
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 4 MARCH 2015**PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT****REPORT FROM HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES****SUBJECT: OPEN SPACES STRATEGY****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That the Open Spaces Strategy is approved.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Executive originally considered the Draft Open Spaces Strategy on 2 April 2014, on which occasion it was approved for public consultation subject to minor amendments. This decision was subsequently referred to Full Council when it was resolved that the original decision be upheld. A revised date of March 2015 was set for final approval by the Executive.
- 2.2 The finalised draft was agreed with the Portfolio Holder and the draft Strategy was then circulated for public consultation through to the end of November. This included circulation to the Town and Parish Council's and other interested parties and publication on the Council's website.
- 2.3 The finalised strategy, picking up the issues raised during the public consultation process, is at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Details of the consultation responses and associated amendments are shown in Appendix 2.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 There is an alternative of not working to a strategy and managing the open spaces on an individual basis. This could result in differing priorities and a lack of clarity as to how open spaces should be managed.

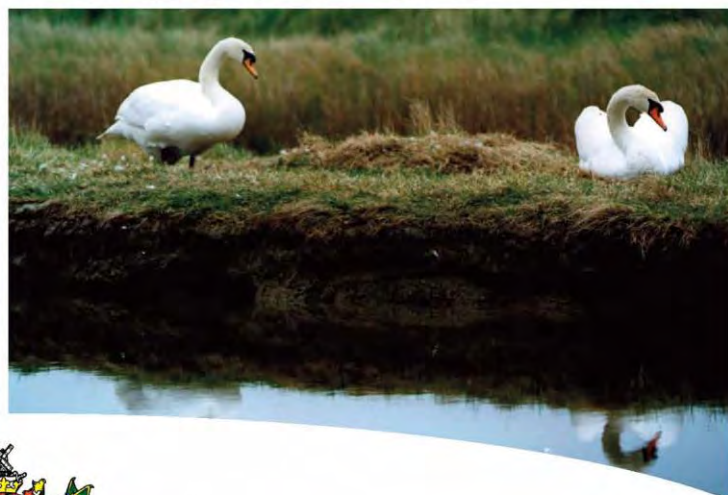
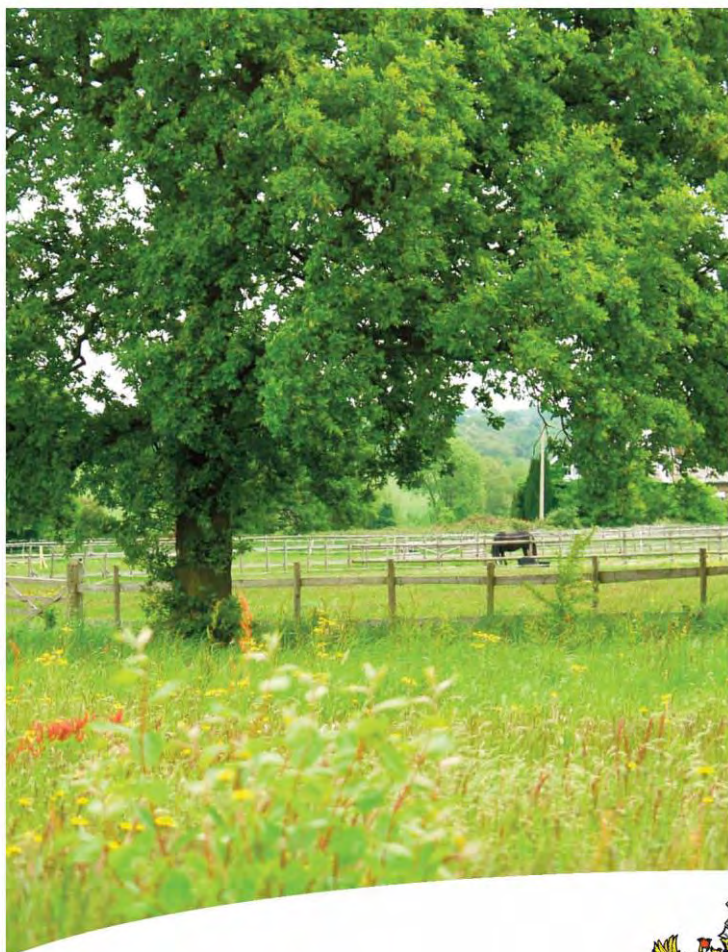
4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An overarching Open Spaces Strategy will ensure that a comprehensive approach is adopted for the management of risks.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no additional resource implications arising from this strategy. It will provide a clear framework for current expenditure and encourage more focus on external funding opportunities.

Open Spaces Strategy



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1 Introduction

The strategy covers many open spaces within the district, from major tracts of green space to small pockets of open space. The strategy is important as it seeks to ensure that open space supports communities, the enhancement of the health and well-being of residents, and the biodiversity of the district.

It sets out to ensure that open space in Rochford district meets the needs of all who live and work, or visit the district, provides a satisfactory environment for nature, and enhances the local streetscape, complementing the built environment.

Why an Open Spaces Strategy?

The need for an Open Spaces strategy has arisen from the growing recognition of the importance of outdoor activity as a key contributor to a healthy lifestyle. Open spaces underpin people's quality of life and are fundamental to delivering the broader objectives of supporting social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well-being and promoting more sustainable development.

It is recognised that open spaces can make our towns and villages better places in which to live, and the role of planning in ensuring that there are sufficient of them, and that they are in the right places. They also need to be of high quality, attractive to use and well managed and maintained. The focus on concentrating development within existing towns makes open spaces attractive for development, and therefore they need to be safeguarded by the planning system.

2 Vision

The purpose of this strategy is to provide an overview of open space provision in Rochford District. Furthermore, establishing a clear framework and direction will not only benefit the council, but it will also help to promote the benefits of open space and raise awareness to the wider public. In view of this, the over-arching vision for this strategy is:

'To deliver a good quality and accessible network of green spaces and street scenes for people to enjoy which provides for healthy recreation and biodiversity and which meets the needs of our communities, attracting visitors and boosting the local economy – above all, a District that is a beautiful and interesting place to live, work and visit, both now and for future generations.'

'The focus will be on preserving and joining the various assets of Rochford Districts' landscape – its woodland, farmland, lowland marsh, creeks and mud flats, towns and villages.'

3 Aims of the Strategy

The aims are reflected in four broad themes:

Community and Wildlife

Meeting the needs of our Communities and Wildlife

We will engage with people and increase users of green space and numbers of volunteers. We will make open spaces feel welcoming to use by all sections of the community. We will increase the number of people, of all ages, participating in active recreation/active life styles. We will protect and enhance green spaces and corridors wherever possible for biodiversity, landscape value and heritage.

Finance

Minimise running costs, whilst maximising value for money in what we do

We will identify opportunities for increasing income through open spaces, entering new external partnerships, seeking to encourage visitors to the Rochford District to help boost visitor economy. We will maximise external funding to invest in our green spaces, and proactively plan our service, ensuring that work is properly prioritised, managed and resourced.

Open Spaces Team's Ability to Get Things Done

Building the capabilities of staff, partners and the community to deliver the challenges ahead

We will ensure that staff have the correct knowledge and capabilities to deliver the service to a high standard and are working to their best of their ability. We will support our green volunteering economy and encourage new volunteering opportunities. We will engage with the local community groups and continue support for Friends Groups.

Operational

Providing green spaces that are clean, safe and welcoming

We will ensure that all RDC sites are maintained to a high standard. We will manage our key sites in line with site management plans and update on a five year cycle. We will ensure that ethos used in maintaining the park or green space and its facilities will be environmentally sound seeking to demonstrate sustainable management.

4 The “Value” of Public Open Space

Good quality green spaces generate enormous social, economic, environmental and ecological benefits.

Parks and green spaces are essential to our towns and villages. Decent parks and green spaces not only contribute to a higher quality of physical environment, but also contribute to the health and well-being of local residents as a network of spaces.

The Economic Value of Open Space

A large body of evidence exists that supports a view that investment in improving green space has a positive effect. In particular, improving the aesthetic quality of place (visual amenity) increases land and property prices. Having a well-managed green space nearby was found to result in average property premiums of 2.6% to 11.3%.

The Health Benefits of Open Space

‘Obesity already costs more in public health terms, and will overtake smoking as Britain’s biggest killer in 10-15 years if current trends persist’.

This increase in obesity is linked to ever more sedentary lifestyles and a reduction in outdoor activity. Growing medical evidence shows that access to the natural environment improves health and wellbeing, prevents disease and helps people recover from illness. Experiencing nature in the outdoors can help tackle childhood obesity, coronary heart disease, stress and mental health problems.

For people experiencing anxiety or stress, studies indicate that certain types of nature scenes quickly foster more positive feelings and promote beneficial changes in physiological systems for instance, blood pressure

Over the last decade there has been a shift in the health agenda towards promoting healthy lifestyle behaviour and choices. There has also been recognition of the role the environment can play in enhancing health.

Parks provide spaces where people can get some fresh air, go for a walk, play football, exercise or just enjoy the surroundings. Unfortunately those living in more deprived communities, who tend to have poorer health and suffer from the kind of illnesses that can be alleviated by regular exposure to green spaces, are also less likely to have good access to high quality parks and green.

A Place for Sport

Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, to play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment. In other words, our open spaces are a powerful weapon in the fight against obesity and ill-health.

Promoting Neighbourliness and Social Inclusion

The open spaces near our homes give us a valuable place to socialise with our neighbours, whether chatting over the garden fence or meeting in the local park. However, quality counts: the better the design of the space in question, the better the quality of the social experience. Free, accessible flexible and inclusive local parks provide an important “social space” and are used by a broader spectrum of users than most other cultural services.

Ecology, Nature and Biodiversity

Parks and urban green space provide valuable natural habitats for all forms of wildlife. The ecological value of urban green space varies significantly according to its type and the way it is managed. However, all green space has a higher ecological value than the surrounding streets and hard landscape areas.

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth: the myriad species of plants and animals and the range of habitats where they live. It includes the range of natural genetic variations within species. Over 150 nations signed up to protecting biodiversity at the Rio Earth Summit 1992. In 2010, having reviewed the available evidence, a report from the ICUN concluded that a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss has not been achieved.

Air Quality

The plant life and trees found within urban parks and green space play an important role in improving the air quality in urban environments and reducing pollutants. A large tree can help lower carbon emissions in the atmosphere by 2-3%.

The plants and trees which are found in green spaces play an important role in improving air quality and reducing pollutants. Trees naturally absorb carbon dioxide through photosynthesis and can also help to absorb nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and sulphur from the atmosphere.

Water and Flood Management

The soil system and vegetation that covers areas of green space is highly permeable, and capable of soaking up even substantial rainfall. By soaking up water and recharging natural groundwater supplies, green space reduces the volume and rate of run-off and greatly contributes to a more sustainable urban drainage situation. By ensuring that river flood plains are conserved as green space, this increased pressure is avoided.

5 Community and Wildlife

Meeting the needs of our Communities and Wildlife

5.1 We will engage with people and increase users of green space and numbers of volunteers by implementing a publicity plan.

We will:

- (a) Investigate our customer base, identify users and non-users and their needs.
- (b) Develop a formalised publicity plan (to include events, stories, wildlife sightings, volunteer activity and projects, site news).
- (c) Work with our partners, such as Rayleigh in Bloom, on targeted promotional initiatives.
- (d) Aim for regular items to be sent to target publications.
- (e) Consider the use of Quick Response (QR) tags on signage and notice boards to enable smartphone apps to access up-to-date events and news information.
- (f) Participate in corporately produced material and online promotions (e.g. Rochford District Matters, Social Media etc.).

5.2 Ensure that where appropriate, new development includes adequate provision of a range of high quality public spaces to meet the needs of the community.

We will:

- (a) Review the findings of the Rochford District Council Open Spaces Strategy 2009 and develop a plan to address deficiencies in provision.
- (b) Investigate the need for a more detailed design specification for all green spaces which could be used internally and by developers.
- (c) Ensure the Open Spaces team has early involvement in planning applications to influence the creative design of urban landscapes.
- (d) Develop a strategic approach to identifying needs and opportunities for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions across the District.
- (e) Produce a strategic core policy on green space/green infrastructure and detailed Development Management policies on open space provision and nature conservation.
- (f) Adopt planning policies that facilitate the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and open space, as well as the creation of new biodiversity areas in development schemes.

- 5.3 Seek to sell poorer quality open space, with the view to generating the capital required to acquire additional open space that offers better strategic opportunity to contribute to the network of green spaces.

We will:

- (a) Identify poor quality sites of low potential and assess feasibility and value of sale of land.
- (b) Identify strategic parcels of land for acquisitions better suited for the creation of quality open spaces.

- 5.4 Seek Green Flag status for key Green spaces and actively seek accreditation for eligible sites which recognise the quality of Green Spaces.

