

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 15 OCTOBER 2015

GREEN GUARANTEE

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: LEISURE, CULTURE & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBERS: COUNCILLOR RICHARD OVERTON & COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH CLARE

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the protection of at least 100 green spaces owned by Telford & Wrekin Council as part of the Council's Green Guarantee referred to in the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan: Consultation document.
- 1.2 The Green Guarantee is to identify a range of locally important green spaces which are in the ownership of the Council and to help safeguard these sites from development which are not currently protected by other means such as Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Fields in Trust sites and Village Greens.
- 1.3 A further 50 Community Green Spaces to be included in the Green Guarantee will be identified through public consultation from December 2016.
- 1.4 The Green Guarantee will recognise the value of these areas for purposes including the provision of open space for leisure, recreation and biodiversity.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the proposal to identify and protect at least 100 green spaces and to remove the current officer delegation relating to these spaces to ensure that all decisions relating to disposals or changes of use of these are determined by Cabinet;
- 2.2 Approve the initial list of 116 green spaces as identified in Appendix 1 and to endorse the proposal that the Assistant Director for Development, Business & Employment and Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture & Facilities Management in conjunction with lead Cabinet Members to consult and progress the site boundaries and to present to a future Cabinet meeting to confirm the protection of the sites and to progress the Council's Green Guarantee Land Management Commitment;
- 2.3 Endorse the intention to bring an additional 50 (approx) areas forward for similar protection via a further public consultation at the conclusion of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

3.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Maintaining a clean, quality environment and improved green infrastructure and public realm: - Protect and enhance the green infrastructure and biodiversity of the borough
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Telford & Wrekin Council, Local Green Space Infrastructure Needs Survey (2013) states that qualitative improvements of natural green spaces would help address health and wellbeing needs.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Subject to Cabinet approval, it is proposed to bring an update report to Cabinet in March 2016 and a further report on the proposed 50 (approx.) additional public green spaces from December 2016	

FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The inclusion of a site under the Green Guarantee will not commit the Council to undertaking additional maintenance on the sites. The maintenance costs of some of the green sites are held within Service areas and currently have no budget pressures. The Service Areas will continue working in partnership with Town Councils and Parishes along with developing current and future Friends groups and local communities to ensure maintenance costs are within budget. Some sites could place restrictions on our future ability to raise capital from perimeter land sales. Any cost implications of the additional 50 sites will be quantified and included within the update report due to Cabinet in March 2016. (AEM 15/09/15).
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Cabinet is the decision making body in respect of disposals and management of Council owned land. However, some of these Cabinet disposal/management powers have been delegated to officers. This means that they can be exercised without the same publicity and member involvement as takes place when matters are reported to Cabinet. Ensuring that all significant decisions regarding the future use and ownership of the areas included in the Council's Green Guarantee list are reported to Cabinet provides a layer of transparent process-protection.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		Enhances the natural environment of the borough and contributes to the overall attractiveness of the borough that will support the local business and visitor economy.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS		Borough wide impact.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Green Guarantee is a commitment to identify at least 100 Council owned green spaces which will formally recognise areas of open space for leisure, recreation and biodiversity purposes to complement the areas of land which are currently protected by other means such as Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Fields in Trust sites and Village Greens.
- 4.2 The Green Guarantee reflects the Council's commitment to the retention of locally important green spaces which have value to local communities. It has been shown that living close to accessible green spaces can promote public health and reduce levels of obesity, heart disease, reduce stress and levels of depression¹. These green spaces also help to meet local and strategic green infrastructure needs.
- 4.3 The Green Guarantee will be delivered in two parts; 1) immediately identifying at least 100 green spaces in council ownership which have been considered by the Council as having significance and meeting a specific criteria (see 6.3); and 2) identifying a further 50 (approx.) such sites through public consultation which will begin from December 2016

5 Protection

- 5.1 The Green Guarantee proposes to identify a range of locally important green spaces which are in the ownership of the Council and to help safeguard these sites from development. The Green Guarantee work will contribute to the existing provision of green spaces which are protected from development including Local Nature Reserves, SSSI's and Village Greens. The Council will continue to seek opportunities to further protect sites such as the Fields in Trust programmes where appropriate.
- 5.2 The process of protection will see the current officer delegated authority, which covers disposal of council owned sites under £50k in value, being removed for those sites identified as part of the Green Guarantee.
- 5.3 Any future proposals for the disposal of the identified sites or indeed the potential change of use (even if they were to remain in Council ownership) will require a Cabinet approval.

¹ Our Natural Health Service: The Role of the Natural Environment in Maintaining Healthy Lives. Natural England. (2009).

5.4 Although there will be no additional resources or funding provided to manage these identified green spaces, Telford and Wrekin Council will continue to work with partners such as Town and Parish Councils, existing and new 'friends of' groups and local communities to provide the maintenance and upkeep of these important community assets.

