



**Glasgow City Council**

**Sustainability and the Environment Policy Development Committee  
26 August 2015**

**Report by Executive Director of Land and Environmental Services**

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**NEW PARKS STRATEGY FOR GLASGOW COMMUNITIES**

**Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of this report is to advise committee of proposals to develop an updated Parks Strategy for the next 10 years - 2017 - 2027.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Committee note

- (a) the proposed scope of the new Parks Strategy and provides any comments at this stage;
- (b) the strategy will cover a 10 year period from 2017 – 2027;
- (c) that following on from recommendations (a) & (b), a report will be brought back to the November Committee outlining a proposed consultation process so as to ensure Glasgow communities and key stakeholders are involved in the process from the outset.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes  No ✓

consulted: Yes No ✓

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Glasgow City Council delivers its Parks and Open Spaces Strategic Best Value Review & Implementation Plan (SBVR) through Land and Environmental Services (LES). The last strategy document was approved by the Parks and Facilities Committee on 15 December 2004 and has been in place since 2005. There is now a requirement for the city to consider how it will devise and implement a new parks and open space strategy for the next 10 years.
- 1.2 Glasgow City Council has a stunning array of 92 public parks containing museums, winter gardens, botanical gardens, animal collections and growing spaces.
- 1.3 We have more parkland than any other broadly comparable city in Europe, with a significant area of Glasgow's land as green space. Eight of our parks have green flag status, testimony to their internationally recognised quality. These assets have been used by citizens of Glasgow and beyond for generations as greatly valued facilities for recreation, exercise and social relaxation.
- 1.4 A fundamental principle in taking forward any new strategy will be ensuring Glasgow residents are key to progressing the work outlined in the report.
- 1.5 As with the majority of international cities over the last few decades, Glasgow has had to plan for many changes -
  - Changes to population and demographics;
  - Major refurbishment of housing stock;
  - Reduction in heavy industrial base; and
  - Leisure and tourism trends being driven by changes to travel, technology and employment.
- 1.6 There will be new challenges and opportunities in the future, in particular encouraging and facilitating greater community participation in the improvement and management of green spaces across Glasgow. Glasgow residents are passionate about their '*Dear Green Place*' and translating this passion into positive action will involve continually changing the way we collectively work and build upon these much valued assets.
- 1.7 Recognising that life now and in the future is very different from the Victorian era when many of Glasgow's parks were created, the need for continual change in the way parks are developed and managed must be acknowledged. For example, Glasgow's children's population is predicted to increase significantly by 18% in the next 25 years. Parks will represent a unique opportunity for these children, young people and their families to be active, to play, to learn and to spend time together as a family as many earlier generations of families have done in our 92 parks.

- 1.8 Glasgow provides and manages high quality parks, civic and open spaces and has a legacy of many fine parks. Their existing quality needs to be protected and enhanced at all times. This will require innovative design and funding and Glasgow City Council will need to work closely with all interested stakeholders, particularly local communities.
- 1.9 Also the amended Park Management Rules will be brought to this Committee at its meeting of the 7th October 2015, with the aim of making the City's parks, gardens, and open spaces safe and protected environments in order that the citizens of Glasgow can enjoy the facilities for generations to come. This will conclude and report back on the wide and expansive consultation process recently undergone as it relates to the parks and current strategy.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The first major city-wide parks strategy was published in 1995 and titled "*A New Vision, a New Future*".
- 2.2 A subsequent strategy document was published in 2005 entitled "Glasgow Parks and Open Spaces, Strategic Best Value Review and Implementation Plan" (SBVR). It is important that we now take time to review the success of the existing strategy and look to building on a new collective vision and strategy for the next 10 years for a number of very good reasons set out in this report.
- 2.3 The city has an emerging wider open space strategy being developed by colleagues in Development and Regeneration Services (DRS). The Glasgow Open Space Strategy (GOSS) is a formal planning policy document which supports the emerging City Development Plan (CDP) looking at the quality, quantity and accessibility of all publicly usable open space in Glasgow. This includes all green spaces over 0.3 hectares. The GOSS will help inform any new Parks Strategy developed, as will the associated qualitative and quantitative openspace mapping. The seven objectives of the Parks Strategy have been informed by the strategic priority themes of the GOSS.
- 2.4 Integrated Green Infrastructure (IGI) is a major component of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network and the wider Central Scotland Green Network which is a National Development in the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework. IGI focuses on the role that greenspaces and other elements of 'green infrastructure' play in delivering high quality, sustainable, resilient and successful places. It seeks to maximise these benefits by incorporating green infrastructure into the way in which development is planned and carried out. It includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, wetlands, road verges, allotments and private gardens.