We will:

- (a) Measure key sites against the Green Flag standard to ensure they meet the agreed quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards.
- (b) Develop fully costed development plans for each site;
- (c) Seek and secure the relevant external funding to develop and promote flagship sites.

- 5.5 Ensure that Green Spaces are easily accessed and do not prevent or restrict access for legitimate users.

We will:

- (a) Assess access arrangements to all open spaces and ensure that they are adequately sign posted.
- (b) Review the access licences in place in respect of all open spaces in order to ensure consistency and that our landlord rights are protected.
- (c) Undertake a full Disability Discrimination Act access audit of all sites and develop any necessary improvement plans.
- (d) Incorporate recognised access standards as developed by the Fieldfare Trust into development guidelines for Supplementary Planning Guidance into creation of new Green Spaces.

- 5.6 Make open spaces feel safer to use by all sections of the countryside making open space environments less intimidating and addressing anti-social behaviour through design.

We will:

- (a) Introduce new Bye laws for all open spaces that include appropriate control of nuisance activities.
- (b) Work with our Community Safety partners to address ongoing issues of anti-social behaviour.

- (c) Ensure all staff, contractors and directly appointed volunteers working on our green spaces are clearly identified with a corporate style of clothing and are subject to appropriate checks. Concerns identified by volunteers would be reported to Council officers.
- (d) Reduce the fear of crime through improved design. Ensuring designs do not include narrow 'corridor' areas of landscape and contains site line that are kept clear, with a particular focus on avoiding low branches and high hedges.

5.7 Increase the number of people participating in active recreation/active life styles.

We will:

- (a) Continue to engage in partnership arrangements with local sports clubs operating on the Council's green spaces to ensure local residents have access to the widest range of quality sports opportunities.
- (b) Enter into an ongoing dialogue with Health & Wellbeing partners in respect of green spaces to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided in suitable locations to inspire all age groups to be active.
- (c) Strive to provide facilities that meet the required Football Association standards for grassroots football.
- (d) Consider opportunities for providing facilities for older people including petanque, outdoor gyms etc.
- (e) Encourage community groups and volunteers to provide community events on the Council's green spaces.

5.8 Provide a greater range of facilities for teenagers and young people, including a greater range of recreation opportunities and designated areas for hanging out.

We will:

- (a) Not introduce further teen facilities unless there is an agreement established with the local community to assist with on-going maintenance obligations.
- (b) Improve the provision of spaces for meeting and congregation to promote social interaction such as picnic areas, seating areas and built facilities where appropriate.

5.9 Manage green spaces wherever possible in order to protect and enhance biodiversity for current and future generations to enjoy and learn.

We will:

- (a) Actively manage woodland habitats, undertaking coppicing in order to promote a range of native plant species.
- (b) Establish traditional grazing and hay cutting regimes on green spaces wherever appropriate to best manage sites while taking into account costs and possible returns.

- (c) Consider impact on biodiversity in all green space management including planting schemes.
- (d) Seek to attain additional designations where appropriate for green spaces in order to stress their importance and value to local people, for example, Local Nature Reserve and Wildlife Site status.
- (e) Manage and enhance areas of regionally scarce and important woodland at Betts Wood, Hockley Woods, New England Woods and Rawreth Hall Woods.
- (f) Where appropriate, seek to restore habitat and improve wildlife value of some areas traditionally managed as amenity green space.
- (g) Arrange for surveys of and the monitoring of parks, green spaces and green corridors and their species including those in the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan.

5.10 Ensure green space is retained for more indirect environmental benefits.

We will:

- (a) Promote the maintenance, good design and implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems for developments, to ensure that the quality and level of green space provision is not compromised.
- (b) Work with key stakeholders to address the legal requirement to reduce flood risk from Nobles Green ditch whilst seeking to minimise its environmental impact.

5.11 Seek to create and protect green corridors that promote active travel between open spaces, and redress fragmentation of the green infrastructure and network.

We will:

- (a) Prepare a Tree and Woodland Strategy.
- (b) Develop a Biodiversity Opportunity Map highlighting key green corridors and core areas of biodiversity with a view to formalising as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- (c) Seek to influence management of neighbouring areas where there is a direct benefit to wildlife value (e.g. co-ordinated control of invasive species or extending wildlife corridors).
- (d) Develop and support a Wildlife Forum to oversee the development of a strategy and the preparation of plans at a local level for biodiversity, local ecological networks

- 5.12 Continue to protect and enhance the Roach Valley Living Landscape, its natural and historic landscape and character, as well as its value for biodiversity.

We will:

- (a) In consultation with user groups and the local community develop a schematic action plan to support the draft Living Landscape Vision Document.
- (b) Seek and secure the relevant external funding to develop and promote the Roach Valley Living Landscape.

6 Finance

Minimise running costs, whilst maximising value for money in what we do.

Identify opportunities for increasing income through provision of services from our open spaces.

We will:

- (a) Identify opportunities for selling firewood, chippings, mulch etc.
- (b) Identify opportunities for sponsorship through advertising.
- (c) Promote the opportunity for hiring buildings to green spaces users.
- (d) Review opportunities for introducing car parking charges at other sites.
- (e) Promote the memorial tree scheme as a means of enhancing the Council's tree stock.

6.1 Investigate opportunities to provide new external partnerships, developing the service to visitors.

We will:

- (a) Make provision for improved catering arrangements at Hockley Woods.
- (b) Implement new initiatives such as circus skills workshops, woodcrafts, bouncy castles, outdoor adventure skills, fitness classes and artificial ice-rinks at appropriate sites.
- (c) Investigate the potential to introduce cafes and other revenue generating activities at Hockley Woods and Cherry Orchard Country Park.

6.2 Identify opportunities for increasing income through hiring green spaces for externally run events.

We will:

- (a) Ensure that all suitable sites are licensed for events which appeal to the community as a whole.
- (b) Ensure the charges and conditions are regularly reviewed.
- (c) Aim to achieve additional income from events each year through supporting carefully targeted income generation opportunities. Ensure these meet the needs of our community and take into account the needs of regular users.

6.3 Encourage visitors to the Rochford District to help boost visitor economy and obtain the best return on income generating sites.

We will:

- (a) Encourage economic growth by maximising visitor experience to the towns by providing innovative planting schemes, ensuring frontage of parks and verges at the District boundary of main routes are maintained to a very high standard.
- (b) Develop exceptional visitor attractions at Hockley Woods and Cherry Orchard Country Park.
- (c) Cherry Orchard Country Park Outdoor Centre Project:
 - Identify and work with local partners to develop visitor provision.
 - Improve outdoor facilities including play area, possible water park etc.
 - Develop building resources in order to add to visitor experience.
 - Develop a plan for expanding and charging for car parking.
- (d) Hockley Woods Project:
 - Identify and work with local partners to enhance visitor provision.
 - Examine the feasibility of relocating the play area at Hockley Woods, in order to enable additional parking spaces to be created, with further ‘natural’ play equipment installed within the woodland setting.
 - Maintain and improve building resources in order to add to visitor experience.
 - Proactively engage with new catering franchises to develop service and increase income.
 - Seek to acquire the woodland and car park at Bullwood Hall, with the long-term aim of introducing new activities, which could be funded from car parking revenue and/or income from a leisure partner.

6.4 Maximise external funding to invest in our green spaces

We will:

- (a) Continue to encourage volunteer groups to apply for external funding to improve the value of our green spaces.
- (b) Continue to seek contributions from developers to improve the value of our green spaces.
- (c) Identify methods of funding for the improvement plan (Community Infrastructure Levy, external grant, and/or capital budget).

6.5 Proactively plan our service, ensuring that work is properly prioritised, managed and resourced.

We will:

- (a) Ensure that all major sites have Management Plans which are reviewed on a five year basis.

- (b) Produce and implement work programmes linked to the site management plans. Ensure replacement plans are produced on time.
- (c) Annually review investment priorities for capital and external funding.
- (d) Ensure an annual programme of revenue works (i.e. repairs, renewals, drainage etc.) is developed and approved before each new financial year.
- (e) Ensure all projects are co-ordinated with a unified plan to ensure that the necessary staff and financial resources are available.
- (f) Monitor budgets monthly and produce quarterly progress reports and achieve external funding for key projects.
- (g) Deliver the plan area rationalisation programme to reduce investment in out-dated and under-used play equipment whilst focusing on key sites offering high play value.
- (h) Review the provision of green spaces in parished areas to identify isolated sites where Parish Councils or third parties may be better funded to support them.
- (i) Ensure internal recharges from other departments reflect the true value of provision.

6.6 Work to reduce the cost of managing and maintaining green spaces while maintaining the quality of the areas.

We will:

- (a) In conjunction with the Review Committee, review the Council's sports provision in open spaces including the pavilions and possible improvements.
- (b) Wherever possible, implement design principles for lowest cost maintenance while maintaining quality landscapes.
- (c) Encourage volunteer groups to adopt sites, especially in residential areas to take ownership of their local green space and get involved with physical tasks.
- (d) Identify further opportunities for working in partnership with other local authorities in the region.

6.7 Ensure that all new Green Spaces will be transferred by the developer to a private management company. All future maintenance will be carried out by this organisation and the developer will make sure that they are provided with adequate funding.

We will:

- (a) Investigate the models of transfer to Trusts, ensuring long-term sustainability and standard of open spaces are maintained.
- (b) Seek to establish arms length trading organisation to allow the Council the ability to offer cost-effective service to new Trusts.

- 6.8 Reduce risk of tree-related insurance claims through pro-active audited inspections, and where appropriate, planned maintenance.

We will

- (a) Establish which sites and the number of trees which may pose a risk.
- (b) Pro-actively carry out a phased programme of works to prune high risk trees and reduce water demand.
- (c) Include the principle of 'Right Tree Right Place' in Planning Policy.

7 Open Space Team’s Ability to Get Things Done

Building the capabilities of staff, partners and the community to deliver the challenges ahead

7.1 Ensure that staff have the correct knowledge and capabilities to deliver the service to a high standard.

We will:

- (a) Review staff and contractors qualifications and training.
- (b) Ensure training needs are identified on personal development plans and priority training needs addressed.
- (c) Review current work operations to identify whether they are best managed under in-house, contractual or volunteer arrangements.
- (d) Train staff to Green Flag standards to allow internal measurement of quality standards for all appropriate sites.
- (e) Ensure specific staff are sufficiently trained to update social media logs, update of static information on the Council’s website.

7.2 Ensure that staff are working to their best of their ability.

We will:

- (a) Undertake regular monthly review meeting with all staff and recruited volunteers.
- (b) Undertake Annual Performance Reviews for all staff and recruited volunteers.

7.3 Support our green volunteering economy by developing a model for working with volunteers.

We will:

- (a) Identify key areas where volunteer involvement can provide a clear benefit to the Council
- (b) Ensure that opportunities for directly appointed volunteers are maximised.
- (c) Ensure the internal organisation of the department is structured to support a growing volunteer force, including opportunities for work experience.
- (d) Develop our policy of best practice with volunteers and co-ordinate and expand a large network of volunteers to help manage and maintain our green spaces and run community and educational events.
- (e) Develop the Council’s Volunteering Policy to cover aspects such as induction, training, supervision.

7.4 Encourage new volunteering opportunities.

We will:

- (a) Develop a model for green space volunteering along with a contract of engagement and clear health and safety and insurance guidelines.
- (b) Develop a volunteer incentives programme, including skills training and personal development.
- (c) Investigate the potential of providing a volunteer discount card.
- (d) Look to provide more volunteering opportunities at weekends.

7.5 Engage with the local community and user groups on proposals which change the use of or significantly alter the appearance of parks and open spaces.

We will:

- (a) Work with Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park to assist with active site maintenance, visitor welcome, consultation and fundraising potential.
- (b) Liaise with CVS and other organisations to encourage new volunteering opportunities and to encourage a more diverse range of volunteers.
- (c) Recruit and develop volunteers to assist in the management and specified patrol functions of sites.

7.6 Continue support for existing Friends Groups and encourage the establishment of new groups and partnerships that wish to help in improving their local parks.

We will:

- (d) Develop management plans for sites in close consultation with Friends groups.
- (e) Create Friends of Hockley Woods, giving support to set up and run an independent constituted group.

7.7 Look to work closely with partners to maximise capacity, and volunteering and training opportunities.

We will:

- (a) Continue and support the partnership with SEETEC offering opportunity for those seeking to get back to work.
- (b) Develop work programme across the Council. Create and promote projects suitable for Corporate Volunteer Days.
- (c) Continue and Develop links with Colleges to offer work placements.

7.8 Succession planning of service provision will be undertaken.

We will:

- (a) Develop Apprenticeship schemes to cover key areas of the service.

- (b) Further develop the Career Matrix approach to staff posts to encourage staff development and retention.