6 Selection of sites

6.1 The initial list of at least 100 green spaces have been selected using the experience and knowledge of officers across the Local Authority including Neighbourhood & Customer Services, Housing & Policy, Parks & Open Space, Regeneration & Investment, Arts & Culture, Leisure, Culture & Facilities Management, Highways & Neighbourhood Management and Development Management. Officers have applied a set of criteria based on the value of the site to local communities, biodiversity value and leisure and recreational value evidence work undertaken as part of preparing the Local Plan

6.2 Table 1: Green Guarantee Site Selection Criteria

	Criteria	Explanation	Evidence Base
1	Ownership	Is the site owned by Telford and Wrekin Council	Telford and Wrekin land ownership datasets
2	Green Network	Is the site within the Green Network (as defined in the emerging Local Plan)	Green Network mapping 2015 as shown on the policies map within the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan: Consultation Document
3	Local Support	Has the community been involved in the site in the past? E.g. community events, litter picking, tree planting etc... .	Officer knowledge
4	Ecological Value	Does the site have ecological value evidenced by: a) Historical species records from the Shropshire Ecological Data Network b) Natural or Semi-natural habitats present on site c) Potential for wildlife to be present	a) All species records from the Shropshire Ecological Data Network April 2015 b) and c) officer knowledge and interpretation provided by Telford & Wrekin Council Planning Ecologist.
5	Ecological Corridor/Stepping Stone	Does the site form part of the Ecological Corridor or Stepping Stone as defined by the Lawton Report ²	Telford & Wrekin Council Ecological Network Mapping Technical Paper & mapping 2014
6	Friends Group	Is there an active 'Friends of' group involved on the site	Officer knowledge
7	Passive Recreation	Is the site used for passive recreation? E.g. dog walking, informal play etc... .	Officer knowledge
8	Active Recreation	Is the site used for active recreation? E.g. formal sport and more formal play including use of formal play areas, pitches and games areas etc... .	Officer knowledge
9	Cultural/Events Potential	Does the site have potential to be used for small scale community events?	Officer knowledge

6.3 Sites have been assessed against the criteria detailed in Table 1.

² Sir John Lawton. Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (2010).

6.4 The initial list of at least 100 green spaces under the Green Guarantee can be found in Appendix 1.

7 NEXT STEPS

7.1 Following Cabinet approval of the initial list of at least 100 green spaces set out in this report, consultation and engagement with local interest groups and organisations via Town & Parish Councils will commence to garner support for the identified spaces, gather any local knowledge and to clarify site information including site boundaries. The consultation will be undertaken via the Telford & Wrekin Council website and will run from Monday 2 November 2015 to 30 January 2016

7.2 The process for engaging with local communities to identify a further 50 or more community green spaces will take place following the publication of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan in December 2016. In response the Council will consider additional sites in their ownership for the Green Guarantee.

7.3 The public consultation period to identify the further 50 Community Green Spaces will commence in January 2017 and will involve engagement with stakeholders including members of the public.

7.4 Timetable for Green Guarantee work;

Milestone	Date
Cabinet approval of Green Guarantee approach and initial list of 100 Green Spaces	October 2015
Engagement with Town & Parish Councils; clarification of an initial list of at least 100 green spaces site boundaries	November 2015 – January 2016
Cabinet approval of final list of 100 green spaces	March 2016
Public Consultation on 50 additional community green spaces	January 2017
Cabinet approval of 50 community green spaces	June 2017

8 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 All members of the community should have the opportunity to benefit from the diverse range of species and habitat present in the Borough. Research has shown that improving the provision of and access to natural green space can be valuable to a wide range of groups within the community. A statement of land management for green spaces provides clarity that the Council recognises the importance of green space.

8.2 Research has shown that the public health benefits derived from living close to accessible green spaces are considerable and include decreased levels of obesity, heart disease and diabetes as well as lower levels of stress. Access to green spaces is also seen as an effective treatment for clinical depression and regular walking has been shown to increase life expectancy. Provision of accessible green spaces can help to reduce costs on some local NHS services.

9 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Full Council Report 9 July 2015 entitled Draft Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Appendix 1: List of sites for approval

1	Albion Bank, Station Hill, Oakengates
2	Albion Street (Walkway to New Street) Oakengates
3	Arleston Community Open Space (Highway View and Wrekin Retail Park)
4	Athol Drive, St Georges
5	Beeches Road Public Open Space Woodside
6	Bowring Park, Wellington
7	Brandlee Public Open Space Dawley
8	Brandon Avenue Public Open Space
9	Broad Oaks, New Trench Road, Donnington

