

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: REVIEW OF THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY AND PARKS DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 19 AUGUST 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In March 2014 the Executive requested that officers in Corporate and Neighbourhood Services, Development Services and the Falkirk Community Trust progress the development of a strategic masterplan for the Council's parks and, in the process, update the Council's Parks Development Plan of 2008. This to be completed by December 2014.
- 1.2 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) requires Councils to take a strategic and long term approach to managing the open space in their areas, assessing both current and future needs and protecting all spaces which can help to meet them. SPP requires the preparation of an Open Space Strategy to achieve this. The Council's first Open Space Strategy was approved in April 2010 with a 5 year outlook. Accordingly, it is due for review by April 2015.

2. THE REVIEW CONTEXT

- 2.1 As the Council's Parks Development Plan was approved in advance of its Open Space Strategy, it is important to recognise that any update of the Parks Development Plan would be taking place in a different and more informed policy context. Therefore, given the closely related strategic nature of the two documents, it is recommended that the update of the Parks Development Plan takes place within the context of the overarching review of the Open Space Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An audit of open space was extended and updated in 2013 to cover 560 open spaces of different sizes and functions across the Council area. The audit is comprehensive and covers all of the open spaces of any significance within a reasonable walking distance of the people who live within the towns and villages of the Falkirk Council area. The open space audit gives a comprehensive picture of the characteristics and quality of open spaces within all towns and villages.
- 3.2 The results of the audit can be used to inform an analysis of the distribution of different types and functions of open space across the Council area. The analysis would provide an indication of need for open space improvements in different towns and villages measured against the desired standards established by the Open Space Strategy

- 3.3. In addition to the above it should be noted that Falkirk Community Trust is currently working on masterplans for the improvement of strategic sites at Muiravonside Country Park, Kinneil Estate and Callendar Park. Falkirk Council's Estates Service also intends to progress a masterplan for Zetland Park in the coming months.

4. THE REVIEW PROCESS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the review process for the Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan be taken forward by a Policy Development Panel. The remit would be for Members to review the extensive background and audit material which has been collated to date as well as wider consultation with major stakeholders on their current issues and future open space needs.
- 4.2 In addition, a Members seminar is proposed for October 2014 where the results of research work can be presented and the strategic issues relating to investment in parks and open space can be discussed.
- 4.3 Dependent on the above, a consultative draft review of the Open Space Strategy incorporating an updated Parks Development Plan could be presented to the Executive in December 2014 as requested. A report summarising the outcomes of the consultation and finalising the review could be presented in April 2015.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that the Executive:-

- a) establishes a Policy Development Panel with the remit to review the Falkirk Council Open Space Strategy and Parks Development Plan; and**
- b) instructs officers to progress an update of the Parks Development Plan within the context of the review of the Falkirk Council Open Space Strategy and, in the process, hold a Members seminar.**

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Director of Development Services

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Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services
Date: 2 July 2014

Contact Officers: Respectively, Danny Thallon Ext. 4927 and David Crighton Ext. 1107.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Falkirk Council Open Space Strategy 2010
2. Falkirk Council Parks Development Plan 2008

Any person wishing to inspect the background paper listed should contact Danny Thallon on 01324 504927.