- 2.5 Glasgow Household Survey results demonstrate how highly Glaswegians value their parks, with figures for residents who are very or fairly satisfied with Parks increasing from 83% to 86% from 2012 to 2014 providing sound platform for any new potential strategy to build upon.
- 2.6 A recent example of innovation within parks being the report on MyPark Scotland presented to committee at its meeting on 10 June 2015. MyPark Scotland is a web-based portal allowing Glaswegians to share their park stories, find out about parks' events and get involved in supporting their parks.

### 3. Emerging Parks Strategy Objectives

The new Parks Strategy objectives will encompass the following -

- Protect, maintain and enhance the quality of parks and green spaces and build upon Glasgow's reputation as the '*Dear Green Place*'.
- Enhance social inclusion, community engagement, and encourage community participation in the management of green spaces, and provide a clear basis for the investment in Glasgow's parks and open spaces. Parks belong to the people of Glasgow and should have Glasgow's people at their heart: *People make Glasgow's Parks*.
- Demonstrate and quantify the benefits accrued to the people of Glasgow, the Council and partners resulting from the provision of high quality parks and open spaces.
- Encourage active and healthy life-styles and help ensure that all residents have access to good quality parks and green space for informal, natural, sports and play use
- Provide and support active travel and green networks.
- Play a significant role in making Glasgow a world class green and sustainable city, and
- Develop an approach to protect and attract the horticultural and arboricultural skills needed to ensure Glasgow remains a vibrant green urban city.

In summary, improve the quality of life for Glasgow communities and continue to showcase our Parks & Open Spaces on an international basis by having a newly refreshed community led strategy.

### 4. Developing the Strategy

- 4.1 The development of a Parks and Open Spaces strategy impacts many stakeholder groups within the city including:

- All Council Services
- Glasgow Life
- Community Safety Glasgow

- Community Planning Partnerships
- Cordia
- Area Partnerships
- Friends of Parks groups
- NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
- Police Scotland
- Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Housing Associations and
- Universities and Colleges.

All of these key stakeholders (and others) will be involved in shaping the future strategy for our Parks & Open Spaces and building on our success to date.

#### 4.2.1 **A Policy Framework**

To inform the final publication of the 2017-2027 strategy document, the work of the strategy will cover the following:

- Identify linkages to Glasgow's Open Space Strategy and local area context priorities;
- Benchmark with other cities and consider national and international standards and best practice;
- Identify sub-strategies or related strategies, e.g. allotments strategy, biodiversity strategy, parks management plans, play strategy and tree & woodlands management plans, sports strategy, etc; and
- Identify ways in which the new strategy can make a major contribution towards a sustainable Glasgow.

#### 4.2.2 **Community Empowerment Approach**

- Develop a community-focussed approach to developing and maintaining parks and open spaces which is informed by current thinking in relation to perhaps, for example, Co-operative Working and Community Empowerment principles.
- Identify a possible framework to support community empowerment and ownership of parks and green open spaces.
- Consider how Glasgow should account for, record and celebrate volunteer activity in support of our Parks & Open Spaces.

#### 4.2.3 **Reviewing our Classification**

- Review current park classifications and investigate the creation of any new classifications required and
- Consider how the deficiency or surplus greenspace identified via the GOSS might be effectively addressed.

