

TITLE OF REPORT: WALSWORTH COMMON MANAGEMENT PLAN

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Walsworth Common is one of the largest open spaces maintained by North Herts District Council. To date this valued asset has evolved over time without a long term vision.
- 1.2 This report therefore presents a Management Plan for Walsworth Common which provides an assessment of the physical and natural environment and the use of the area and set out arrangements to preserve and enhance the area in the long term.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the new Management Plan and support the recommendations that have been identified for the next five years.

3. FORWARD PLAN

- 3.1 The recommendations in this report do not require a key decision and have not been identified in the Forward Plan.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To preserve and enhance the community asset and provision including the flora and fauna that can be found at Walsworth Common.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Due to the aspirations of the Council for its Parks and Open Spaces to improve and deliver appropriate resources to its residents the option of continuing without a Management Plan is no longer appropriate. Therefore in this instance there is no alternative option with regards the introduction of a Management Plan along the principles and best practice experiences as seen elsewhere in the District.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Walsworth Common is registered Common Land (No. CL050), and it constitutes a 9.6ha open space owned by North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC). This large green space with the River Purwell and fine mature trees provides some visual relief from the residential and industrial landscape of north-east Hitchin.
- 6.2 The formal recreational facilities include two football pitches, changing rooms, a basketball court, skateboard ramp and children's play areas.
- 6.3 The key to the further development of the Common's recreational potential and to ensure continued maintenance is the replacement of a bridge which is the sole vehicular access on to the site. This will allow vehicles to access the common from the Woolgrove Road car park. Finding funding for the new bridge is a priority task.
- 6.4 In order to commence the search for external funding and to recognise the importance of Walsworth Common the development and adoption of a Management Plan is essential.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Area Committees within their Terms of Reference may "provide local input into centrally determined specifications for all services
- 7.2 There are no specific Legal Implications.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial risks. If external grant funding can not be found the various elements within the current plans that are not completed can be rolled forward into the next management plan.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no risk implications

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1 October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5 April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.
- 10.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give **due regard** to the need to
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity) and those who do

not (this can mean removing or minimising disadvantage; meeting people's needs; taking account of disabilities; encouraging participation in public life);

- Foster good relations between those people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (such as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding).

10.3 This report provides an outline of the management plan, but in the delivery of that plan it will be essential to ensure that in the recruitment of volunteers, opportunities afforded by external grants etc, appropriate consideration of different groups and individual needs is made. This includes physical access, as well as opportunity to participate.

11. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, but an extension to an existing contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraph 11. However, at such time as the contract is required to be re-negotiated, Social Value benefits and implications will need to be assessed as part of that procurement process.

12. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this briefing note.

13. APPENDICES

13.1 Appendix A – Draft Management Plan

13.2 Appendix B – Year 1 – 2015 - 2016

13.3 Appendix C – Year 2 - 2016 - 2017

13.4 Appendix D – Year 3 – 2017 - 2018

13.5 Appendix E – Year 4 – 2018 - 2019

13.6 Appendix F – Year 5 – 2019 - 2020

13.7 Appendix G – Constraints

13.8 Appendix H – Site Description

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15. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15.1 Management Plan for Walsworth Common