

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (CONTRACTS & PROCUREMENT)**  
**TO THE EXECUTIVE**  
**5 OCTOBER 2007**

**Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 The title of this draft strategy reflects the fact that it derives from the work done to deliver objectives outlined in the Government's planning guidance PPG17 "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" (July 2002). This draft strategy is based on a wide-ranging assessment of provision established through a detailed physical audit of all facilities across the Vale (whether in District, Parish or other ownership), a Vale Voice Citizens Panel survey in 2006 and a survey of Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.2 Open spaces and sport and recreation facilities are fundamental to quality of life in the Vale and the Council needs a strategy to manage and develop these facilities. The strategy identifies the key issues facing the Council and provides a vision and plan for tackling these issues. It provides an evidence base to support policies for open space, sport and recreation in the Council's developing Local Development Framework. It also strengthens the Council's ability to justify and secure s106 contributions from developers. The strategy is supported by a detailed background document, including amongst other things the detailed survey documentation.
- 1.3 The contact officer for this report is Mike Mackay, Deputy Director (Contracts and Procurement), telephone 01235 540337. **Michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.co.uk**.

**2.0 Recommendation**

*That the Executive approves the draft strategy.*

**3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies**

- 3.1 This report relates to the Council's Vision in that it supports the Council's aims to improve the quality of life for residents and to protect the natural environment and the Council's priority to create a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment. The report does not conflict with any Council Strategies.
- 3.2 Furthermore, the report complies with existing local planning policies and reflects the Council's policy with regard to equalities and diversity and the emerging sustainability strategy. The report supports the Vale's Community Strategy, Corporate and Performance Plans. (Full details are at section 2 of the Draft Strategy).

**4.0 Timetable**

- 4.1 Following approval of the draft strategy it is anticipated that consultation will commence for a period of 6 weeks on 1 November 2007. A consultation plan is being drawn up by officers from planning, leisure and corporate communications. It is intended that the strategy will be formally adopted no later than 01 April 2008.

## **5.0 Budget / Resource Implications**

5.1 It should be recognised that implementation of this strategy through the Delivery Plan will be constrained by the Council's financial position and other resource constraints. Successful implementation will also require Parish Councils to play their part in partnership with the Vale. There are four potential resource implications consequent upon the implementation of this strategy.

- Maintaining the integrity of the survey data – it is recommended that 20% of facilities are re-audited every year. There may be costs in carrying out the surveys and maintaining the database. These are estimated to be £10k per annum.
- The majority of the open spaces in the District belong to the parish councils and it is these locations that are most in need of improvement. There are potential costs in supporting parish councils and local communities in managing and developing the quality of their open spaces, however the objective will be to provide this support through re-prioritising workload within the Leisure Services team and through community grants and / or charging for our services to ensure this support is cost neutral to the Council.
- It is likely that the Council will incur additional costs in enhancing existing poor quality open space, particularly with regard to access for the disabled, a provisional capital sum of £20k is suggested.
- Finally, the implementation of the strategy and the Planning SPD will enable the Council to improve it's performance in obtaining s106 contributions from developers but this will require additional resource in Leisure services, expected to be a part time s106 officer post. The annual cost of such a post is estimated at £20k per annum.

All of the above costs are provisional and will be finalised as part of the budget setting process for 2008/09. These costs will be far outweighed by the anticipated s106 contributions which will be made possible by the adoption of a robust strategy.

MIKE MACKAY  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (CONTRACTS & PROCUREMENT)

STEVE BISHOP  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR