 1b: Open Space Fund Receipts 1996-2010: Graph



- 5.2 Details of the amounts held for each parish and for Winchester Town, up to 28 February 2010, are set out in Appendix 1. They include the amounts of interest that have accrued.
- 5.3 A list of the amounts released to the various Parish Councils and Winchester City Council's Environment Division to implement play and sport improvement schemes in the last year is attached at Appendix 2. There have been overspends in some parishes. Sparsholt a deficit of £2,001, Shedfield a deficit of £1,990 Otterbourne a deficit of £2,387.43, Durley a deficit of £2,485 and

Crawley £131.57. These overspends will be rectified once housing development takes place in these areas.

- 5.4 A total of £756,080.21 has been released from the open space fund between 1 March 2009 and 28 February 2010.

Figure 2a: Amounts released from the Open Space Fund 1998-2010: 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
2007/08	1,560,746.00
2008/2009	277,212.59
2009/10	756,080.21
TOTAL released to date	£5,904,548.70

Figure 2b: Amounts Released from the Open Space Fund 1998-2010: Graph

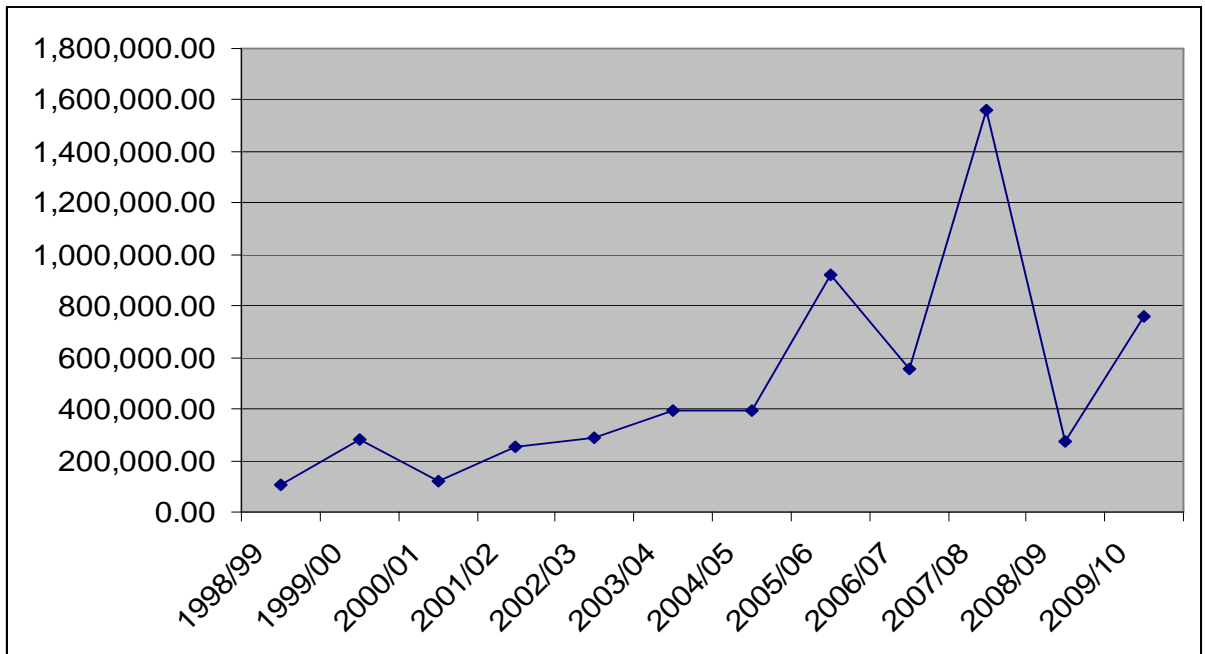


Figure 2c: Proportion of receipts that have been spent: 1998-2010: Table

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
2007/08	282
2008/09	127
2009/10	296

