

## RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

### \*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted *[if applicable]*

#### **SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Place**

#### **1. DECISION TAKEN**

To continue to use the current Greenspace Strategy because of Covid 19 and the emerging financial crisis for a further 12 months whilst the Council complete and finalise the next Greenspace Management Strategy

#### **2. DECISION TAKER**

The Executive Member for Environment and Leisure in consultation with the Service Director Place

#### **3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:**

7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

#### **4. REASON FOR DECISION**

- 4.1 Due to the impact of Covid 19 upon the financial position of the Council the development of the next Greenspace Management Strategy (GSMS) could see its aspirations potentially constrained.

#### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 The alternative option is to continue production of the GSMS to be delivered for April 2021. However, this risks raising public expectations, as a result of the consultation processes, regarding the delivery of options that may not be financially viable in the future.

#### **6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)**

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken in conjunction with the Executive Member with Political Liaison Board (PLB), Leadership Team.
- 6.2 Wider public consultation will be undertaken once the next Greenspace Strategy has been determined pending financial forecasts and contractual negotiations with our service provider John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd.

#### **7. FORWARD PLAN**

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

#### **8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

## 8.1 **Background**

The current Greenspace Management Strategy (GSMS) is due to expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and, during the interim a review and updating process has commenced.

8.2 The process was endorsed at Cabinet on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 by the Record of Decision made under Delegated Authority (as a result of the Cabinet meeting on 24 March 2020 being cancelled due to Covid-19 situation) dated 2 April 2020.

8.3 The Greenspace Strategy set out with the following aims –

- To identify sustainable and affordable principals for the short and medium term
- To identify current influences upon Greenspace and make proposals to manage them
- To identify previous achievements and propose new projects and aspirations
- To contribute and provide input into solutions in response to the pressures of development as identified within the Council's Local Plan. To enable the Council to have clear policies on adoption of any new residential developments
- To suggest alternatives that could have a beneficial environmental impact
- To encourage positive use of our Parks and Open Spaces by everyone

8.4 However, since Cabinet on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the impacts of Covid 19 have changed the financial position of the Council significantly. This has resulted in an alternative focus upon the delivery of services creating a need to undertake a review of the existing service, the standards delivered to residents and its representation of Best Value.

## **Proposal**

8.5 As such it is proposed to adjust the review of the Greenspace Strategy accordingly by progressing the following –

8.6 Agree a financial approach towards making potential green space savings by identifying a target, if possible. This will also include environmental considerations to deliver services in a different way that may also produce a financial saving.

8.7 Set up a small Project Board involving both Members and Officers. Propose the board to include the following members Cllr S Jarvis, Cllr A Ruggiero-Cakir, Vaughan Watson and Ian Couper with Andrew Mills as the Project Manager. This is not exclusive as other Councillors, Officers and individuals will be asked to attend for specific items as identified as part of the discussions.

8.8 Undertake a benchmarking process with other authorities to determine best value.

8.9 Negotiate with John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd regarding potential options to introduce climate change improvements and, if possible, at the same time financial savings and agree the next five-year term from 2022-2027.

8.10 Public consultation to be undertaken during the summer of 2021.

8.11 Project Board is to recommend to Cabinet any service changes resulting from the review of the Grounds Maintenance Contract, including the public consultation process for the five-year period from 2022–2027.

8.12 Confirm savings/budgets, revenue and capital (2022-2027) for green space (Summer 2021) and include within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

- 8.13 Based on the outcome of the above, (Project Board, consultation and finances) finalise the draft Greenspace Management Strategy and consult on the document, that will give us a clearer approach for the five year period 2022-2027 and will align with the next grounds management contract review.
- 8.14 Adopt the Greenspace Management Strategy in the Spring of 2022 for implementation in 2022.
- 8.15 In addition, the existing 2017 – 2021 strategy is extended with the fundamental principles remaining in place until April 2022 when the new Greenspace Strategy will be adopted.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Decision Taken in respect of the Cabinet Agenda – 24 March 2020 – Items 8 and 6j - Greenspace Strategy 2021 - 2026 - Scoping Document is as per the Record of Decision made under Delegated Authority (as a result of the Cabinet meeting on 24 March 2020 being cancelled due to Covid-19 situation) dated 2 April 2020:

*“(1) That it be noted that Officers are commencing a process of review, to develop the next Greenspace Management Strategy from 2021 to 2026*

- 9.2 *“(2) That the scoping document as attached at Appendix A of the report be approved.”* Section 14.6.9 of the Council’s Constitution contains the Functions and Service Responsibilities which have been delegated to the Service Director: Place. The Service Director shall exercise the following functions powers and duties except those reserved to Council, Cabinet or a Committee in relation to: (vii) Parks and Open Spaces. The Executive Members responsible for leadership, strategic planning and development, partnership working and decision making within this service area (Parks and Open Spaces) is Executive Member for Environment and Leisure.

- 9.3 This decision can therefore be made by the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure in consultation with the Service Director Place.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. The proposed delay of the GSMS will allow the opportunity for better forecasting of the revenue implications of the Ground’s Maintenance Contract arrangements in the future.
- 10.2. The next GSMS will provide identification of future capital investment opportunities for 10 years on a rolling program.
- 10.3. The delay will allow the opportunity to identify and negotiate any potential savings and their potential impacts upon the Council into the future should the Council wish to adopt them.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The key risk of allowing the existing GSMS to expire relates to the on-going negotiations with developers with regards future landscaping and public open spaces associated with new large scale developments. There will be a need to progress the Planning process which will require additional liaison between the Planning Dept and the Greenspace Service Manager to ensure cohesion and continuity between the old and new strategy documents.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 There are no additional equality implications associated with this proposal.

### 13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act does not apply to this Report.

### 14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to the actions of this report.

### 15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The review of the GSMS will require the opportunity to research the marketplace for available options which is something that will require the employment of a specialist consultant to provide the appropriate advice in a timely manner.

### 16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 Existing GSMS 2017 – 2021.

### 17. APPENDICES

17.1 None.

### NOTIFICATION DATE

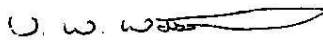
*Date sent to all Members, put on website and appears in MIS – Committee, Member & Scrutiny Services can confirm this with you,*

Signature of Executive Member Consulted:



Date: 7 December 2020

Signature of Decision Taker:



**Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.**

**Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**