8 Operational

Providing green spaces that are clean, safe and welcoming

8.1 Ensure that all sites, within council control, have a documented and scheduled maintenance standard which is adhered to across all sites.

We will:

- (a) Maintain areas to comply with the Grounds Maintenance Standards.
- (b) Develop a formalised grounds maintenance inspection schedule.
- (c) Develop a more formalised programme for inspection, repairs and replacement of infrastructure such as footpaths, steps, painting, seat replacement, bins, small landscape enhancements and fencing.
- (d) Develop a formalised plan for the maintenance and improvement of buildings, walls and lighting within green spaces
- (e) Integrate 20 year property maintenance plans and secure appropriate funding for maintenance and repairs, to ensure the long term protection of buildings and infrastructure.
- (f) Seek funding on an annual basis for the refurbishment of Council owned and managed play areas and sports facilities such as tennis courts and football pitches.

8.2 Seek to retain and maintain park and open space original features wherever possible if their use is consistent with the current uses of the park or open space.

We will:

- (a) Develop a programme of infrastructure repairs and small landscape enhancements.

8.3 Ensure that sites are maintained in a clean condition and that graffiti found on park buildings and equipment is removed promptly.

We will:

- (a) Ensure all high amenity sites are visited weekly for litter picking and bin emptying and more regularly for popular sites.
- (b) Run an annual anti-litter campaign to stress the issues surrounding litter.
- (c) Address reports on issues of littering within a period of two working days.
- (d) Address reports of all broken glass, and dog excrement upon pavements, within a period of one working day.
- (e) Escalate reports of graffiti to the street cleansing team within one working day.

- (f) Implement a programme for the clearing of algae from park infrastructure such as signs, bins, benches and play equipment.
- (g) Treat moss, which causes slipperiness on hard surfaces, in particularly play areas and sports surfaces on an annual basis.
- (h) Ensure that toilet facilities are regularly cleaned.

8.4 Reduce the possibility of accidents to our staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors on green spaces by carrying out safe working practices that are supported by regular recorded inspections and risk assessments.

We will:

- (a) Standardise an electronic inspection system which enables mobile reporting and rapid response to issues.
- (b) Incorporate all countryside trees and woodland areas into the Council's tree management system.
- (c) Ensure that all children's play areas are inspected at least once every week and more often if it is a very popular play space.
- (d) Ensure grave memorials are inspected at least every five years and that the results are acted upon.
- (e) Ensure that there is a site risk assessment for each key green space site and review whenever major changes occur.
- (f) Support investigations into the use of customer reporting applications by mobile phone.
- (g) Address health and safety issues on Council owned and managed play areas and commit to appropriate levels of funding. Proactively seek opportunities for external funding for such projects.
- (h) Seek to involve all operatives and contractors in the development of Health & Safety standards.
- (i) Complete and regularly review risk assessments, method statements and procedures for all operational works on Open Space's sites.
- (j) Ensure that tools and machinery are routinely maintained and equipment is regularly service to a safe standard.

8.5 Review signage leading to and within parks and green spaces and seek to provide signage that is informative, relevant and appropriate to the location.

We will:

- (a) Utilize signage to encourage local people to report issues relating to anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, intimidating groups, littering and dog fouling.
- (b) Introduce updated and relevant byelaws to regulate the use of open spaces.

- (c) Clearly publicise the key byelaws at our sites.
- (d) Ensure notice boards are placed in all key green spaces.
- (e) Keep notice boards up to date with relevant information including ownership and contact details.

8.6 We will:

- (a) Not increase the number of parks and green spaces that are opened and closed daily, unless there is an agreement established with the local community to participate or contribute towards this activity.
- (b) Ensure that all contract works are fully and clearly specified and ensure that the responsibilities of each partner are understood.
- (c) Ensure that regular contract review meetings are scheduled and recorded.
- (d) Use a standard method for reviewing new work requests. A pro forma should be used to ensure work is relevant to the strategy, achievable and cost effective.
- (e) Develop a computerised system for green space maintenance and management.
- (f) Carry out scheduled inspections of sites to ensure that contractors are meeting standards set and that work is carried out in a timely way.

8.7 Provide effective customer service.

We will:

- (a) Investigate the use of a call logging system to manage customer queries more efficiently.
- (b) Investigate the feasibility of an online mapping system to enable all parks and countryside staff to view maintenance regimes, therefore offering precise and timely information to customers at the time of enquiry.

8.8 Manage our key sites in line with site management plans and update on a five year cycle.

We will:

- (a) Ensure that all major sites have Management Plans which are reviewed on a five year basis.
- (b) Produce and implement work programmes linked to the site management plans. Ensure replacement plans are produced as necessary.

8.9 Ensure that ethos used in maintaining the park or green space and its facilities will be environmentally sound seeking to demonstrate sustainable management.

We will:

- (a) Minimise pesticide use through mulching, pruning and diseased/damaged growth and selecting pest/disease resistant plants.
- (b) Use recycled green waste for soil conditioning and mulching.
- (c) Maximise the capacity for grey water collection and re-use in watering.
- (d) Identify opportunities for changing existing planting to drought tolerant planting schemes.
- (e) Seek to control invasive plants and injurious weeds in line with current best practice.

9 Action Plan

Community and Wildlife – Meeting the needs of our Communities and Wildlife

9.1 We will engage with people and increase users of green space and numbers of volunteers by implementing a publicity plan.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Investigate our customer base, identify users and non-users needs.	Completed User Surveys	October 2015	Community Open Spaces Officer
	Non user market testing undertaken identifying barriers to use	March 2015	
(b) Develop a formalised publicity plan (to include events, stories, wildlife sightings, volunteer activity and projects, site news).	Three year publicity plan in place	February 2015	Communications Officer
(c) Work with our partners, such as Rayleigh in Bloom, on targeted promotional initiatives.	Rayleigh in Bloom achieves award	On-going	Open Spaces Officer
(d) Aim for regular items to be sent to target publications.	One successful press release per quarter	Oct 2014	Community Open Spaces Officer
(e) Consider the use of QR tags on signage and notice boards to enable smartphone apps to access up-to-date events and news information	QR tags in regular use	Sept 2017	Principal Open Spaces Officer

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(f) Participation in corporately produced material and online promotions (e.g. Rochford District Matters, Social Media etc.)	Two articles produce per year	Oct 2014	Community Open Spaces Officer

9.2 Ensure that where appropriate, new development includes adequate provision of a range of high quality public spaces to meet the needs of the community.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Review the findings of the Rochford District Council Open Spaces Strategy 2009 and develop a plan to address deficiencies in provision.	Plan Produced for Executive approval	Dec 2015	Assistant Director - Environment
	Net increase in open space provision	Dec 2017	
(b) Investigate the need for a more detailed design specification for all green spaces which could be used internally and by developers.	Design Brief document produced and available on website	Feb 2016	Assistant Director - Planning
(c) Ensure the Open Spaces team has early involvement in planning applications to influence the creative design of urban landscapes.	Design Brief document produced and available on website	Feb 2016	Assistant Director - Planning
(d) Develop a strategic approach to identifying needs and opportunities for CIL contributions across the District.	CIL contributions identified and secured	May 2016	Assistant Director- Planning

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(e) Produce a strategic core policy on green space/green infrastructure and detailed Development Management policies on open space provision and nature conservation.	Relevant Policies in place, net gain in open spaces provision.	June 2016	Assistant Director - Planning
(f) Adopt planning policies that facilitate the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and open space, as well as the creation of new biodiversity areas in development schemes.	Net gain in Priority Biodiversity Habitat across District. No net loss in designated Wildlife Sites.	June 2016	Assistant Director - Planning

- 9.3 Seek to sell poorer quality open space, with the view to generating the capital required to acquire additional open space that offers better strategic opportunity to contribute to the network of green spaces.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Identify poor quality sites of low potential and assess feasibility and value of sale of land.	List of sites produced suitable for consideration for disposal.	January 2016	Assistant Director - Commercial
(b) Identify strategic parcels of land for acquisitions better suited for the creation of quality open spaces.	List of sites produced for consideration for acquisition.	January 2016	Assistant Director - Environment

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- 9.4 Seek Green Flag status for key Green spaces and actively seek accreditation for eligible sites under schemes which recognise the quality of Green Spaces.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Measure key sites against the Green Flag standard to ensure they meet the agreed quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards.	Mock Green Flag assessments completed for all key sites.	Dec 2015	Open Spaces Officer
(b) Develop fully costed development plans for each key site;	Costed plans identifying works required to achieve green flag	Mar 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(c) Seek and secure the relevant external funding to develop and promote flagship sites.	One green flag award for open space	Apr 2018	Assistant Director - Environment

- 9.5 Ensure that Green Spaces are easily accessed and do not prevent or restrict access for legitimate users.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Assess access arrangements to all open spaces and ensure that they are adequately sign posted.	Clear signage provided at all sites	Mar 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(b) Review the access licences in place in respect of all open spaces in order to ensure consistency and that out landlord rights are protected.	Assess rights regulated and consistent fees charged	Mar 2016	Assistant Director – Legal Services

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(c) Undertake DDA access audit of all open spaces and play areas, and develop any necessary improvement plans.	DDA audit completed	Mar 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer
(d) Incorporate recognised access standards as developed by the Fieldfare Trust into development guidelines for Supplementary Planning Guidance into creation of new Green Spaces.	Supplementary Guidance in place.	Sept 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer, Forward Planning

- 9.6 Make open spaces feel safer to use by all sections of the countryside making open space environments less intimidating and addressing anti-social behaviour through design.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Introduce new Byelaws for all open spaces that include appropriate control of nuisance activities.	New Byelaws published	Summer 2015	Assistant Director - Legal Services
(b) Work with our Community Safety partners to address ongoing issues of anti-social behaviour.	Anti-social behaviour minimised	On-going	Open Spaces Team

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(c) Ensure all staff, contractors, and directly appointed volunteers working on our green spaces are clearly identified with a corporate style of clothing and are subject to appropriate checks. Concerns identified by volunteers would be reported to Council officers.		On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(d) Reduce the fear of crime through improved design. Ensuring designs do not include narrow ‘corridor’ areas of landscape and contains vistas kept clear with a particular focus on avoiding low branches and high hedges.	Rolling programme of clearance upon existing sites, increased scores on ‘welcoming criteria’ for green flag.	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer

9.7 Increase the number of people participating in active recreation/active life styles.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Continue to engage in partnership arrangements with local sports clubs operating on the Council’s green spaces to ensure local residents have access to the widest range of quality sports opportunities.	Local choice	On-going	Assistant Director - Commercial

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(b) Enter into an ongoing dialogue with Health & Wellbeing partners in respect of green spaces to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided in suitable locations to inspire all age groups to be active.	Contribution made to healthier lifestyles	Nov 2015	Assistant Director - Commercial
(c) Strive to provide facilities that meet the required Football Association standards for grass root football.	All pitches Grade 1 or 2 standard.	Oct 2015	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(d) Consider opportunities for providing facilities for older people including petanque, outdoor gyms etc.	Contribution made to healthier lifestyles	Apr 2015	Assistant Director - Commercial
(e) Encourage community groups and volunteers to provide community events on the Council's green spaces.	Co-ordinated events programme	On-going	Community Open Spaces Officer

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- 9.8 Provide a greater range of facilities for teenagers and young people, including a greater range of recreation opportunities and designated areas for hanging out.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Not introduce further teen facilities unless there is an agreement established with the local community to assist with on-going maintenance obligations.	No budget growth	On-going	Assistant Director - Legal
(b) Improve the provision of spaces for meeting and congregation to promote social interaction such as picnic areas, seating areas and built facilities where appropriate.	Incorporate into site development plans into key sites	Dec 2015	Principal Open Spaces Officer

- 9.9 Manage green spaces wherever possible in order to protect and enhance biodiversity for current and future generations to enjoy and learn.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Actively manage woodland habitats, undertaking coppicing in order to promote a range of native plant species.	Active management of all woodland sites	On-going	Operational Open Spaces Officer

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(b) Establish traditional grazing and hay cutting regimes on green spaces wherever appropriate to best manage sites while taking into account costs and possible returns.	Traditional management on all appropriate wildlife sites	Dec 2015	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(c) Consider impact on biodiversity in all green space management including planting schemes.		On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(d) Seek to attain additional designations where appropriate for green spaces in order to stress their importance and value to local people, for example, Local Nature Reserve and Wildlife Site status.	Wildlife Site status gained for at least two Green Spaces	Jun 2017	Assistant Director - Environment
(e) Manage and enhance areas of regionally scarce and important woodland at Betts Wood, Hockley Woods, New England Woods and Rawreth Hall Woods.	Sites in 'Favourable Condition'	Mar 2018	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(f) Where appropriate, seek to restore habitat and improve wildlife value of some areas traditionally managed as amenity green space.	10 ha of semi-natural habitat replacing formal amenity grassland	Sept 2018	Assistant Director - Environment