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed revisions to the Open Space Strategy reflect current play and sport 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.
- 6.2 The system has continued to operate without any requirement for changes arising from planning applications or appeal procedures although the Planning Inspectorate now ask for more evidence of the shortfalls and deficiencies identified in the Open Space Strategy.
- 6.3 The contributions sought from developers are proposed to be increased in accordance with the RPI for December 2009. These would apply to planning decisions taken between 1st April 2010 and 31 March 2011.
- 6.4 The Open Space Officer will continue to work with parish councils, the Town Forum and Winchester City Council's Sport and Recreation Manager in an effort to make full use of, and to ensure the proper use of, the amounts held in the fund over the coming financial year.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

7 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN (RELEVANCE TO):

- 7.1 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.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Detailed financial information is shown at section 5. The balance of receipts held in the fund as at March 2010 was £1.27m.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 9.1 The Council maintains the Open Space Funding system in order to properly manage and disburse developer contributions arising as a result of policies in the Local Plan.
- 9.2 The Open Space Officer ensures that funds are allocated correctly to eligible projects, records of allocations are kept and that the level of the fund is monitored throughout the year. Officers are seeking to implement new software (linked to the existing Uniform planning system) to improve collection of contributions, monitoring of the Fund, and tracking expenditure on projects.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

1. Amounts held for each Parish and Winchester Town at 28th February 2010.
2. Amounts released to Parish Councils and Winchester City Council's Cultural Services and Environment Teams for Schemes between beginning of March 2009 and end of February 2010.
3. Open Space Strategy 2010/11 - because of its size, a draft b/w copy of the Strategy is included for Cabinet, Group Leaders and Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee and Environment Scrutiny Panel only. Further copies will in future only be available on the Council's website: www.winchester.gov.uk. (under Planning and Environment, Parks and Open Spaces, Open Space Development).

Appendix One: Total Amount Held in the Open Space Fund, 28th February 2010

	Play	Sport	Total
Badger Farm	-	-	-
Beauworth	-	-	-
Bighton	-4,727.97	-4,727.96	-9,455.93
Bishops Sutton	6,817.69	9,953.51	16,771.20
Bishops Waltham	15,355.61	41,660.01	57,015.62
Boarhunt	-1,537.79	10,886.32	9,348.53
Bramdean	0.24	1,493.58	1,493.82
Cheriton	-4,814.95	10,367.31	5,552.36
Chilcomb	1,504.71	2,162.54	3,667.25
Compton & Shawford	20,927.28	-151.60	20,775.68
Corhampton & Meonstoke	22,225.26	53,773.17	75,998.43
Colden Common	8,548.64	30,493.49	39,042.13
Crawley	802.41	-933.98	-131.57
Curdrige	1,471.17	8,754.44	10,225.61
Denmead	-26,049.09	31,725.25	5,676.16
Droxford	3,206.15	4,714.84	7,920.99
Durley	18,241.32	-20,726.34	-2,485.02
Exton	3,126.00	3,126.00	6,252.00
Hambledon	8,111.28	1,354.49	9,465.77
Headbourne Worthy	1,852.48	8,491.41	10,343.89
Hursley	3,132.65	5,539.02	8,671.67
Itchen Stoke & Ovington	11,283.28	43.22	11,326.50
Itchen Valley	2,454.56	6,859.07	9,313.63
Kilmeston	-	-	-
Kingsworthy	-20,940.86	18,400.92	-2,539.94
Littleton	6,047.79	9,405.11	15,452.90
Micheldever	2,317.68	25,209.52	27,527.20
New Alresford	54,708.23	115,349.90	17,0058.13
Northington	-	-	-
Old Alresford	-3,871.98	7,495.79	3,623.81
Olivers Battery	14,249.97	20,115.44	34,365.41
Otterbourne	-9,755.47	7,368.04	-2,387.43
Owslebury	-427.12	876.67	449.55
Shedfield	29,907.39	27,917.35	1,990.04
Soberton	83.89	-83.84	0.05
Southwick	-1,197.03	5,132.88	3,935.85
South Wonston	6,338.45	18,246.23	24,584.68
Sparsholt	-1,081.20	-920.38	-2,001.58
Swanmore	8,598.97	39,269.49	47,868.46
Tichbourne	-	-	-
Twyford	3,771.83	3,041.91	6,813.74
Upham	5,822.39	-1,070.18	4,752.21
Warnford	1,880.46	3,397.57	5,278.03
West Meon	-3,874.97	3,875.69	0.72
Wickham	-59,578.74	206,723.50	147,144.76
Winchester Wards	244,322.28	247,336.81	491,659.09
Wonston	-89,12.92	11,559.57	2,646.65
	300,525.19	973,505.78	1,274,030.97