#### 4.2.4 **Operational Issues**

- Ensure Glasgow communities are driving forward the plans for our highly valued parks at the most appropriate local level;

- Highlight the multi-agency working that supports the green space areas identified in the strategy including Local Operational Working Groups.
- Identify the mechanisms required to deliver community requirements, as informed by customer research, the ambitions of Glasgow's Friends of Parks Groups and strategies such as the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015;
- Develop an approach to protect, enhance and attract the horticultural and arboricultural skills needed to deliver the Parks Strategy and
- Identify how residents and communities can inform and participate in the future planning and examine the potential for their involvement in operational delivery of parks services on a regular basis.

#### **4.2.5 Innovative Funding**

- Identify the level of capital and revenue funding required over the next 10 years to provide the expected standard across all parks and open spaces;
- Identify how existing and projected levels of capital and revenue funding should be best targeted to meet community requirements;
- Identify innovative, community led opportunities for investment;
- Identify how residents and communities can inform and participate in funding decisions via initiatives such as Community Budgeting and MyPark Scotland and
- Evidence the plethora of benefits associated with well maintained parks and open spaces, an example being significant opportunities for health improvement benefits accruing to the wider public sector.

#### **4.2.6 Developing a Prioritised Action Plan**

- Provide a clear action plan which indicates the key actions with clear timescales and accountabilities.

### **5. Next Steps**

5.1 A team led by LES will require to be developed comprising representation from LES, Development and Regeneration Services (DRS), Glasgow Life and the Glasgow Friends' Forum to commence the commissioning of the Parks Strategy and develop an appropriate stakeholder and public consultation approach.

5.2 It is intended to structure the work of this Strategy in three broad stages, and to undertake extensive public consultation and report back to this committee at each stage:

- Policy Framework, Community and Consultation
- Parks Classifications
- Operational issues and Funding

5.3 The proposed timeline for development of the Strategy is as follows –

Action	Date
Report to the Sustainability and the Environment Policy Development Committee detailing the purpose of the next Strategy document	26 August 2015
Report outlining a possible draft consultation process to Sustainability and the Environment Policy Development Committee	25 November 2015
Engagement with stakeholders regarding policy framework and community empowerment approach	December 2015 - February 2016
Public Consultation regarding policy framework and community empowerment approach	May - June 2016
Report policy framework and community empowerment approach to the Sustainability and the Environment Policy Development Committee	August 2016
Engagement with stakeholders regarding parks classifications	September - December 2016
Public Consultation regarding parks classifications	January - February 2017
Report regarding parks classifications to the Sustainability and the Environment Policy Development Committee	June 2017
Engagement with stakeholders regarding operational issues and funding	July - September 2017
Public Consultation regarding operational issues and funding	October - November 2017
Final Parks Strategy Report, to include policy framework, community & consultation, parks classifications, operational issues and funding, to the Sustainability and the Environment Policy Development Committee	December 2017

## 6. Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

*Financial:* The cost of developing the strategy will be met from existing budgets.

*Legal:* None at present.

*Personnel:* None at present.

*Procurement:* None at present.

**Council Strategic Plan:** Parks contribute to the sustainable development of the city by attracting business development and tourist visits.

- Economic growth
- A world class city
- A sustainable city

**Equality Impacts:**

*EQIA carried out:* An EQIA screening will be carried out as part of the next phase of this initiative.

*Outcome:* N/A

**Sustainability Impacts:**

*Environmental:* Well managed parks and open spaces contribute to the greening of the City by building on these valued assets, helping to meet our aspiration to make Glasgow one of the most sustainable cities in Europe.

*Social:* The Parks Strategy will encourage community-led management of open spaces, which will build management, leadership and practical skills within communities. Parks will form the heart of Glasgow's vibrant communities.

*Economic:* Parks contribute to the sustainable development of the city by attracting business development and tourist visits.

## 7. Recommendations

It is recommended that committee note:

- (a) the proposed scope of the new Parks Strategy and provides any comments at this stage
- (b) the strategy will cover a 10 year period from 2017-2027;
- (c) that following on from recommendations (a) & (b), a report will be brought back to the November Committee outlining a proposed consultation process so as to ensure Glasgow communities and key stakeholders are involved in the process from the outset.