10	Brookside Centre Pay Area
11	Capewell Road, Maple Close, Trench
12	Church Aston Playing Field
13	Churchill Drive, Ketley Bank, Ketley
14	Crescent Road Playing Field, Wellington
15	Dale End Park, Ironbridge
16	Dawley Park, Doseley Road, Dawley
17	Donnington Recreation Ground (including allotments), School Road, Donnington
18	Donnington Wood Bowling Club
19	Doseley Road Playing Pitch
20	Dothill Playing Field, Dothill
21	Edgmond Bowling Club, Edgmond
22	Edgmond Playing Field, Edgmond
23	Elms Playing Field, Stirchley
24	First Ave, Third Avenue open space and play area, Ketley Bank
25	Ford Road Open Space, Newport
26	Forest Close Public Open Space, Bratton/Dothill
27	Gatcombe Way Public Open Space
28	Gibbons Close Play Area (old Sutherland school site), Trench
29	Glovers Way Public Open Space, Bratton/Dothill
30	Grainger Drive Public Open Space, Leegomery
31	Grooms Alley Public Open Space, Wellington
32	Grove Estate, St. Georges
33	Hadley Castle Public Open Space, Pitch and Canal
34	Hadley Park Road Open Space
35	Halesfield Public Open Space, Halesfield 21
36	Hartshill Park, Oakengates
37	Harvey Crescent Play Area, Arleston
38	Hills Lane Play Area and Linear Public Open Space
39	Hollinswood Playing Field
40	Hollyhurst Road and Ashdale Road open space, Wrockwardine Wood
41	Holmer Lake Public Open Space
42	Horsehay pool
43	Hurley Brook
44	Jockey Bank Gardens
45	John Broad Avenue/Churchill Rd, Arleston
46	Ketley Bank Public Open Space, Fifth Avenue, Ketley
47	Ketley Pit Mound, Main Road, Ketley Bank
48	Ketley Recreation Ground, Station Road, Ketley
49	Lawley Village Green
50	Leegomery BMX Track, Play & Fairground, Leegate Avenue, Leegomery
51	Leegomery Pools, Leegate Avenue, Leegomery
52	Leegomery Public Open Space and Playing Field, Grainger Drive, Leegomery
53	Lilleshall Playing Field
54	Little Apley Park, Apley Avenue, Wellington
55	Longford Road Open Space, Newport
56	Madeley Ski Centre Playing Field, Madeley Court, Madeley
57	Mannerley Wood, Ridings Close, Ketley
58	Matlock Avenue, Dawley
59	Middle Pool, Trench
60	Millfieds Park, Millfields Rd, Wellington
61	Milward Mere, Newport

62	Mount Gilbert School Playing Field, Dawley
63	Nedge Hill
64	New Road, Fields between Trench and rail freight line, A518, Trench
65	Newport Cricket Club
66	Newport Showground Play Area, Newport
67	Norbroom Park
68	Oakengates Leisure Centre
69	OD Murphy Public Open Space, Orleton Lane, Orleton
70	Old Park Pool, Telford
71	Overdale Playing Field, Overdale
72	Pageant Drive Public Open Space, Aqueduct
73	Parrots Beak, Wombridge Road, Trench
74	Playing fields south of old Phoenix School site
75	Portley Road Public Open Space
76	Princes End, Lawley Bank
77	Priorslee Flash
78	Priorslee Pitmound, adjacent to Priorslee Flash, Priorslee
79	Priorslee Playing Field, Teece Drive, Priorslee
80	Randlay Avenue Public Open Space, Randlay
81	Redhill Ecology Park, St Georges
82	Regatta Playing Field, Ironbridge
83	Ringers Lane (Admaston)
84	Russell Square, Madeley
85	Saltwells Drive, Muxton
86	Shawbirch Pools, Mere Grove, Shawbirch
87	Shawbirch Spine Public Open Space, Shawbirch
88	Shuker Field, Newport
89	Snedshill (The Viewpoint), Snedshill
90	Southside Gardens, Ironbridge
91	Southwater Way, North of Isaiah's Stone, Telford
92	Station Road, Donnington
93	Stile Rise Public Open Space, Shawbirch
94	Stirchley Spine Public Open Space
95	Strine Brook, Newport
96	Sunniside, Coalbrookdale
97	Sunny Croft Public Open Space, Wellington
98	Sutton Hill Playing Field
99	Telford Town Park (None LNR)
100	The Dip, Brookside
101	The Muddy, Daddlebrook
102	The Rock Public Open Space
103	Tibberton Playing Field, Tibberton
104	Trench Community Field, Gibbons Road, Trench
105	Upper Road Play Area, Madeley
106	Victoria Park, Newport
107	Wantage Open Space, Woodside
108	Watling Community Centre, St Giles Close, Arleston
109	Wealdstone, Woodside open space
110	Wellington Road, Trench
111	Whiteway Drive Public Open Space, Shawbirch
112	Wickes Stadium Wellington Amateurs FC, Oakengates
113	Wombridge Road Green

114	Wombridge Skate Park
115	Woodhenge Public Open Space, Leegomery
116	Woodside Centre Public Open Space