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(g) Arrange for surveys of and the monitoring of parks, green spaces and green corridors and their species including those in the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan.		On-going	Open Spaces Supervisor

9.10 Ensure green space is retained for more indirect environmental benefits.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Promote the good design and implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems for new developments to ensure that the quality and level of green space provision is not compromised.	Design Brief document produced and available on website	Feb 2016	Assistant Director - Planning
(b) Work with key stakeholders to address the legal requirement to reduce flood risk from Nobles Green ditch whilst seeking to minimise its environmental impact.	Flood attenuation features created along Nobles Ditch in Cherry Orchard Country Park.	Oct 2016	Assistant Director – Environment

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9.11 Seek to create and protect green corridors that promote active travel between open spaces, and redress fragmentation of the green infrastructure and network.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Prepare a Tree and Woodland Strategy.	Policies approved by Executive.	Feb 2016	Arboricultural Officer
(b) Develop a Biodiversity Opportunity Map highlighting key green corridors and core areas of biodiversity with a view to formalising as SPD.	Biodiversity Opportunity Map in place.	Sept 2017	Assistant Director - Environment
(c) Seek to influence management of neighbouring areas where there is a direct benefit to wildlife value.	Opportunities secured.	Sept 2017	Assistant Director - Environment
(d) Develop and support a Wildlife Forum to oversee the development of a strategy and the preparation of plans at a local level for biodiversity, local ecological networks.	Active forum with quarterly meetings represented by key wildlife interest.	Oct 2016	Assistant Director - Environment

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- 9.12 Continue to protect and enhance the Roach Valley Living Landscape, its natural and historic landscape and character, as well as its value for biodiversity.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) In consultation with user groups and the local community develop a schematic action plan to support the draft Living Landscape Vision Document.	Living Landscape document finalised.	Jan 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer
(b) Seek and secure the relevant external funding to develop and promote the Roach Valley Living Landscape.	Funding Secured	Jan 2017	Assistant Director - Environment

Finance – Minimise running costs, whilst maximising value for money in what we do.

- 9.13 Identify opportunities for increasing income through provision of services from our open spaces.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Identify opportunities for selling firewood, chippings, mulch etc.	Increased woodland product sales – incremental rise of £5,000 for three years.	Mar 2018	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(b) Identify opportunities for sponsorship through advertising.	Opportunities secured	Mar 2017	Assistant Director - Commercial
(c) Promote the opportunity for hiring buildings to green spaces users.	100% occupation of available space.	On-going	Assistant Director - Commercial?

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(d) Review opportunities for introducing car parking charges at other sites.	Business case developed and presented to Executive	Mar 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(e) Promote the memorial tree and Bench scheme as a means of enhancing the Council's open spaces.	20 Memorial trees planted each year; 10 memorial benches installed.	Mar 2016	Open Spaces Officer

9.14 Investigate opportunities to provide new external partnerships, developing the service to visitors.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Make provision for improved catering arrangements at Hockley Woods.	New catering provision in place; additional £5,000 per annum income	Mar 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(b) Implement new initiatives such as circus skills workshops, woodcrafts, bouncy castles, outdoor adventure skills, fitness classes and artificial ice-rinks at appropriate sites.	New temporary attractions in place. £10,000 net profit generated over three years.	Mar 2018	Assistant Director - Environment
(c) Investigate potential to introduce cafes and other revenue generating activities at Hockley Woods and Cherry Orchard Country Park.	Business plans presented to Executive, partners identified.	Oct 2016	Assistant Director - Environment

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9.15 Identify opportunities for increasing income through hiring green spaces for externally run events.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Ensure that all suitable sites are licensed for events which appeal to the community as a whole.	Events licence in place	Dec 2015	Assistant Director - Legal
(b) Ensure that charges and conditions are regularly reviewed.	Charges reviewed annually, conditions remain relevant	Ongoing	Assistant Director - Environment
(c) Aim to achieve additional income from events per annum through supporting carefully targeted income generation opportunities Ensure these meet the needs of our community and take into account the needs of regular users.	Increased Revenue - £5,000 per year.	Mar 2017	Assistant Director - Commercial

9.16 Encourage visitors to the Rochford District to help boost visitor economy and obtain the best return on income generating sites.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Encourage economic growth by maximising visitor experience to the town by providing innovative planting schemes, ensuring frontage of parks and verges at the District boundary of main routes is maintained to a very high standard.		June 2016	Principal Open Spaces Officer

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(b) Develop exceptional visitor attractions at Hockley Woods and Cherry Orchard Country Park.	50% increase in visitor numbers for Hockley; 100% increase in visitor numbers for Cherry Orchard Country Park	Mar 2019	Assistant Director - Environment
<p>Cherry Orchard Country Park Outdoor Visitor Centre Project</p> <p>Identify and work with local partners to develop visitor provision.</p> <p>Improve outdoor facilities including play area, possible water park etc.</p> <p>Develop building resources in order to add to visitor experience.</p> <p>Develop a plan for expanding and charging for car parking.</p>	New attraction with infrastructure in place; external partners and concessions secured; Generating £25,000 per annum within four years	Mar 2019	Assistant Director - Environment

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
<p>Hockley Woods Project</p> <p>Identify and work with local partners to enhance visitor provision.</p> <p>Examine the feasibility of relocating the play area at Hockley Woods, in order to enable additional parking spaces to be created, with further 'natural' play equipment installed within the woodland setting.</p> <p>Maintain and improve building resources in order to add to visitor experience.</p> <p>Proactively engage with new catering franchises to develop service and increase income.</p> <p>Seek to acquire the woodland and car park at Bullwood Hall, with the long-term aim of introducing new activities, which could be funded from car parking revenue and/or income from a leisure partner.</p>	<p>New attraction with infrastructure in place; external partners and concessions secured; Generating £25,000 per annum within two years.</p>	<p>Oct 2017</p>	<p>Assistant Director - Environment</p>

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9.17 Maximise external funding to invest in our green spaces

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(d) Continue to encourage volunteer groups to apply for external funding to improve the value of our green spaces.	£,10,000 per annum of funding is secured	Mar 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer
(e) Continue to seek contributions from developers to improve the value of our green spaces.		On-going	Assistant Director – Planning
(f) Identify methods of funding for the improvement plan (Section 106, Community Infrastructure, Levy external grant, capital budget)	£50,000 of external funding secured each year.	On-going	Assistant Director - Environment

9.18 Proactively plan our service, ensuring that work is properly prioritised, managed and resourced.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Ensure that all major sites have Management Plans which are reviewed on a five year basis.	All management plans in place	Mar 2019	Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(b) Produce and implement work programmes linked to the site management plans. Ensure replacement plans are produced on time.	Work programmes in place.	Dec 2015	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(c) Annually review investment priorities for capital and external funding	Plan in Place	March 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(d) Ensure an annual programme of revenue works (i.e. repairs, renewals, drainage etc.) is developed and approved before each new financial year	Plan in Place	March 2016	Assistant Director - Commercial
(e) Ensure all projects are co-ordinated with a unified plan to ensure that the necessary staff and financial resources are available.	Plan in Place	March 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(f) Monitor budgets monthly and produce quarterly progress reports	Expenditure within limits of budget profile at each quarter.	On-going	Assistant Director - Resources
(g) Deliver the play area rationalisation programme to reduce investment in out-dated and under-used play equipment whilst focusing on key sites offering high play value.	Report to Executive outlining recommendations.	Feb 2015	Assistant Director - Environment

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(h) Review the provision of green spaces in parished areas to identify isolated sites where Parish Councils or third parties may be better funded to support them.	List of sites produced	Sept 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(i) Ensure internal recharges from other departments reflect the true value of provision.	Detailed accurate breakdown of recharges available for scrutiny.	Dec 2015	Assistant Director - Resources

9.19 Work to reduce the cost of managing and maintaining green spaces while maintaining the quality of the areas.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(j) In conjunction with the Review Committee, review the Council's sports provision in open spaces including the pavilions and possible improvements.	Review Committee make recommendations to Portfolio Holder.	February 2015	Assistant Director - Environment
(k) Wherever possible, implement design principles for lowest cost maintenance while maintaining quality landscapes.	Policy developed	July 2017	Assistant Director - Environment

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(l) Encourage volunteer groups to adopt sites, especially in residential areas to take ownership of their local green space and get involved with physical tasks.	Sites transferred to Community Groups	Oct 2018	Community Open Spaces Officer
(m) Identify further opportunities for working in partnership with other local authorities in the region.	Joint working initiatives are set up delivery resource/financial savings	Nov 2015	Assistant Director - Environment

9.20 Ensure that all Green Spaces will be transferred by the developer to a private management company. All future maintenance will be carried out by this organisation and the developer will make sure that they are provided with adequate funding.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Investigate the models of transfer to Trusts, ensuring long-term sustainability and standard of open spaces maintained.	Additional income stream generated through arms length company	Mar 2017	Assistant Director - Environment
(b) Seek to establish arms length trading organisation to allow the Council the ability to offer cost-effective service to new Trusts.			Assistant Director - Legal

9.21 Reduce risk of tree-related insurance claims through pro-active audited inspections, and where appropriate, planned maintenance.

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Establish which sites and the number of trees which may pose a risk.	Completed tree survey all tree stock owned by RDC	Mar 2017	Arboricultural Officer
(b) Pro-actively carry out a phased programme of works to prune high risk trees and reduce water demand.	100% of High risk trees in regular maintenance schedule	Mar 2017	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(c) Include the principle of 'Right Tree Right Place' in Planning Policy.	Policies approved by Executive	Mar 2016	Arboricultural Officer

Open Space Team's Ability to Get Things Done

Building the capabilities of staff, partners and the community to deliver the challenges ahead

9.22 Ensure that staff have the correct knowledge and capabilities to deliver the service to a high standard.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Review staff and contractors qualifications and training.	Three year team training plan	Mar 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(b) Ensure training needs are identified on personal development plans and priority training needs addressed.	Personal three year development plan	Mar 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(c) Review current work operations to identify whether they are best managed under in-house, contractual or volunteer arrangements.	Service Review Report to Portfolio Holder	June 2016	Assistant Director - Environment

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(d) Train staff to Green Flag standards to allow internal measurement of quality standards for all appropriate sites.	Two staff enrolled as Green Flag judges	May 2016	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(e) Ensure specific staff are sufficiently trained to update social media logs, update of static information on the Council's website.	Two staff available to provide web up date.	May 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer

9.23 Ensure that staff are working to their best of their ability.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Regular monthly review meeting held with all staff	Monthly Performance Targets set and reviewed monthly	On-going	Line Managers
(b) Annual Performance Reviews will be undertaken	Annual Performance Targets set and reviewed	On-going	Line Managers

9.24 Support our green volunteering economy by developing a model for working with volunteers.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Identify key areas where volunteer involvement can provide a clear benefit to the Council.	Volunteering policy established	Jun 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(b) Ensure that opportunities for directly appointed volunteers are maximised.	Annual Work programme for volunteer work produced	Jan 2016	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(c) Ensure the internal organisation of the department is structured to support a growing volunteer force, including opportunities for work experience.	Volunteering policy established	Jun 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(d) To develop our policy of best practice with volunteers and co-ordinate and develop a large network of volunteers to help manage and maintain our green spaces and run community and educational events.	Significant increase in volunteer hours.	June 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer
(e) Develop the Council's Volunteering Policy to covers aspects such as induction, training, supervision.	Volunteering Policy produced and approved by Executive	Jan 2016	Assistant Director - Environment

9.25 Encourage new volunteering opportunities.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Develop a model for green space volunteering along with a contract of engagement and clear health and safety and insurance guidelines.	Volunteering Handbook produced	Dec 2015	Community Open Spaces Officer

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Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(b) Develop a volunteer incentives programme, including skills training and personal development.	Training and induction programme developed	Dec 2015	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(c) Investigate the potential of providing a volunteer discount card.		Dec 2015	Community Open Spaces Officer
(d) Look to provide more volunteering opportunities at weekends.	Cost benefit analysis undertaken	Dec 2015	Community Open Spaces Officer

9.26 Engage with the local community and user groups on proposals which change the use of or significantly alter the appearance of parks and open spaces.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Work with Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park to assist with active site maintenance, consultation and fundraising potential.	Cherry Orchard work parties programme established.	Oct 2015	Community Open Spaces Officer
(b) Liaise with CVS and other organisations to encourage new volunteering opportunities and to encourage a more diverse range of volunteers.	Work programme established	Nov 2015	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(c) Recruit and develop volunteer wardens to assist in the management and specified patrol functions of sites.	Pilot scheme with Volunteer Warden recruited.	March 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer

