

8 December 2021		ITEM: 13 Decision: 110593
Cabinet		
Public Land Maintenance Strategy		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Andrew Jefferies – Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Leisure		
Accountable Assistant Director: Daren Spring – Assistant Director for Street Scene and Leisure		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers – Director for Public Realm		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Thurrock's public land and open spaces should enrich the quality of resident's lives, have a positive environmental impact and contribute towards a healthy lifestyle. The Public Land Maintenance Strategy sets out guidelines as to how we will change some of the current delivery methods to increase efficiency and help improve and maintain our public land in the future.

1. Recommendation:

1.1 That Cabinet approve the adoption of the Public Land Maintenance Strategy and its recommendations as shown within this report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This Public Land Maintenance Strategy has been prepared to ensure that all of the boroughs public open spaces are effectively maintained in the most efficient and cost effective way possible. This should decrease the amount of maintenance required in some areas and allow resources to be redirected and targeted in other areas, where more frequent and specialised maintenance is required, increasing resilience.

2.2 The Strategy will also inform future action plans and projects for the delivery of improvements to existing open spaces and new open spaces triggered by development. This enhances the opportunity to secure funding both internally and externally for the improvement and maintenance of Thurrock's public

open spaces, including possible S106 developer contributions, or match funding from other organisations.

3. Delivery Options

3.1 This Public Land Maintenance Strategy has key methods of delivery, these include

- Working with and developing “Friends of Parks” groups and Community Volunteers
- Long Grass Regimes / Wildflowers / meadow planting
- Low maintenance schemes
- Tree Planting
- Planned Parks Improvement Programme
- Supporting the progress of the Council’s Local Plan

3.2 It is important to increase the biodiversity and habitats within the borough, by not mowing certain areas of grass or to use the terminology “no mow” areas and leaving grass to grow. This has now become a more widespread and accepted concept to encourage wildlife. Some areas will benefit from planting wild flower areas to also help enhance this. It is therefore recommended where possible that this is the approach taken by the Council.

3.3 The strategy sets out plans for site specific action plans to be conducted for the Council’s cemeteries, parks and open spaces. This is to ensure that these areas are fit for purpose and to identify any need to replace and repair the infrastructure within these areas.

3.4 Going forward, all green open spaces that the Council are responsible for maintaining, will be categorised by their typology, these being:

- Typology 1 - Formal Parks and Spaces
- Typology 2 – Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces
- Typology 3 – Amenity Space and Urban Open Spaces
- Typology 4 - Grass Verges and Roundabouts
- Typology 5 - Cemeteries
- Typology 6 - Outdoor Sport

Each typology is then broken down further by Zones, these being:

- High amenity (high maintenance)
- General/medium amenity (standard maintenance)
- Low amenity (low maintenance)

This will provide a clear understanding of how we maintain these areas to the proposed maintenance standards.

3.5 Each piece of land will also be identified in terms of which pieces of equipment will be used to maintain these spaces. This will be applied to each typology so that there is a clear and published understanding of what land is maintained by Thurrock Council, and how it is maintained.

- 3.6 A communication plan will be devised to inform the public of any changes to the maintenance programme and the reasons why these changes are being trialed or implemented.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Public Land Maintenance Strategy provides a clear guide on how to maximise the opportunity to present the borough, increase biodiversity and wildlife habitats. To help maintain areas that require more frequent maintenance regimes and improve air quality.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

This report was presented to Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7 October 2021. The committee recommended that Cabinet adopt the Policy.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 This relates to the corporate priority – Green Environments that everyone has reason to take pride in.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

This report does not impact upon the revenue budget, however to deliver the full infrastructure improvements will require developer and/or capital funding.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
**Assistant Director Law and Governance, and
Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Appropriate checks for land ownership and compliance with relevant legislation will be need to be assured, taking legal advice as necessary, in due course.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**

Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

Consultation and engagement will take place across the borough including working with community forums and ward members to inform a Community Equality Impact Assessment for the Public Land Maintenance Strategy

- 7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children.

When considering designs we will consult with the Community Safety Partnership Manager to ensure we are aiming to design out antisocial behaviour.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- N/A

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Public Land Maintenance Strategy

Report Author:

Vincent Taylor

Strategic Lead – Clean and Green Services

Public Realm