

REPORT TITLE: MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE – SCOPING REPORT

19 JANUARY 2022 (RESCHEDULED FROM 7 DECEMBER 2021)

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor Hannah Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

Contact Officer: Steve Lincoln Tel No: 01962 848110 Email slincoln@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The work programme for the committee includes an item to consider the management of open space. This is a broad subject, so this paper considers some specific subjects for inclusion in a revised work programme for the coming year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Policy Committee agrees the inclusion of the following future reports related to the management of open space:
 - a. March 2022 – Tree strategy
 - b. September 2022 - Management of open spaces of ecological importance

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 None directly resulting from this report.
- 1.2 Tree ownership (and therefore budgets/financing) is complex as different sites and trees fall under town, district & HRA. The report which comes forward in March 2022 will reflect existing budgets and workload as well as possible future financial implications.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 2.1 The work programme for the committee was agreed at the beginning of the administrative year and includes an item to consider the management of open space. This is a broad subject and a huge amount of work is undertaken; planned and responsive, routine and developmental; statutory and discretionary.
- 2.2 There are some specific issues within the broader subject of open space management which are in need of review, or for which new policy is emerging. These are areas in which the views of the committee can help shape future approaches and reflect on effective use of resources.

March 2022

- 2.3 It is proposed that the report to the March 2022 meeting focusses on the emerging Tree Strategy. Winchester City Council has both a legislative and managerial role in the protection and enhancement of the district's tree stock and is committed to managing its own tree stock in a sustainable and appropriate manner.
- 2.4 Whilst the council has many procedures and processes for managing and responding to tree issues, there is a need for a single document which clearly sets out the council's position and policies. This tree strategy will be the main point of reference for any works in relation to trees which come under the remit of the city council, including trees owned and managed by the council and those in private ownership where the council has a role in their safeguarding or management. The document will achieve this by identifying appropriate works and policies which balance the need for the management of risk associated with trees with the many benefits they provide.

September 2022

- 2.5 The council's approach to the management of open spaces of ecological importance that it owns has been changing over the last few years. Ecology and biodiversity carries greater prominence, which has led to additional sites coming forward to be maintained under our direct ownership and others being managed in partnership.

- 2.6 It is proposed that later in 2022 officers provide a brief overview of the current sites owned and managed by the council and whether they are achieving biodiversity enhancements. This will allow members to examine whether the current arrangements are effective and to provide comment on efforts to achieve biodiversity enhancements on our own land holdings. This work will support the Biodiversity Action Plan and will be included in the action plan for delivery in year 2.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 3.1 The committee work programme included an item to update on delivery of the biodiversity action plan. The plan was published early in 2021 and work is well underway to deliver on the actions set out within. This will be the subject of an all member briefing early in 2022.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

None.

Other Background Documents:-

None.

APPENDICES:

None.