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9.27 The Council will continue its support of existing Friends Groups and will encourage the establishment of new groups and partnerships who wish to help in improving their local parks.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Develop management plans for sites in close consultation with Friends groups.	Management Plans with specific tasks allocated to Friend Groups	March 2019	Open Spaces Officer
(b) Create Friends of Hockley Woods, giving support to set up and run an independent constituted group.	Friends of Hockley Woods established	March 2016	Community Open Spaces Officer

9.28 Look to work closely with partners to maximise capacity, volunteering and training opportunities.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Continue and support partnership with SEETEC offering opportunity for those seeking to get back to work	Increase in SEETEC recruits	Sept 2016	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(b) Create and promote projects suitable for Corporate Volunteer Days.	Projects identified	Oct 2015	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(c) Continue and Develop links with Colleges to offer work placements	College work placement each year.	Dec 2015	Operational Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

9.29 Succession planning of service provision will be undertaken.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Develop Apprenticeship schemes to cover key areas of the service.	Apprentice employed	Oct 2015	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(b) Further develop the Career Matrix approach to staff posts to encourage staff development and retention	Career Matrix rolled across further posts	Oct 2016	Assistant Director - Environmental

Operational – Providing green spaces that are clean, safe and welcoming

9.30 Ensure that all sites, within council control, have a documented and scheduled maintenance standard which is adhered to across all sites.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Maintain areas to comply with the Grounds Maintenance Standards.	No criteria deemed as 'failed'	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(b) Develop to formalised grounds maintenance inspection schedule.	Schedule in place	April 2015	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(c) Develop a more formalised programme for inspection, repairs and replacement of infrastructure.	Schedule in place	April 2015	Principal Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(d) Develop a formalised plan for the maintenance and improvement of buildings, walls and lighting within green spaces.	Asset Annual Maintenance Plan	Mar 2016	Assistant Director - Commercial
(e) Integrate 20 year property maintenance plans and secure appropriate funding for maintenance and repairs, to ensure the long term protection of buildings and infrastructure.	Asset long-term Maintenance Plan	Mar 2017	Assistant Director - Commercial
(f) Seek funding on an annual basis for the refurbishment of Council owned and managed play areas and sports facilities such as tennis courts and football pitches.	Funding secured.	Mar 2016	Principal Open Spaces Officer

9.31 Seek to retain and maintain park and open space original features wherever possible if their use is consistent with the current uses of the park or open space.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Develop a programme of infrastructure repairs and small landscape enhancements.	Programme in place	Mar 2017	Principal Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

9.32 Ensure that sites are maintained in a clean condition and that graffiti found on park buildings and equipment is removed promptly.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Ensure all high amenity sites are visited weekly for litter picking and bin emptying and more regularly for popular sites.	No overflowing bins	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(b) Run an annual anti-litter campaign to stress the issues surrounding litter	Reduced levels of littering	On-going	Refuse and Street Cleansing
(c) Address reports on issues of littering within a period of two working days.	Litter levels within grounds maintenance standards	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(d) Address reports of broken all broken glass, and dog excrement upon pavements, within a period of one working day.	Litter levels within grounds maintenance standards	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(e) Escalate reports of graffiti to the street cleansing team within one working day.	Graffiti levels within grounds maintenance standards	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(f) Implement a programme for the clearing of algae from park infrastructure such as signs, bins, benches and play equipment.	Infrastructure clear of algae	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(g) Treat moss, which causes slipperiness on hard surfaces, in particularly play areas and sports surfaces on an annual basis.	No slip hazards	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(h) Ensure that toilet facilities are regularly cleaned.	Litter within grounds maintenance standards	On-going	Refuse and Street Cleansing

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

9.33 Reduce the possibility of accidents to our staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors on green spaces by carrying out safe working practices that are supported by regular recorded inspections and risk assessments.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Standardise an electronic inspection system which enables mobile reporting and rapid response to issues.	System in place	Dec 2015	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(b) Incorporate all countryside trees and woodland areas into the Council's tree management system.	All tree stock recorded	March 2017	Arboricultural Officer
(c) Ensure that all children's play areas are inspected at least once every week and more often if it is a very popular play space.	Weekly play inspections sheets - countersigned	On-going	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(d) Ensure grave memorials are inspected at least every five years and that the results are acted upon.	Grave memorials secure	On-going	Assistant Director - Commercial
(e) Ensure that there is a site risk assessment for each key green space site and review whenever major changes occur.	Risk Assessments up to date.	Mar 2016	Assistant Director - Environment
(f) Support investigations into the use of customer reporting applications by mobile phone.	Reporting app established.	Oct 2016	Principal Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(g) Address health and safety issues on Council owned and managed play areas and commit to appropriate levels of funding. The Council will proactively seek opportunities for external funding for such projects.	Funding secured.	Nov 2015	Assistant Director - Environment
(h) Seek to involve all operatives and contractors in the development of Health & Safety standards.	Operatives involved in meetings	On-going	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(i) Complete and regularly review risk assessments, method statements and procedures for all operational works on Open Space's sites.	All Risk Assessments up to date.	On-going	Operational Open Spaces Officer
(j) Ensure that tools and machinery are routinely maintained and equipment is regularly service to a safe standard.	All maintenance plans on schedule.	On-going	Operational Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

9.34 Review signage leading to and within parks and green spaces and seek to provide signage that is informative, relevant and appropriate to the location.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Utilize signage to encourage local people to report issues relating to anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, intimidating groups, littering and dog fouling.	Increase in reporting from public	Mar 2019	Community Open Spaces Officer
(b) Introduce updated and relevant byelaws to regulate the use of open spaces.	Byelaws in place	Mar 2016	Assistant Director – Legal Services
(c) Clearly publicise the key byelaws at our sites.	Byelaws displayed at key sites	Mar 2017	Community Open Spaces Officer
(d) Ensure notice boards are placed in all key green spaces.	Notice boards in place	Jan 2019	Open Spaces Officer
(e) Keep notice boards up to date with relevant information including ownership and contact details.	All information displayed in date	Mar 2019	Community Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

9.35 Manage our sites to ensure appropriate grounds maintenance standards are consistently maintained.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Not to increase the number of parks and green spaces that are opened and closed daily, unless there is an agreement established with the local community to participate or contribute towards this activity.	No budget growth	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(b) Ensure that all contract works are fully and clearly specified and ensure that the responsibilities of each partner are understood.	Contract specification reviewed annually	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(c) Ensure that regular contract review meetings are scheduled and recorded.	Monthly minutes of meetings	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer
(d) Use a standard method for reviewing new work requests. A pro forma should be used to ensure work is relevant to the strategy, achievable and cost effective.	New pro-forma	Oct 2015	Open Spaces Officer
(e) Develop a computerised system for green space maintenance and management.	System in place	Mar 2016	Principal Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(f) Carry out scheduled inspections of sites to ensure that contractors are meeting standards set and that work is carried out in a timely way.	Regularly up-dated performance indicators	On-going	Principal Open Spaces Officer

9.36 Provide effective customer service

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Investigate the use of a call logging system to manage customer enquiries more efficiently.	Call logging linked to GM software	Mar 2016	Open Spaces Officer
(b) Investigate the feasibility of an online mapping system to enable all parks and countryside staff to view maintenance regimes.	On-line mapping available to customer.	Mar 2017	Principal Open Spaces Officer

9.37 Manage our key sites in line with site management plans and update on a five year cycle.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Ensure that all major sites have Management Plans which are reviewed on a five year basis.	All management plans in place	Mar 2019	Principal Open Spaces Officer

Rochford District Council – Open Spaces Strategy

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(b) Produce and implement work programmes linked to the site management plans. Ensure replacement plans are produced as necessary.	Annual work plan produced	Nov 2015	Operational Open Spaces Officer

9.38 Ensure that ethos used in maintaining the park or green space and its facilities will be environmentally sound seeking to demonstrate sustainable management.

Actions	Measure of Success	Target Date	Responsible Officer(s)
(a) Minimise pesticide use through mulching, pruning and diseased/damaged growth; selecting pest/disease resistant plants.	Reduced use of pesticide	June 2016	Open Spaces Officer
(b) Use recycled green waste for soil conditioning and mulching.	Mulch applied to all beds.	Sept 2016	Open Spaces Officer
(c) Maximise the capacity for grey water collection and re-use in watering.	Reduced use of water.	Dec 2018	Open Spaces Officer
(d) Identify opportunities for changing existing planting to drought tolerant planting schemes.	No water used for bedding plants.	Sept 2016	Open Spaces Officer

APPENDIX 1 - Key Performance Indicators

Community and Wildlife

Meeting the needs of our communities and wildlife

- Satisfaction Survey.
- Number of complaints/compliments.
- Heath Fritillary Population Count.
- Wildlife condition score of key wildlife sites.

Finance

Minimise running costs, whilst maximising value for money in what we do.

- Total Expenditure.
- Net Expenditure.
- Income targets.
- External Funding Secured.

Organisational Capacity

Building the capacity and capabilities of staff, partners and the community to deliver the challenges ahead

- Friends/volunteers survey.
- Staff retention.
- Staff Sickness.
- Volunteer Hours.

Operational

Providing green spaces that are clean, safe and welcoming

- % of planned works achieved.
- Contract outcomes.
- Response time to health and safety issues.
- Condition scoring of sites.



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APPENDIX 2

**Open Spaces Strategy 2015-2018
Consultation Comments – The Vision**

Respondent Id.	Respondent Comments	RDC Response
AF116089	Excellent strategy but don't be afraid to make charges for its use	<i>It is intended to be a working strategy with an annual review</i>
AF116093	As long as 'linking' doesn't mean roads or housing estates. Why do they need to be linked? They are all accessible and beautiful as they are. All we need to do is to care that it doesn't get blighted by 'progress' in the form of building or fracking or anything invasive. Our spaces are wonderful and this area's best kept secret.	<i>Replace the word 'linking' with 'joining'. The words linkage can have negative associations such as 'link' roads, this is not the intention, rather to join up positive feature of open spaces where possible.</i>
AF116115	sound good but I am sceptical as you are putting in applications to building too many houses in the district. you say the focus is on linking the districts assets....we have 2 children and want to encourage cycling but because there is nowhere safe away from the busy roads we cannot find anywhere in the district to cycle. If there were paths linking these green spaces people would cycle more.	<i>To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention: 1.11... '(e) Work with appropriate partners to develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district.</i>
AF116124	Open space is vital to the health and bio diversity of our area, I disagree that there can be any open space that is 'low quality' and suitable for disposal to developers. Enhancements to our open spaces are welcome but these must not be at the expense at the loss of others.	<i>Any assessment of the quality of open space would be subject to further consultation before any decision would be made.</i>
AF116131	None. In fact I see some good ideas.	
AF116132	How many man hours did it take to produce this enlarged piece of gobbledygook? Most of it should already be in place as part of the Councils responsibility of care to the open spaces. We are lucky we can afford the time and money to produce such repetitive garbage.	
AF116135	UPPERMOST IS TO ENSURE THAT "THE DISTRICT IS A BEAUTIFUL AND INTERESTING PLACE TO LIVE". Everything else is secondary	

AF116154	"The focus will be on PRESERVING AND linking the various assets of Rochford Districts' landscape – Its woodland, farmland, lowland marsh, creeks and mud flats, towns and villages.	<i>The word 'preserving' will be added.</i>
AF116173	It is vital to protect small spaces, even wide verges, as they all add to the greenness of the district. This was seen with the recent green area the council wanted to build on but members didn't.	<i>Any decision regarding the future of an open space would be subject to further consultation before any decision would be made</i>
AF116177	As a vision this sounds sensible. It would perhaps be useful to modify the vision to add a focus on maintaining facilities well which is not always something that is a strong point. For example: "To deliver a good quality, well maintained and accessible network of green spaces and street scenes."	<i>The emphasis on providing 'good quality' will imply that these areas must be well maintained</i>
AF116191	I feel that our open spaces should be mainly meadows and material places managed with a light touch not as Magnolia park which is too regimented.	<i>A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate.</i>
AF116201	Keep as much open space as possible	
AF116203	Yes keep all the green spaces that so far you have not built on... We do not need the 500 houses that you wish to build in Rayleigh... It will add congestion on the already congested roads over crowding at the schools doctors shops dentists and need i go on.	
AF116229	Fully agree	
AF116281	Fresh air and physical development should be part of the school curriculum, but public spaces do allow people of all ages access to large areas of greenery and sport. Green spaces should never be necessary because families are under occupied indoors. Residents should be occupied and fulfilled within the best quality houses and gardens. Green spaces should be a bonus on top of high quality homes.	<i>These comments will be passed onto the Housing Strategy review</i>
AF116831	Support the idea of boosting the green offer and linking up sites with cycle / walk paths where possible. Many of the districts footpaths are over grown and unclear, if these were maintained it could help encourage people to use open spaces more often.	<i>To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention: 1.11... '(e) Work with appropriate partners to</i>

