

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee – 31 January 2023
SUBJECT:	Parks and Greenspaces Strategy (PGS) - Scoping Report
LEAD OFFICER:	James Jones-McFarland, Parks & Cemeteries Manager / Oliver Handson, Environmental Services & Strategy Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor David Edwards
WARDS:	All

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:

The Parks and Greenspaces Strategy (PGS) shall focus on and set out how it will contribute towards the delivery of a number of the overall aims identified in three themes of the new Council Vision for the period 2022-2026;

- Improving the wellbeing of Arun
 - Improve our parks and greenspaces by providing infrastructure that supports wellbeing
- Supporting the environment to support us
 - To consider climate change, sustainability, biodiversity, and the environment in the management and maintenance of parks and greenspaces
 - Protect and enhance our parks and greenspaces.
 - Regularly review progress toward Arun’s Carbon Neutral Strategy (2022-30) as set out in the annual Climate Action and Biodiversity Work Plan
 - Make low carbon transport including walking, cycling, travel by public transport and electric vehicle easy, convenient, and pleasant and a fundamental part of our placemaking by interconnecting communities through parks and greenspaces.
- Fulfilling Arun’s economic potential
 - Encourage the development of the district as a key tourist destination, supporting and enabling improvements and activities to increase visitor spend
 - Use regeneration opportunities to attract new and relocating businesses to the district.
 - Make best use of our parks and greenspaces to help drive the economy

DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:

Current service delivery plan (SDP) indicators for the parks and greenspaces are;

- SDP13 – Contractor achieving performance for all green space management operations following monitoring
- SDP14 – Achieve Green Flag Award for the Councils Parks, 4 by 18/19, 5 by 19/20 and maintain 5 thereafter
- SDP15 – Increase grass regimes managed specifically for biodiversity purposes

The PGS will make recommendations for revised service delivery plan indicators at the next point of review.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

The PGS is anticipated to be contained within existing budgets. A feature of the PGS is to help identify additional income streams and unlock future funding.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To seek Member approval for the principle of developing a PGS which specifically concerns existing council owned parks and greenspaces.
- 1.2. In developing and subsequently adopting the PGS, the Council will demonstrate it aspires to preserve, enhance, and improve its parks and greenspaces and at very least will have clear strategic direction and widespread understanding in respect of future decision making for this service.
- 1.3. A full draft PGS is intended to be presented before Committee within 18 months of this reports approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.4. For the Environment Committee to approve the development and drafting of a Parks and Greenspaces Strategy as per methodology and structure set out in the scoping report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. In order to meet the new Council Vision, a strategy which focuses specifically on our parks and greenspaces is highly desirable. This is to ensure that future decisions concerning the management, maintenance and development of the service and its existing greenspace assets is driven by guiding and well-established principles and is supported by robust consultation with valued stakeholders.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1. The PGS will establish and consult on seven key strategic outcomes which deliver the Councils 2022-2026 Vision (stated above) and are as follows;
 1. Improve health and wellbeing of Arun residents
 2. Implement biodiversity net gain
 3. Implement climate change mitigation
 4. Improve social cohesion
 5. Preserve parks and greenspace heritage
 6. Enhance learning opportunities through training, apprenticeships, and volunteering
 7. Unlock the investment and economic potential of the district's parks and greenspaces
- 3.2. The PGS will develop an action plan aligned with the key outcomes above.
- 3.3. The PGS will inform potential future Service Delivery Plan indicators to monitor the performance and delivery of the actions identify to meet the key outcomes.
- 3.4. It is intended that the PGS will be in place for at least ten years with a full review in year 5.
- 3.5. The PGS will provide a clear framework which will review existing systems/processes/procedures, develop practical actions and solutions to deliver the seven key strategic outcomes and identify how to measure progress with target dates. (The framework is laid out visually in the Scoping Report in Appendix 1 of this document).
- 3.6. The PGS strategic framework will include reviews of all areas relevant to the management, maintenance and development of parks and greenspaces under the ownership of the Council as well as the functions of the parks and greenspaces service itself.

3.7. The PGS will establish appropriate means to measure success. External review/assessment of our progress in delivering the PGS will be encouraged; for example through Green Flag Award and other land stewardship awards. Membership with other sector-relevant regional and national organisations will be sought.

3.8. Draft Timetable

Timeframe	Action
31st Jan 2023	Initial scoping report to Env Committee. Approval sought to take PGS forward
Feb 2023 March 2023	Develop consultation strategy & questionnaires
April 2023 – July 2023	Public/stakeholder consultation
Aug 2023 – Sept 2023	Analyse results of public/stakeholder consultation
Oct 2023 – Dec 2023	Draft PGS
Jan 2024 – Feb 2024	Seek committee approval for draft PGS

4. CONSULTATION

4.1. Consultation on the PGS will be extensive and will include a wide range of internal and external stakeholders as outlined in section 4.7 of the scoping report in Appendix 1. Consultation will primarily take the form of online digital surveys asking key questions based on the PGS outcomes.

4.2. Where appropriate dedicated focus groups will be arranged to brainstorm each of the seven outcomes and to propose a range of actions for consideration within the PGS.

5. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

5.1. Not to develop a parks & greenspace strategy

6. COMMENTS BY THE INTERIM GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1. None at this stage

7. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

7.1. None at this stage.

8. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

8.1. There are no legal or governance issues arising from the development and ultimate adoption of this strategy.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

9.1. None at this stage.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

10.1. None at this stage.

11. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

11.1. None at this stage, but the Property and Estates Service will be a key internal stakeholder and will be fully consulted if pursuing the development of a strategy.

12. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

12.1. Not needed at this stage but will be included at the time the draft strategy is ready to be brought to committee.

13. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

13.1. This will form an important element of the overall strategy with two of the seven key outcomes focussed on Biodiversity Net Gain and Climate Change Mitigation.

14. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

14.1. None at this stage but Community Safety will be a key internal stakeholder and will be fully consulted if pursuing the development of a strategy.

15.HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

15.1. None

16.FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

16.1. None at this stage

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Appendix 1 – Scoping report