

HITCHIN COMMITTEE
1 March 2016

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

9

TITLE OF REPORT: BUTTS CLOSE AND CADWELL LANE MANAGEMENT PLAN

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR PETER BURT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Butts Close and Cadwell are some of the most important open spaces maintained by North Herts District Council in Hitchin. To date these valued assets have evolved due to a long term vision high lighted in the previous management plans and Greenspace Strategy that has been successful in attracting external grant funding and empowering local volunteers to preserve and enhance the sites for the whole community.
- 1.2 This report therefore presents the next Management Plan for Butts Close and a new plan for Cadwell Lane (Appendix A and B) which provides an assessment of the physical and natural environment and the use of the area and sets out arrangements to preserve and enhance the areas in the long term.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the new Management Plans 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 assets and provision including the flora and fauna that can be found at Butts Close and Cadwell Lane.

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 to the continuation of a Management Plan along the principles and best practice experiences as seen elsewhere in the District.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Butts Close is the oldest open space in Hitchin with a long history of use stretching back to the late medieval times, when it was a sporting ground for archery. It covers 4.5 hectares (11 acres) and is owned partly by NHDC and the Hitchin Cow Commoners Trust.
- 6.2 Cadwell Lane is a 2.3 hectare (5.6 acres) open space owned by NHDC. The site, formerly an old landfill, is bordered by an industrial area to the north, residential area to the south, River Hiz and railway line to the east and Cadwell Lane to the west.
- 6.3 The action plans identify a number of aspirational elements which will require funding from external sources to deliver. If grant applications are not successful then these items will not progress to delivery.
- 6.4 The proposed Management Plans are in accordance with the Councils adopted Green Space Management Strategies policy for countryside sites: *'To support key partners such as Groundwork Hertfordshire and the Countryside Management Service to work with volunteers to deliver the actions of agreed management plans'*.

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 An assessment should be made on each individual project as to whether there are any permissions or special considerations, which need to be taken into account prior to commencement of work.

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. The none aspirational items within the action plans are already financed by existing revenue budgets

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, captured and reported alongside the procurement in due course.

12. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

13. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Butts Close
Appendix B – Cadwell Lane

14. CONTACT OFFICERS

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15. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15.1 Management Plan for Butts Close and Cadwell Lane