<p>AF116884 Taking the entire document into consideration, the Parish Council do not agree with the proposed car parking charges at Cherry Orchard Lane Country Park. Members would like to know how the RSPB project at Wallasea Island had been included in the strategy.</p>	<p><i>develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district.</i> <i>Any charges brought in would be subject to a separate review with an opportunity to comment at that stage.</i> <i>The RSPB project at Wallasea Island will be considered under 1.11....</i></p> <p><i>(d) Develop and support a Wildlife Forum to oversee the development of a strategy and the preparation of plans at a local level for biodiversity, local ecological networks</i> <i>Greater public participation and consultation will be key to the Strategy. A steering group of community representatives will be considered for overseeing the strategy delivery.</i></p>
<p>AF116986 The strategy embraces a very broad range of activity, and it must be developed in a transparent way, with the Council maintaining consultation with interested parties in an ongoing manner. The very narrow 'cabinet' structure of the Council, tends to create a bias on the part of 'Portfolio holders' to promoting their 'pet projects'. Ongoing public consultation is vital as the process progresses.</p>	
<p>AF117101 It all sounds a bit of a pipe dream but I am for anything that promotes and enhances New England Woods in particular. 1.9 A and E1.11 A</p>	
<p>AF117123 Yes in general. What is your measure of success? There are many actions assigned with a target date, I assume completed by , some have no measure of success or timing at all. However the document shows no indication of what has been made to date or a partially achieved status say 70%. There are many action dates already passed. What is their current "met" status? Specifically to Cherry Orchard, there are many references to it with proposals to develop revenue streams, i.e., a £25K payback. What is the plan to facilitate this, what is the evidence to deliver it? Strategy defines a move to contract out all park maintenance. What are the performance indicators you mention that will be adopted to ensure</p>	<p><i>The action will be reviewed at the end of consultation to reflect accurate time lines for actions.</i></p> <p><i>The Performance Indicators are being trialled at present with an aim to publish and update on a monthly basis upon the web-site.</i></p> <p><i>The use of volunteers and community groups is about creating additional public value rather than generating savings.</i></p>

	<p>value for money and ensure quality is not diminished? I believe your sustainability plan is potentially flawed, your employees will be made proficient a year after volunteers will be trained capable. I assume the use of volunteers is a major constituent to deliver your cost reduction plan. Please comment. Throughout the strategy document there is regular use of generalised metric, these should be defined. ex. 4.4 [c], there will be regular reviews, what does this mean? Weekly or monthly or could be annually.</p>	<p><i>Savings are to be generated through tighter commissioning and monitoring of contracts.</i></p> <p><i>The use of a generalised metric will be replaced with specific times.</i></p>
AF117131	<p>An increase in the number of public access routes are required, and existing paths maintained to a higher standard. An open discussion surrounding the access for horse riders would be invaluable. Shared access is required in the area to reduce the road work for horse riders by using the public footpaths even season periods only would greatly reduce the roadwork and at the same time would increase the publics awareness to local riders.</p>	<p><i>To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention:</i> 1.11... ‘(e) <i>Work with appropriate partners to develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district.</i></p>
AF117148	<p>The above vision is very welcome provided you listen to the comments of the people who use these facilities</p>	
AF117223	<p>I agree with the sentiments of the vision, so why are the council considering building on fields in both Rayleigh and Hullbridge.</p>	
AF117248	<p>Would like the council to be proactive in their work, i.e. upkeep of paths annually rather than never.</p>	<p><i>To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention:</i> 1.11... ‘(e) <i>Work with appropriate partners to maintain, develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district.</i></p>
AF117320	<p>I am a frequent visitor to Hockley woods and the park at the woods. My children are of a young age and love visiting the park as much as the woods. I have heard rumours the park may be used as something else in the future. This would be devastating to my self and many if my friends who use the park at the woods on a regular basis. Please do not</p>	<p><i>There are no plans to remove the play area at Hockley Woods.</i></p>

COCP	<p>get rid of the play area that gives so much pleasure to the local children.</p> <p>We hope that the focus on linking the various assets of Rochford District's landscape, its woodland, farmland, lowland marsh, creeks and mudflats, towns and villages, will include the meadows, lakes and young plantations of Cherry Orchard Park. We also hope that the links will be practical as well as visual in nature and include footpaths, bridleways, and access for less able visitors to the open spaces, including Cherry Orchard Park, which at present has no access for disabled visitors, and no marked walks or pathways.</p> <p>The draft strategy offers great expectations of things to come for the Rochford District. We hope that RDC will enable the experienced and qualified Open Spaces Team to implement the plans and deliver the quality of service that the district deserves.</p>	<p><i>The strategy will aim to cover these points that you have raised.</i></p>
AF117421	<p>This vision is very good, but is the Council going to realistically be able to deliver it?</p>	
AF117439	<p>Focus should not just be on connecting assets but improving accessibility of existing assets. reference to biodiversity is very important and should recognise the particular assets of the district, e.g. the Roach estuary, Wallasea.</p>	<p><i>The RSPB project at Wallasea Island will be considered under 1.11....</i></p> <p><i>(d) Develop and support a Wildlife Forum to oversee the development of a strategy and the preparation of plans at a local level for biodiversity, local ecological networks</i></p>
AF117443	<p>The Council has tried to strike a difficult balance between enhancing biodiversity and increasing revenue from its open spaces. For the most part it achieves these aims, but there are a few key omissions and causes for concern</p>	

Open Spaces Strategy 2015 - 2018
Consultation Comments – Theme 1 - Community and Wildlife

Respondents ID	Respondent Comments	RDC Response
AF116093	The needs of our communities are to have some open space and to maintain our relationship with nature in these progressive times. The needs of our wildlife are to be left alone as much as possible in order to maintain the equilibrium that nature brings about by its own accord	<i>A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks.</i>
AF116115	How do we get safely to Hockley Woods from Rayleigh. We have to drive have you thought of linking the two towns with a cycle path?	<i>To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention: 1.11... '(e) Work with appropriate partners to develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district</i>
AF116131	These are the needs that should be met.	
AF116132	See my original comments	
AF116145	I am impressed and encouraged by the proposed undertakings laid out in the document	
AF116154	Some assets should be improved, for example Rochford Reservoir is not very welcoming and should be a gem so near to the town centre.	<i>Management Plans are to be written for the key sites across the district. Rochford Reservoir would be included in this list,</i>
AF116173	Areas need to be neat and tidy or left to go a bit wild depending on location.	<i>A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate.</i>
AF116177	Focus on making the best of existing facilities. Selling poor quality green spaces to enable development and finance high quality space and facilities that meet user needs.	<i>This would be in accordance with draft policy 1.3</i>
AF116191	The more natural spaces the better and hedge edges and verges	<i>A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken</i>

	should be planted with wild flowers and forage for insects red	<i>which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate.</i>
AF116203	Wildlife need open and green spaces. Communities also need places like this for fresh air exercise and areas of beauty.	<i>A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate.</i>
AF116229	Productive farmland is more important than wildlife therefore do not agree with removing it	<i>The proposed strategy does not intend to remove any productive farmland.</i>
AF116986	The strategy should strive to bring these two areas of interest together ie to enable the community to interface with the wildlife in a manner which doesn't harm the wildlife. The 'wild' open spaces have much for the community to enjoy. At a time when budgets are tight, more support should be given to community groups to promote and develop these.	<i>The proposed strategy seeks to engage with community groups for this purpose.</i>
AF117101	Let's see how it works in practice its all very well putting it on paper.	
AF117131	Increased bridle paths please.	<i>To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention: 1.11... '(e) Work with appropriate partners to develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district</i>
AF117148	Protecting wildlife (including flora) is the most important issue and we need to protect the few wild places that exist in our	<i>This would be in accordance with policy 1.9 and 1.11 which both seek to further biodiversity interest.</i>
AF117370	You will provide a greater range of facilities for teenagers and young people then go on to say but only if agreement can be agreed with the local community to assist with maintenance. I read that as parish/town councils and not all have the finances to do this. The smallest areas should not be penalised just because they do not have the finances.	<i>We will seek to work all community groups, unfortunately finance will realistic limit what can be achieved.</i>
COCP	We are glad to note that Volunteers are acknowledged as a viable workforce and that Bye laws for open spaces will include appropriate	<i>Byelaws will be ratified by DEFRA as part of the process.</i>

control of nuisance activities. We trust that these will eventually be approved by Government. We are also pleased to see that the Council will consider opportunities for providing facilities for older people including petanque, outdoor gyms etc.

Though the majority of the Friends of Cherry Orchard Park would prefer to see it retain its tranquil nature, we accept that facilities for other groups are important and should these be planned for the park we would prefer to see such activities in the eastern area of the park, close to the car park, where access for less mobile users could be improved and sensitive landscaping might mark this area of the park as having a slightly more varied use and separate from the wildlife focused majority of the park.

We are very pleased indeed to see that New England Wood will be managed and enhanced as an area of regionally scarce and important woodland. Friends appreciate the fact that a coppicing programme has begun in the wood again after many years of neglect.

We are also glad to note that the draft plan indicates that the Council will work to reduce the flood risk from Nobles Green Ditch – home to the water vole, the most endangered British mammal.

<http://www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk/planyourvisit/animals/watervole.html> The Friends of Cherry Orchard Park would like to be involved in any planning etc.

We have an opportunity to make a real difference here in Cherry Orchard Park where water voles have been seen in the lake and the feed ditch from the stream to the lake.

We applaud the intention to develop and support a Wildlife Forum. We look forward to being consulted regarding the development of the draft Living Landscape Vision Document and the promotion of the Roach Valley Living Landscape.

Any development of the park would seek the views of the Friends Group and other users of the park.

AF117421

The Council needs to listen to the people that actually use the parks and open spaces. The council failed to listen to evidence and public consultation regarding the Pet Memorial Garden in Cherry Orchard

Policy 4.9 will ensure that all major sites will require a management plan. These will assess suitability of individual projects and

Jubilee Country Park and spent thousands on this white elephant. Money that would have been better spent elsewhere in this park. If the Council has no intention of listening to its residents, do not bother consulting them. In addition to this, there are times when it is better to do nothing than spend money on the wrong project. For example, the play 'stones' in Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park. This was not the preferred play space option after consultation with the local friends group, it appears to have been chosen due to its ease of maintainable, as a result it is rarely used by children to play on. It may have been far better to choose something that perhaps had a short, but very useful lifespan, rather than an unused long standing folly.

will involve consultation with the public and any relevant community groups.

AF117439

Important to consider the impact on wildlife and biodiversity of changes to support communities for example, amendments to reduce fear of crime (while welcome) should be done carefully so as not to destroy valuable habitat.

Same consideration should be applied to option of selling off 'poor quality' green space. It may be valuable for some people, and for wildlife consideration should be given to whether the space can feasibly be improved or enhanced as an alternative.

A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate.

Works in parks will give consideration to policy 1.9 and 1.11 which both seek to further biodiversity interest.

AF117443

There are many people who do not access the open spaces our area has and it is right that the council should encourage visitors. However this strategy document concentrates purely on access by car with little or no reference to public transport or bicycle. By increasing car parking at locations such as Cherry Orchard and Hockley Woods you are threatening biodiversity by removing green spaces!

To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention:

1.11...

