



Report of the Chief Recreation Officer

Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Date: 9th September 2008

Subject: Parks and Green Space Strategy

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report provides an update on the development of the draft Parks and Green Space Strategy ahead of Executive Board approval to be sought in the autumn.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The draft Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds was launched in December 2006, and following consultation and a seminar that was held in February 2007, a subsequent document was published on 'What you said about the draft Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds'.

2.2 Further work has been carried out on the Parks and Green Space Strategy document taking account of issues raised, and the development of an Executive Summary which is attached to this report, along with a draft strategic framework and action plan. A copy of the full document, which has also been revised, is available in the Member library for perusal.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The issues and proposals contained in the strategy document are structured around 6 themes that set out the overriding aims of the strategy, namely *places for people; quality places; sustaining the green realm; creating a healthier city; an enabler for regeneration* and *delivering the strategy*. These themes are not exclusive or self-contained and there are also broader strands that cut across each theme.

3.2 There is a rich heritage of parks and green space in Leeds, and the value of this key asset to the economy, tourism, community cohesion, health and education, as well as for recreation and conservation should not be underestimated. The parks and

green space estate contributes to so many aspects of city life, that sustaining this estate can often be taken for granted and not seen as a priority in it's own right.

- 3.3 The strategy therefore seeks to address key challenges faced, which include improving the condition of parks and green spaces - particularly community parks; providing and promoting access for all to quality green space – particularly in the city centre, as well as some areas of deprivation, and the role played in adapting to climate change.
- 3.4 Key proposals contained in the attached executive summary of the strategy include the following:
- the aspiration to develop a city centre park during the life of this strategy
 - the aspiration for all community parks to meet the Green Flag standard for field based assessment by 2020
 - to develop an investment strategy through the asset management plan to maximise opportunity for sustained investment in parks and green space
- 3.5 A local key indicator has been included in the Leeds Local Area Agreement in order to 'improve the quality and sustainability of the built and natural environment', namely *the % of Parks and Countryside sites assessed that meet the Green Flag Standard*. This is a key measure of progress for the Parks and Green Space Strategy.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 The Parks and Green Space Strategy is a strategy for the city, and such will be published by the Leeds Initiative under the Cultural Strategy banner.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 Implementation of the strategy will require specific commitments from the Council as the lead agency in this sector.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 That members note the contents of this report and related documents to the draft Parks and Green Space Strategy.

Background Papers

1. The draft Parks and Green Space Strategy
2. 'What you said about the draft Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds'.
3. Leeds Local Area Agreement