

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

9th July 2024

Report Title	Parks Development Strategy: Consultation and Engagement
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List of Appendices

Appendix One: Draft Parks Development Strategy

1. Purpose of Report

1. Provides Board members with an overview of WNC's emerging Parks Development Strategy.
2. Outlines the consultation and engagement WNC will be undertaking to seek the views of interested stakeholders on the Strategy.
3. Makes Board membership aware of the upcoming consultation and engagement, share the emerging / draft questions and to encourage participation

2. Executive Summary

This paper provides an overview of WNC's emerging Parks Development Strategy, its vision and supporting objectives. WNC's Assets and Environment directorate have developed ambitious plans to enhance the social value its major parks generate.

Through focusing on three themes, WNC intends to implement the depth and breadth of the activities which will help its major parks to be reinvented as "destinations" appealing to local communities and visitors alike, celebrate park-specific context, environment and heritage, enabling those people who live in, work in and visit West Northamptonshire to live their best lives.

3. Recommendations

1. Board Members to note this report and supporting presentation
2. Board Members, and / or their colleagues, to complete the upcoming consultation and engagement exercise on behalf of their employer and / or themselves
3. Board Members to share information about this consultation exercise with their professional and personal networks

4. Parks Development Strategy

West Northamptonshire Council has a range of great parks, which are vital for securing the health and well-being of the people of West Northamptonshire. The draft Parks Development Strategy aims to make the parks estate even better, filling key gaps with new parks and enhancing existing parks, increasing the range of activities on offer.

The Parks Development Strategy sets out how we will deliver our vision: to make our parks and green spaces places where people can exercise, relax and enjoy nature, build communities and support biodiversity. Covering a twenty year period to 2044, it describes how WNC will realise its primary aim, to protect, maintain and enhance its parks enabling them to meet the current and future needs of WNC communities, whilst also supporting the delivery of the authority's wider aspirations, as described in its Corporate Plan.

In addition to introducing WNC's vision for its major parks it outlines three further aspirations:

1. To support the delivery of the shared, multi-agency, "live your best life" ambitions and WNC's corporate plan
2. To explore increasingly sustainable ways of managing and funding WNC's parks
3. To ensure WNC's parks continue to evolve and meet the needs of residents and communities, positively contributing to making West Northamptonshire a great place to live, work and visit

The draft Strategy is attached at Appendix One.

5. Vision

WNC's vision for its major parks comprises three ambitions, specifically, places:

1. Where people can exercise and relax in the open air, enjoying nature and heritage
2. Where people can build communities
3. Which support local biodiversity to thrive

Through delivering the strategy's vision, WNC will be able to evidence the contribution its major parks are making to support the delivery of other WNC and wider partner / multi agency strategies and plans, for the betterment of those who live in, work in and visit West Northamptonshire.

6. Objectives

Underpinning WNC's vision are six priorities. These priorities will inform and shape park-specific activity, ensuring proposals are appropriate, affordable and sustainable:

1. Provide a network of safe and accessible parks serving the whole of West Northamptonshire
2. Create spaces for health and wellbeing to flourish
3. Preserve and develop the biodiversity, heritage, and landscape values of all sites
4. Encourage engagement and participation of communities and partners to develop a sense of pride and community cohesion
5. Secure investment in our parks
6. Make good use of public money and assets

Through delivering this strategy WNC intends to reinvent its parks as "destinations" appealing to local communities and visitors alike, which celebrate park-specific context, environment and heritage.

7. Themes

The activity WNC will initiate to realise its vision and objectives is described through three broad themes. These are:

1. Overarching actions. A range of activities to enhance WNC's existing major parks as local and regional destinations, including maintaining good land management practices; supporting local nature recovery and biodiversity; ensuring parks are safe, accessible and welcoming spaces for all and; introducing new activities.
2. New and renewed parks. Initiatives to create new major parks in those localities where there are gaps in coverage / accessibility which reflect the local environment and heritage.
3. Enhance existing Parks. Activities to capitalise on and leverage additional social value associated with WNC's established major parks that can enhance the park-specific offer whilst retaining individual charm and character.

Whilst all of the Strategy is likely to be of interest to Board members, the activities of the Outdoor Learning Service and the proposals to explore extending this to help children and young people who struggle to engage with conventional education may one area of particular interest.

The Strategy's supporting Action Plan defines the depth and breadth of activities required to underpin delivery.

8. Consultation and Engagement

WNC is currently developing plans to consult on the draft Parks Development strategy. This will be underpinned by a series of questions we want stakeholders to consider and respond to. Representing a mix of open and closed questions, we will ask stakeholders to share their observations. Through adopting this approach, we aim to ensure stakeholders have sufficient opportunity to provide insightful responses to the questions posed.

Stakeholders / respondents will have the opportunity to include "free text" responses to all key questions. It is anticipated this will generate a rich, nuanced feedback enabling

WNC to reflect on stakeholder perception of its emerging Parks Development Strategy and refine it accordingly.

At the time of writing work, WNC is still developing its consultation and engagement exercise, with its launch date to be confirmed. However, recognising the frequency Board meets, WNC wanted to ensure members and their host organisations had sufficient notice of this consultation exercise and therefore sufficient time to consider and complete, and to encourage those they engage with to participate in the consultation.

This paper will be supported by a presentation intended to clarify where we are currently and begin the conversation we want to have about our parks, including some of the great things that are already happening.

9. Next Steps

WNC activity will focus on:

1. Continuing to refine its consultation and engagement plan to support stakeholders shape and inform the Parks Development strategy.
2. Developing its list of key stakeholders so they can be proactively informed as to the launch of this exercise.
3. Ensuring all the communications required to maximise the impact of this exercise have been developed and are ready for publication, recognising the need to evolve and adapt messaging as required.
4. Analysing stakeholder responses, building an evidence base as to what people think of the proposals contained within the Parks Development strategy and identifying where alternative or revised approaches are suggested.
5. Finalising the Parks Development Strategy, based upon the outcome of the post consultation analysis, deciding what revisions are to be progressed.
6. Adopting and publishing the final version of the Parks Development Strategy.
7. Developing and publishing a “You Said ... We Did” enabling stakeholders and respondents to understand how the information provided shaped the final strategy.