'(e) Work with appropriate partners to develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district

**Open Spaces Strategy 2015 - 2018
Consultation Comments – Theme 2 - Finance**

Respondent s ID	Respondent Comments	RDC Response
AF116093	I don't see that we need too much in the way of 'service delivery'. Our natural spaces aren't another consumer lead option in today's world. Some ground maintenance and careful planning. Our children's play areas should be given priority in terms of spending.	<i>Ensure plain English seek to replace 'service delivery' with clearer wording where appropriate.</i>
AF116131	Ideal but achievable?	<i>Ensure regular review of targets is incorporated into action plan</i>
AF116132	Shouldn't this be a basic requirement for all Council projects? So why repeat it so many times? Job creation?	<i>Look to produce executive summary of plan, reduce wording of existing plan.</i>
AF116135	WOULD NOT AGREE WITH TURNING BEAUTIFUL OPEN SPACES SUCH AS HOCKLEY WOODS INTO INCOME GENERATING SITES BY INTRODUCING MORE CAR PARKING AND CAFES ETC.	<i>Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users. A café was in place in Hockley Woods in the 1960s and during the mid 80s.</i>
AF116145	I agree with the proposed initiatives laid out in the document	
AF116154	I don't support the recent introduction of parking charges at Hockley Woods this seems counter productive in terms of public enjoyment of the natural environment. The objective of deterring parking by commuters and local businesses could have been achieved by free periods and/or restricted hours/duration. The cost of "policing" the current charges is unlikely to be cost effective.	<i>Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users.</i>
AF116173	Playing fields must be cut so they remain useful. Certain areas could be left to grow and develop into meadows or wildlife.	<i>A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate</i>
AF116177	Prioritise looking after existing facilities before investing in expanded	<i>This is addressed in: '4.1 Ensure that all</i>

	facilities. Ensure any new facilities will be affordable to maintain over their lifetime.	<i>sites, within council control, have a documented and scheduled maintenance standard which is adhered to across all sites.'</i>
AF116201	Value for money usually means standards drop	<i>Recording of existing standards is being undertaken to act as benchmark for comparison to any changes made.</i>
AF116229	Easy to say hard to do what will suffer in turn?	
AF116711	Money could be raised by allowing organisations to sponsor signage, literature (guides) and place names.	<i>This is addressed in 2.1 (b): 'Identify opportunities for sponsorship through advertising.'</i>
AF116986	The danger is that the Council will try to 'commercialise' parks and open spaces to raise revenue. This should be fiercely resisted and be subject to public consultation where the development or event affects the environment of the space itself or its environs.	<i>Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users</i>
AF117101	Perhaps you need to look into the waste of money being spent on the Pet Memorial in Cherry Orchard Country park !!	<i>Future income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users</i>
AF117131	Encourage the community to help maintain the green spaces, have a go days etc.	
AF117148	In my opinion, the money available is not always wisely spent. More meaningful consultation needs to be carried out with those that actually use the open spaces.	<i>Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users</i>
AF117178	I accept that RDC needs to be cost effective but don't cut back too much on the environment. It's the green lung of our district and needs to be properly maintained for the good of all.	<i>This addressed in: 2.7 'Work to reduce the cost of managing and maintaining green spaces while maintaining the quality of the areas.'</i>
AF117248	Use your money wisely, it is uneconomic to do work on parks and then completely ignore for years, then the work becomes extensive again. Sweyne Park is a prime example.	<i>This is addressed in: 4.1 (e): (e) Integrate 20 year property maintenance plans and secure appropriate funding for</i>

		<i>maintenance and repairs, to ensure the long term protection of buildings and infrastructure.</i>
AF117370	Cherry orchard Car parking charges: RDC use cherry orchard as the jewel in the crown for encouraging green tourism how does charging for parking sit with this? lead to greater street parking around the park access areas? Pay and display parking with users constantly looking at their watches or pay on exit?	<i>Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users</i>
COCP	<p>Friends of Cherry Orchard Park will be happy to inform members and park users of opportunities to buy firewood, chippings, mulch etc through its website, Facebook page and email.</p> <p>We oppose the introduction of car parking charges at Cherry Orchard Park as we feel it would discriminate against Rochford resident visitors to the park, favour the large number of Eastwood and Southend residents who live in walking distance of easy access into the park and discourage new visitors to the park.</p> <p>We understand the need to investigate potential to introduce cafes and other revenue generating activities at Hockley Woods and Cherry Orchard Country Park, however Friends do not support any commercialisation of the park that would change its tranquil nature or focus on wildlife.</p> <p>Cherry Orchard Country Park Outdoor Centre Project The Friends of Cherry Orchard Park are keen to be involved in any planning for this project to ensure that improving the 'visitor experience' is not to the detriment of the tranquil nature of the park and the focus on wildlife.</p> <p>We would like more information regarding the transfer of Green Spaces to Trusts. We would be opposed to anything that changed the nature/status etc of Cherry Orchard Country Park.</p>	<i>Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users. The impact upon the individual park will be given consideration. The transfer of Green Spaces to Trusts would be considered on site by site basis and would require approval of Full Council to progress.</i>
AF117421	There is no mention in this strategy of the Pet Memorial Garden. The councillors insisted that it should be built/ developed and therefore it should be promoted to recoup the thousands of pounds that they have wasted on it.	

AF117438

Items 2.1d and 2.4b Car Parking I do not agree with introducing car parking charges in the car parks serving our open spaces. The emphasis should be on encouraging people to use and enjoy these spaces per Item 1.7. Introducing car parking charges will only introduce resentment and discourage use. There is very little in life these days that you can do for free, but taking the family out to enjoy the pleasures of the Districts open spaces is one of them. Introducing car parking charges will change this. I understand why car parking charges were introduced at Hockley Woods, specifically to stop station users from using the car park all day, but the only people using Cherry Orchard Park car parks and the like will be those people who are visiting them to use and enjoy them.

Item 2.8 The transfer of green spaces to a 'private management company'. Not something I have heard of before and something that on the face of it makes me nervous. Who funds the private management company, and who are the answerable to? Can't the developer pass the funds to RDC and they ensure the upkeep? By all means subcontract out the works as you do at the moment, but I believe the Council should retain some level of control.

Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users.

Item 2.8 – 'text to be altered to clarify that this is only applicable to new open spaces within new housing developments, not existing open spaces'

AF117443

I'm afraid there are elements of this report that seem to be focused on how the council can make the most possible money out of our green spaces. Our green spaces are not theme parks and overdevelopment will harm our unique habitats.

Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, the impact and risks, and consultation with public space users.

**Open Spaces Strategy 2015 - 2018
Consultation Comments – Theme 3**

Respondents ID	Respondents Comments	RDC Response
AF116093	I am not sure I like the sound of that. It sounds as though there is already an agenda in place. I would like to see 'partners' being chosen in a fair and open allocation for a start. We can't build the capacity of open space. We must maintain what we have and not allow it to be used for the greed of certain individuals.	<i>Any partner that will help achieve greater public value for the open spaces will be given consideration.</i> <i>To re-define 'capacity' as 'Open Space Team's ability' to avoid confusion.</i>
AF116115	you cannot leave it to local groups to run these parks alone. I see Sweyne Park had a group setting up activities in their park but this was only successful as Heather (the RDC contact) was fully on board and could use her contacts and RDC insurance. Now she is gone the liaison between the two dried up as have the activities.	<i>The post of Community Open Spaces Officer is to be reviewed with a request for the post to be filled in 2015,</i>
AF116131	To deliver the strategy this is necessary.	
AF116132	What else are you supposed to have been doing for the last fifty years?	
AF116145	I agree with the proposed initiatives laid out in the document	
AF116154	As the population grows and new residential, industrial and commercial areas are developed then it is important that additional open spaces are created such that there is no "watering down" of the mix.	<i>This is addressed in 1.2: 'Ensure that where appropriate, new development includes adequate provision of a range of high quality public spaces to meet the needs of the community.'</i>
AF116173	Parishes may be able to take on some tasks but it should not be forced on them. Some are small and do not have the staff or funds.	
AF116229	Good luck	
AF116986	There are many organisations and user groups within parks and open spaces and developing relationships with them is vital, to mitigate organisational costs. Educational and recreational use of the spaces is better understood,	<i>This is addressed in Policy 3.5: 'Engage with the local community and user groups on proposals which change the use of or significantly alter the appearance of parks</i>

	in many cases, by users rather than, particularly councillors who are rarely involved at a hands on level, while the relevant officers should be encouraged to develop working relationships with users.	<i>and open spaces.'</i>
AF117101	Good News as people will volunteer to help	
AF117148	Again, this is a good vision provided you listen to the community and not just pay lip service. Many people do not feel that they have been listened to. Ward councillors could play a bigger part here if they seek out and listen to their residents.	<i>This is addressed in Policy 3.5: 'Engage with the local community and user groups on proposals which change the use of or significantly alter the appearance of parks and open spaces.'</i>
AF117178	Yes, cut out the management speak! Please write in plain English, not meaningless drivel.	
AF117370	Great emphasis on volunteers which in an ideal world would be great however, life is not like that so, what is plan B when volunteers do not step up?	<i>The basic maintenance of parks is to continue to be provided by Rochford District Council, the volunteering is to create additional value.</i>
COCP	<p>We are pleased to note that the draft document indicates willingness to work with volunteers and community groups and that the Friends of Cherry Orchard Park are recognised as such a group. We look forward to the development of the model for green space volunteering and trust that it will not discourage possible volunteers with a web of red tape and bureaucracy.</p> <p>In partnership with skilled staff at RDC volunteers have already taken part in maintenance work groups in the park and look forward to further opportunities. FOCOP has public liability insurance to the value of five million pounds.</p> <p>We are pleased to see that it is intended that management plans will be developed in consultation with Friends Groups.</p>	
AF117421	It is fairly obvious that there are not enough staff to meet the needs of your vision. Volunteers are willing to help, but often 'red tape' prevents people from helping. A few years ago the country was encouraged to join the 'big society', friends groups tried, but the constant need to provide insurances, risk assessments etc., put	<i>This is addressed in 3.4 (a): 'Develop a model for green space volunteering along with a contract of engagement and clear health and safety and insurance guidelines.'</i>

	people off. You need to have a clear plan on how volunteers can help without getting them bogged down in paperwork.	
AF117439	Broadly sensible partnering with community groups can add indirect benefits through increased sense of community ownership of green spaces. Should also consider increased partnerships with third sector groups EWT, RSPB etc.	<i>An additional text will be added as a further point to : ‘ Seek opportunity for co-working with volunteer and charity organisations.’</i>
AF117443	Ideas such as the 'Friends of Hockley Woods' are good. But these are public spaces owned by the local community and should not be managed by private companies making a profit.	<i>Item 2.8 – ‘text to be altered to clarify that this is only applicable to new open spaces within new housing developments, not existing open spaces’</i>

**Open Spaces Strategy 2015 - 2018
Consultation Comments- Theme 4 - Operational**

Respondent s ID	Respondents Comments	RDC Response
AF116093	Yes, we all want that. That is the current state	
AF116115	Get rid of the cheap contractors and bring the cleaning staff under your control. You get what you pay for. The current contractors in Sweyne Park drive up, eat their lunch, read a paper and then leave.	<i>The existing contractor is paid for outcomes rather than any resource, we will pass your comments onto our contractor.</i>
AF116131	Absolutely essential	
AF116135	ABSOLUTELY	
AF116145	I agree with the proposed initiatives laid out in the document	
AF116154	It is important that all open spaces, current or future, are fully protected legally to ensure that they remain permanent open spaces with no threat of future development.	
AF116173	More bins for dog poo and litter. These should be emptied more often. More seats especially in play areas. More litter picking. If playing fields are rented out they should be made to clean up after.	<i>A review of standards will be undertaken as per policy 4.3 and 4.7</i>
AF116177	Currently play areas for children are not well looked after. They need	<i>This is addressed by 4.1 (e): ‘Integrate</i>

	more frequent basic maintenance (e.g. painting) and the equipment is poor relative to that, for example, seen in Southend parks.	<i>20 year property maintenance plans and secure appropriate funding for maintenance and repairs, to ensure the long term protection of buildings and infrastructure.'</i>
AF116201	We have beautiful green spaces but a lack of seating/benches to enjoy it	
AF116203	Rayleigh has limited green spaces but what we do have seem cleanish as safe as any area	
AF116229	This is a given	
AF116711	Signage should be provided which allows visitors to quickly and easily contact the appropriate department in the event of an issue (litter, fly tipping, vandalism etc.).	<i>This is addressed by 4.5: 'Review signage leading to and within parks and green spaces and seek to provide signage that is informative, relevant and appropriate to the location.'</i>
AF116986	This is the labour intensive, hence costly and 'simplification' seems a vital consideration. Councils off use sledgehammers to crack walnuts. One 'pet subject, of mine, although I am not affected, is that many of the open spaces are discriminatory, when it comes to access by those of limited mobility. Some wetland areas, and Cherry Orchard Park, are particularly difficult.	
AF117131	Bridle paths are not maintained as they should be. The bridle paths that runs along cherry orchard next to the football pitches has had a fence down for over 6 months and the Path has not been kept clear. The bridle paths that run through cherry orchard have not been maintained with the surface and we are now riding on a concrete base which is unsuitable.	<i>To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention: 1.11... '(e) Work with appropriate partners to develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district</i>
AF117148	Only to say that we should not spoil the "wildlife" aspect by overly trying to make open spaces look too cultivated, neat and tidy. Perhaps more thought could be given to community wardens, similar to community policemen. I believe there are a great deal of people who would willingly be the eyes and ears for the authority.	<i>These points are addressed by: A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate.</i>

3.4 'Encourage new volunteering opportunities'

AF117370 Ensure staff are pro active not reactive. Again note that there will be no increase in the number of parks/green spaces opened/closed unless locals contribute this is not addressing problem areas where local funds are limited.

COCP We note that signage leading to and within parks and green spaces is to be reviewed. The Friends of Cherry Orchard Park have been urging the council for four years to provide informative signage within the park and would be happy to use their fundraising efforts to support the purchase of such signs. There are no indicated paths or walks within the park that encourage visitors to explore further than the car park. The Page 4 of 5 Friends of Cherry Orchard Park will be happy to work with Open Spaces Officers to plan walks and informative leaflets.
The Friends of Cherry Orchard Park were consulted on the proposed Bye laws for the park. At present there are no Bye laws displayed. We have always found Customer Services to be very efficient. We wholeheartedly approve the ethos used in maintaining the park i.e. minimal use of pesticides, recycled green waste for soil conditioning, planting etc. We consider the control of ragwort should be continued in view of the stables and paddocks at Blatches Farm in the centre of the park, at Flemings Farm, also on the southern side of the bridleway and at the end of Rayleigh Avenue.

