

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM 8**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**9 MARCH 2006**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION/KEY DECISION**

***Regeneration and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Cook  
Environment – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Nelson  
Arts, Leisure and Culture – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mrs O’Donnell***

#### **STOCKTON BOROUGH OPEN SPACE AUDIT**

1. Summary

This report invites Cabinet to note the Borough-wide Open Space Audit prior to its publication for public consultation. The Open Space Audit findings will inform future documents, local planning policy and strategies including *inter alia* the creation of minimum open space standards for use in Planning.

2. Recommendation

That Cabinet note the report and approve the Open Space Audit prior to public consultation.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

PPG17 “Sport and Recreation” sets out Government policy on the subject of open space. In promoting sport and recreation in the widest sense, it requires an audit of existing open space provision to be undertaken, having regard for its value as playing space as well as a wider visual and recreation amenity. A companion guide to PPG17 sets out the framework for undertaking the Audit.

Following a pilot audit in Billingham in 2003, a comprehensive survey was undertaken of all open spaces identified in a desk-top study and subsequent site visits. This survey work has been completed and the findings analysed to produce an interim summary of findings for public consultation.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council’s code of conduct

(paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc.; whether or not they are a member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting, and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room during consideration of the relevant item.

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## **CABINET DECISION/KEY DECISION**

### **STOCKTON BOROUGH OPEN SPACE AUDIT**

#### **SUMMARY**

This report invites Cabinet to note the Borough-wide Open Space Audit prior to its publication for public consultation. The Open Space Audit findings will inform future documents, local planning policy and strategies including *inter alia* the creation of minimum open space standards for use in Planning.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Cabinet note the report and approve the Open Space Audit prior to public consultation.

#### **DETAIL**

1. PPG17 "Sport and Recreation" sets out Government policy on the subject of open spaces. In promoting sport and recreation in the widest sense, it requires an audit of existing open space provision to be undertaken, having regard for its value as playing space as well as a wider visual and recreation amenity. A companion guide to PPG17 sets out the framework for undertaking the Audit.
2. Following a pilot audit in Billingham in 2003, a comprehensive survey was undertaken of all open spaces identified in a desk-top study and subsequent site visits. Thanks go out to all the members of staff across the departments who donated a lot of time and energy assisting this survey.
3. This survey work has been completed and the findings analysed to produce an interim summary of findings for public consultation. This is a substantial document and to limit publication costs, a copy is available in the Members Library and in each of Stockton, Billingham and Thornaby town centre libraries.

#### **FUTURE STEPS**

4. Public consultation should help determine the needs and aspirations of local communities with regard to open space requirements and highlight whether existing open spaces provision in terms of size, location and typology are appropriately fulfilling their needs. This knowledge can then be used to develop local space standards from which local policy can be informed.

5. Once the local space standards are developed they will be used as baseline data (which will be monitored regularly from now on) to inform the Council of open space requirements and the needs of local communities when developing open space strategies and assessing planning applications

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial**

6. There is a cost incurred for the third party assessment of the Audit, however, this has already been accounted for in the Planning Budget.

### **Legal**

7. There are no significant legal implications of this Audit as it is merely a 'fact finding' exercise that will inform other documents and is not itself a policy document.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

8. It is considered that there is no significant risk associated with the undertaking of the Open Space Audit. Conversely, if the Council does not undertake the Open Space Audit it will be unable to develop minimum open space standards, thus weakening its stance in negotiating with developers and ultimately in determining planning applications.

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

9. Within the Stockton Community Plan the following specific actions are identified which are relevant to this exercise:
  - satisfaction with Stockton as a place to live
  - residents who feel that their local area is getting better or worse
  - satisfaction with leisure facilities
  - satisfaction with parks and open spaces

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

10. The summary of findings will be made available for the public to comment upon and, if necessary, propose additional sites for inclusion in the survey. It is anticipated that this will be in May and June (following Full Council) for a period of six weeks. A summary presentation will be given to each of the area partnership boards and a separate session in conjunction with SRCGA.

## **Corporate Director of Development & Neighbourhood Services**

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Background Papers

Stockton on Tees Local Plan  
Report to Planning Committee 22 February 2006

Planning Policy Guidance note 17 "Sports and Recreation"

<u>Education Related Item?</u>	No
<u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u>	All
<u>Property Implications</u>	N/A
<u>List of Annexes</u>	N/A