



Subject:	Review and Update of the Open Spaces Strategy
Date:	11 October 2016
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
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Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	A review of the Open Spaces Strategy is a critical component of the Belfast City Local Development Plan (LDP) and will influence the future needs and direction of relevant planning policy in the city.
1.2	The purpose of this report is to outline for Members the proposed approach and timeframe associated with the review of the Council's Open Spaces Strategy – 'Your City, Your Space'.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the planned approach and timeframe associated with the review of the Open Spaces Strategy and to approve the request to procure appropriate technical assistance to support this specialist work.
3.0	Main report
	Local Development Plan
3.1	As part of Local Government Reform, the Council gained a new and effective opportunity to develop agreed future visions through the Belfast Agenda and is required to prepare a co-ordinated and planned approach to delivering this vision spatially, through the Local

Development Plan (LDP). Led by the Planning Committee, work is ongoing on evidence-gathering and development of Preferred Options Papers (POPs) on a number of thematic areas, which will all feed into the Plan strategy document, to be published by early summer 2017. A critical component of the Plan strategy is an updated Open Spaces Strategy.

Open Spaces Strategy

3.2 The Council's existing Open Spaces Strategy was launched in November 2005, with an ambitious action plan. Delivery of the Open Spaces Strategy enabled the Council to achieve the following outcomes: healthier places, safer spaces, protected heritage, shared spaces and increased community involvement and participation. Some key successes achieved include:

- Attainment of 15 green flag accreditations;
- Development of management plans for open spaces in partnership with stakeholders;
- Funding contributions from Heritage Lottery Funding, Sport NI, Public Health Agency, DSD BRO and Big Lottery;
- Delivery of the Playing Pitches and Growing Communities strategies;
- Improved site presence in parks with the introduction of a park warden service;
- Increased number and participation levels at local events and outreach programmes;
- Delivery of the 'Parklife' outdoor education programme to schools across Belfast;
- Improved management of all Belfast street trees; and
- Introduction and delivery of a playground improvement programme.

3.3 In the context of the statutory requirement for a Local Development Plan, it is now necessary for the Council to review and update the Open Spaces Strategy based on more recent development of significant regional and local strategic, policy and planning changes. This will necessitate broadening the strategy's existing focus on Council-owned open spaces, to set out a vision for all open spaces in the city.

Planning Policy

3.4 Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) provides guidance on the preparation of LDPs and requirements in relation to open spaces states that councils should:

- Reflect on the aims, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS;
- Survey/ assess existing open space provision and future needs (public and private);
- Consider open spaces within or adjoining urban areas;
- Consider outdoor recreational facilities in the countryside; and
- Take account of the provision, role, distribution and accessibility of other forms of

open space i.e. children's play areas, availability of indoor sports facilities.

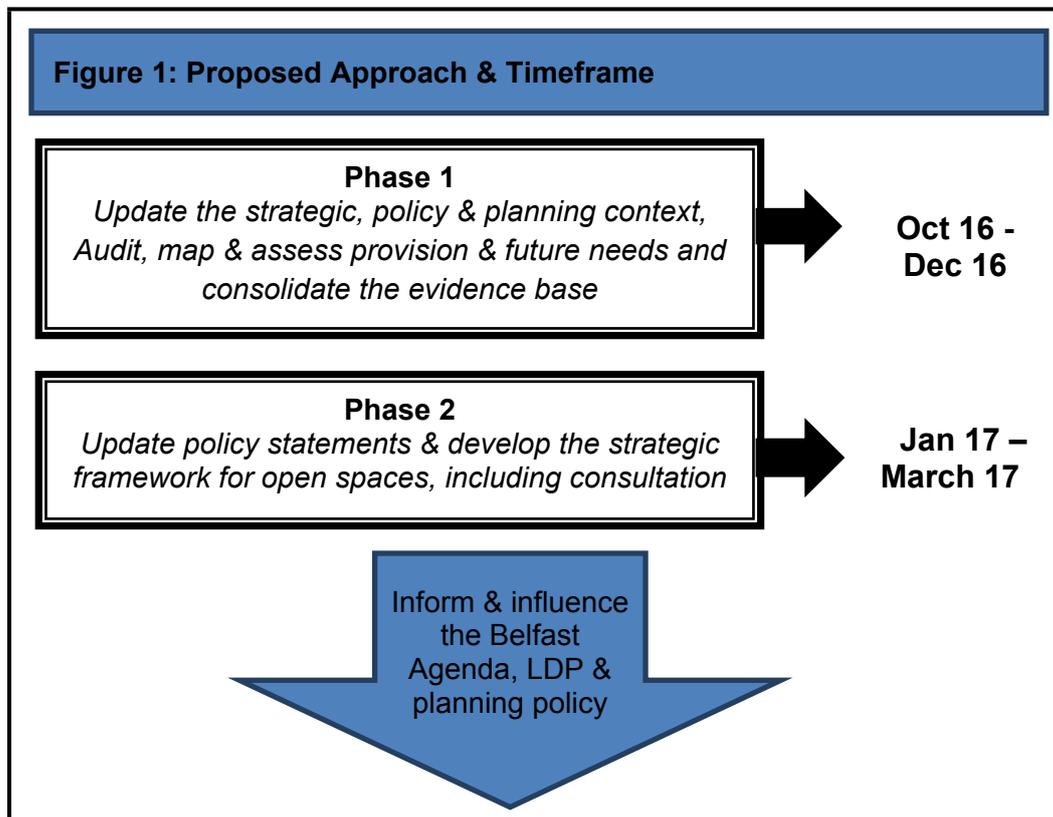
3.5 Planning Policy 8 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (PPS8) defines open space as *"all open space of public value, including not just land, but also inland bodies of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation and can also act as a visual amenity"*.

3.6 The typology of open space of public value ranges from parks and gardens to outdoor sports facilities, play parks, greenways, urban green spaces, community gardens and cemeteries. A full list of open space typology to be covered in the new Open Spaces Strategy is documented in Appendix 1.

Planned Approach and Timeframe

3.7 The ambition is for Council to review the Open Spaces Strategy and develop a draft framework by April 2017 for public consultation, which is required to inform the ongoing preparation of the LDP. An action plan for the Council-owned open spaces will be developed thereafter.

3.8 The proposed approach to review and develop the revised Open Spaces Strategy and timeframes are outlined below.



<p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p>	<p>An inter-departmental working group made up of officers from various disciplines across the Council will be set up to guide the review of the Open Spaces Strategy, including the Planning and Place Service.</p> <p>It was also agreed by the People and Communities Committee in October 2015 to review the Belfast Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) which will take into account the new Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy. This will also help support the evidence base required as part of the LDP process.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>While Council officers will be involved in the development of the strategy, this is a specialised expertise and external technical assistance will be required, the cost of which will be met through existing departmental budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no equality and good relations implications at this stage. Equality screening of emerging proposals will be undertaken as part of the strategy review process.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Appendix 1: Typology of open space</p>