Appendix Two:

Funds Released for Schemes: 1st March 2009 – 28th February 2010

Parish	Scheme Details	Date	Amount Released
Bighton	New public open space and play equipment	Jun-09	23,344.00
Bishops Waltham	new play equipment at Priory Park	Feb-10	65,796.00
Compton & Shawford	safety surfacing to play area	Dec-09	13,865.00
	play equipment	May-09	11,046.00
Meonstoke	safety surfacing	May-09	3,371.00
	sports equipment	Mar-09	325.50
Curdridge	tree work to sports ground	Dec-09	5,049.00
	new access to sports ground	Jul-09	5,531.50
	tree work to play ground	Mar-09	1,312.00
Denmead	recreation ground car park work	Feb-10	90,000.00
	playground re-furbishment	Jul-09	20,000.00
	professional fees	May-09	3,750.00
Hursley	fencing to play area	Mar-09	1,266.00
Itchen Valley	cricket pavilion improvements	Nov-09	10,000.00
Kingsworthy	over 60's exercise equipment	Mar-09	12,244.00
	landscape improvements to Firs Cres POS	Mar-09	4,845.82
	contribution to Henry Beaufort School MUGA	Jun-09	1,000.00
	access improvements to Eversley park	Jul-09	6,061.00
	improvements to Church Green POS	Jun-09	27,462.20
Littleton & Harestock	Henry Beaufort sport contribution	Jun-09	7,500.00
	play equipment	Oct-09	5,629.00
Micheldever	Play area at east Stratton Village Hall	Jul-09	22,478.00
New Alresford	Petanque court	Mar-09	3,850.00
	new play equipment	Jun-09	5,508.00
	professional fees	Jun-09	450.00
	new benches in Arlebury Park	Jul-09	1,270.00
Owslebury	play and sport improvements	Jan-10	7,117.57
Shedfield	changing facilities at Rec	Apr-09	58,331.72
Soberton	play facility	Apr-09	18,808.00
South Wonston	play equipment	Jan-09	527.37
	vehicular barrier in Park	Jan-10	1,257.00
	South Wonston sports pavilion	Jan-10	5,097.95
Swanmore	skateboard equipment	May-09	1,815.00
	benches, bins and bike racks	May-09	1,478.12
	gates to recreation ground	Jun-09	457.57
Twyford	play equipment Ballards Close	Oct-09	6,000.00
West Meon	play equipment	Oct-09	6,900.00

Parish	Scheme Details	Date	Amount Released
Winchester	play area surfacing Walpole Road	Mar-10	20,265.53
	swings and safety surfacing Taplings Rd	Mar-10	12,565.00
	play equipment Somers Close	Jan-10	75,250.00
	play equipment Teg Down Meads	Jan-10	15,500.00
	play equipment Dean Park	Jan-10	34,229.36
	artificial turf pitch H. Beaufort School	Jun-09	130,000.00
	basket ball facility Somers Close	Oct-09	2,686.00
	safety surfacing Somers Close	Jul-09	4,840.00