To add a further action to explicitly underline the intention:

(e) Seek to control invasive plants and injurious weeds in line with current best practice.

AF117421 At the moment, I have to say that in comparison to neighbouring Councils parks and open spaces, the smaller parks and open spaces are not particularly welcoming. Hockley woods and Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park are obviously the flag ship parks, but the smaller parks currently suffer due to old and unattractive benches and bins. I appreciate that you intend to promote the sale of memorial benches

This will be addressed by 4.1 (c) :
'Develop a more formalised programme for inspection, repairs and replacement of infrastructure such as footpaths, steps, painting, seat replacement, bins, small landscape enhancements and fencing.'

and trees, but at present many benches are old, scruffy and in some cases do not appear to be safe. Perhaps some initial investment is needed by the Council to kick start this process. Again, repairs in these smaller parks takes far too long, more staff are required because once damage is done, it encourages others to cause more damage.

AF117438	Item 4.3d Dog excrement A real problem with our park at Sweyne Park Open Space. For some reason the dog walkers seem to think that they don't have to clean up their dogs mess if they do it on the bridle way in particular. Very unpleasant when trying to walk through with young children, and you have to be on your guard the whole time. There needs to be a BIG emphasis on educating the dog owners that use our open spaces (and pavements for that matter). The years of drink driving campaigns have made drink driving a social crime as well as a legal one, why not dog fouling. If you commit to attending to dog excrement within a period of one working day across the District, you'd better start recruiting the team to pick it up now.	This will be reviewed and relates to metalled (i.e. tarmac and concrete) surfaces. 4.3 (d) to now read: 'Address reports of all broken glass, and dog excrement upon pavements, within a period of one working day'
AF117439	Positive. a lot of areas could benefit from improved signage e.g. a lot of signs on the Roach Valley path are in poor condition.	
AF117443	Yes all makes sense but our woodlands should be wild spaces, not sanitised would hate to see them all tidied up!	A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate

**Open Spaces Strategy 2015 - 2018
Consultation Comments – Action Plan**

	Consultee Comment	RDC Response
AF116093	I'm concerned about identifying 'poor quality' sites and selling them? Who will decide? Will they be sold in the public arena or to someone's wealthy friend? Property developers? I'm not sure we need or can buy more land? Where from? Farmers? That doesn't seem right. It seems like pre development plans? Identify opportunities for sponsorship through advertising? Where? In parks or fields? NO. You must never do this. It is a route to disaster. Keep nature free from consumerism.	Any assessment of the quality of open space would be subject to further consultation before any decision would be made.
AF116115	I support the linking up of the green spaces. I support the creation of new green spaces.	
AF116131	I like the idea of introducing some form of catering facilities in the two major open areas. I think that this will attract both visitors from other boroughs as well as from further afield.	
AF116132	Farm the whole issue out to the private sector	
AF116135	MY THOUGHTS ARE: DO NOT TRY AND GENERATE INCOME TO COVER OTHER COUNCIL COSTS IT IS PARAMOUNT THAT THE NATURAL SITES OF BEAUTY ARE RETAINED AND NOT MEDDLED WITH JUST TO GET INCOME. NO MENTION IS MADE OF TRAVELLERS. I TRUST THAT NO SPACE WHATSOEVER IS BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM.	Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users. The impact upon the individual park will be given consideration.
AF116154	I support having a Strategy and Action Plan as I believe it is the best way to ensure the future protection of Open Spaces and our Environment. Without such a plan developers are more likely to force through planning applications, especially on appeal. I also think that such a plan helps to defend the District from threats by neighbouring authorities.	
AF116201	Action Plan will proceed despite comments, etc. from the public	

AF116203	Stop building and keep the open space action plan	
AF116229	Cut down on removing productive agricultural land as it will only eventually lead to importing more food from abroad.	
AF116986	That the formulation of the action plan, resulting from the consultation should be presented to the public at open forums at progress points. Public perception is that the Council carries out surveys such as this, and then does what the councillors personally want by way of a vestige interest, anyway. The above will provide more accountability.	The action plan will be regularly reviewed updated and progress published upon the RDC website.
AF117148	Only to say that we should not spoil the "wildlife" aspect by overly trying to make open spaces look too cultivated, neat and tidy. Perhaps more thought could be given to community wardens, similar to community policemen. I believe there are a great deal of people who would willingly be the eyes and ears for the authority.	A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate.
COCP	have the following comments/suggestions/question in relation to the Action Plan. 5.2 (d) What are Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions? 5.3 (a) Is any part of Cherry Orchard Park at risk at risk of being identified as poor quality with sale value? 5.4 We would like to learn more about Green Flag status. 5.6 (a) As we are still waiting for the government to approve the draft Byelaws sent to them many months ago is it worth the Friends lobbying the government department to push this through. No byelaws are publicly displayed in the park at present. 5.10(b) FOCOP would like to be included as a key stakeholder regarding the legal requirements to reduce the flood risk from Nobles Green ditch whilst seeking to minimize its environmental impact. We believe it is of great importance to protect the water voles (endangered species) that inhabit the ditch and lake. 5.11(d) Will FOCOP be invited to have a representative on the proposed Wildlife Forum.	The Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. It came into force on 6 April 2010 through the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. Any assessment of the quality of open space would be subject to further consultation before any decision would be made. The Friends of Cherry Orchard County Park would be actively encouraged to be involved in any consultation that the Friends wish to make a contribution to.

5.12(a) Draft Living Landscape Document – we assume that we will be involved.

5.13(b) Could you give us an example of the type of opportunities for sponsorship through advertising that you envisage.

5.14(b) Sites for implementing new initiatives – which sites are considered to be appropriate?

5.14(c) Revenue generating activities at Cherry Orchard Country Park – does this include a Visitor’s Centre, Toilets etc.? We would like to know more about this, e.g. where and what?

5.15 We have real concerns about this and would like to know what area of the park would be considered, how many events a year might take place. What will the impact be on wildlife, park users and park neighbours?

We trust that the council and local partners will work with the Friends Group to ensure that while improving the visitor experience we protect the tranquillity and ambience of the park, and maintain the important focus on wildlife. What does the phrase “water park” mean in the context of a country park? We remain opposed to parking charges which we see as discriminating against Rochford residents for whom the park can only be accessed by car and favouring Eastwood and Southend residents who can easily access the park on foot. We think this will decrease the number of park users and discourage new visitors.

5.19(c) Sites transferred to Community Groups. We would like more information about this. Is FOCOP considered a ‘community group’?

5.20(b) Seek to establish arms length trading organization to allow the Council the ability to offer cost-effective service to new Trusts. We need to understand more about this before we can comment.

5.24(a) This section is about volunteers – should there be a definition of “volunteer” here, e.g. it may be a young person on a Government Scheme, or local support group, or both.

Income generating options would only be considered after presentation of a detailed business plan, and consultation with public space users. The impact upon the individual park will be given consideration. At present there are no definitive plans for development of any Open Space, the strategy merely wished to establish the policy to explore any opportunities that may present themselves.

A Friends Groups would be considered a Community Group.

	5.32 We would add to this list, review and increase if necessary – the number of dog waste bins in the park.	
AF117421	There is no mention of enforcement of bye laws, littering or dog fouling in the strategy. At a recent event in Cherry orchard Jubilee Country Park prior to it taking place, an area the size of about 2 football pitches was poo picked. 28 bags of dogs mess was collected (most bags contained 2 lots of mess) education and campaigns regarding litter and fouling are not working, enforcement is needed.	A review by Rochford District Council of enforcement regarding dog related issues is presently underway.
AF117438	My only comments is that knowing how stretched the Open Spaces team are, I don't know how they can possibly hit all the target dates set.	Target dates are to be regularly reviewed and updated.
AF117443	<p>There are some positive elements in here such as the possible purchase of Bullwood Woods, but the concentration on parking is very worrying. Turning the children's playground at Hockley Woods into a car park is a retrograde step. This has been a public playground for more than thirty years, I took my children there and now grandchildren. Before that it was a school sports field. It is a rare open space in Hockley and ideal for small children. It's also home to various wildlife frequented by green woodpeckers and nuthatches.</p> <p>There are already two car parks at the woods the council one and now a pay and display at the Bull public house. This would make three. The Bull car park also used to be an open space for children to play. Moving the playground into the woods would result in the loss of two habitats since this is ancient woodland and while the trees may be preserved the ground fauna and flora would be destroyed by a playground.</p> <p>The council should be doing all it can to encourage people to visit by public transport (not mentioned in report?) and bicycle. It should also be looking at the links between its open spaces Cherry Orchard, Hockley Woods and if it comes, Bullwood Wood these are</p>	There are no current plans to remove the play space at Hockley Woods.

all interconnected these links should be encouraged and promoted a network of cycle paths linking these areas would be ideal and encourage visitors to leave the car at home. In a time of global warming increasing car parking is irresponsible. To destroy a green open space and a children's playground to boot, is unforgivable.

**Open Spaces Strategy 2015 - 2018
Consultation Comments - Miscellaneous**

	Consultee Comment	RDC Response
AF116093	<p>I really disagree with parking charges for our green spaces. It really doesn't sit well with the communities that you serve. I know you want to raise revenue but this is always the quick buck but it penalises and alienates people from the council. Stop trying to make everything a paid for activity. We pay enough. It does rather seem as though this is already in place though. It didn't work well in Dedham. The residents were apoplectic with rage there at the introduction of parking fees.</p> <p>Any cafe or refreshment business should be simple and unintrusive with reasonable prices. Again, we are all tired of paying for everything everywhere at inflated prices.</p> <p>Ensure that all Green Spaces will be transferred by the developer to a private management company.?? Really?</p> <p>This sounds like another sell off of our spaces to private firms who will seek to only make a profit as that is their only way of being. Please don't even think about doing this. It will be a tragedy. I implore you to stop this pathway.</p> <p>Investigate the potential of providing a volunteer discount card? What would be discounted? Open spaces don't cost the users anything, they already pay for them through council tax. Discounts where? given by whom?</p>	<p><i>Policy 4.9 will ensure that all major sites will require a management plan. These will assess suitability of individual projects and will involve consultation with the public and any relevant community groups.</i></p> <p><i>Please note 3.5: 'Engage with the local community and user groups on proposals which change the use of or significantly alter the appearance of parks and open spaces'</i></p> <p><i>The volunteer discount initiative is to be researched therefore at this stage there no further details to state.</i></p>

AF116115	You should be creating more green spaces but sadly I feel you are destroying communities by building too many large housing developments.	
AF116132	Condense it all down to a couple of pages of A4 then employ a decent firm to implement it.	<i>An Executive Summary will be produced.</i>
AF116201	No	
AF116229	Cut down on removing productive agricultural land as it will only eventually lead to importing more food from abroad.	<i>The proposed strategy does not intend to remove any productive farmland.</i>
AF116281	There is some suggestion of 'contracting out'. Using services and staff from outside RDC is dubious. Staff must be long term, committed employees, with a sense of 'belonging'.	
AF116711	Footpaths should be clear and undergrowth cut back. Companies and individuals that block access to public footpaths and open spaces and remove signs and markers should be taken to task.	<i>To add a further action to explicitly underline this intention: 1.11... '(e) Work with appropriate partners to develop and promote footpaths, cycle-routes and bridleways within the district</i>
AF116986	To have a strategy is fine, but the likelihood of it becoming reality is where the public loses faith! The Council have a responsibility to share thinking and reasoning more openly.	
AF117148	Only to say that we should not spoil the "wildlife" aspect by overly trying to make open spaces look too cultivated, neat and tidy. Perhaps more thought could be given to community wardens, similar to community policemen. I believe there are a great deal of people who would willingly be the eyes and ears for the authority.	<i>A biodiversity audit is to be undertaken which will encourage a less formal approach to the management of parks where appropriate. 3.4 Encourage new volunteering opportunities.</i>
AF117248	These questions are too high brow, need much simpler feedback	
AF117320	Do not remove the park at Hockley woods. Please see comments on previous page.	<i>There are no current plans to remove the play space at Hockley Woods.</i>
COCP	We hope our comments will be of use when the draft document is	

next discussed and that points made by The Friends of Cherry Orchard Park, who are among the most frequent users of the park, will be given serious and proper consideration.

AF117421

If you are serious about consultation, take notice of those that you consult. If people respond to your consultations it means that they are genuinely interested. They are most likely the people that use the parks and open spaces the most and as such are far better placed to advise you than some 'parties' that have never set foot in the parks and open spaces.