

Appendix C: Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee Minute SCOSC/13/102 – Leisure Strategy Adoption

The Policy and Strategy Manager (Leisure Services) provided a presentation that set out the purpose of the Leisure Strategy and its key components. The presentation also outlined the information detailed within each chapter of the Strategy and the next steps in its implementation in order for it to be adopted as interim Technical Guidance to inform the emerging Development Strategy. Public consultation had been undertaken with regards to the Strategy, the outcomes of which were outlined in the report.

In light of the report and the presentation the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Whether it was appropriate to call it a 'leisure' Strategy as this could encompass many different facilities. The Strategy and Policy Manager clarified that people had different interpretations of what constituted 'leisure'.
- The Council is developing a questionnaire for Parish Councils to identify where the Council may be able to provide them with CBC land for new allotments and cemeteries.
- The positive nature of including burial grounds and cemeteries in the Strategy.
- The need to identify additional football pitches in the Strategy for Cranfield as proposed developments would not address existing deficiency. In response the Strategy and Policy Manager confirmed the data regarding Cranfield would be reviewed.
- Whether it was feasible to expect sufficient Section 106 contributions from the North Houghton Regis development to fund a leisure centre in Houghton Regis. The Policy and Strategy Manager clarified that officers were working with the development consortium to achieve an indoor leisure facility on the development, however, this is within the financial constraints of the viability assessment. At the current time a new Houghton Regis leisure centre is predicated on S106 contributions as there is currently no CBC capital budget for it. In addition, the Assistant Director Planning clarified that there were potential contributions from the HRN1 application and future planning applications in the Houghton Regis, Dunstable and North Luton area. At this stage however, there were no firm guarantees that the value of the HRN1 scheme would be of a sufficient level to deliver a contribution towards a new leisure centre and Development Management would have to weigh up various priorities to determine whether a new leisure centre was of higher priority than other planning obligations (for example transport). If the Council implemented a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the Council would have greater flexibility over the use of CIL funding, and could

prioritise spend of CIL funds towards a new leisure centre rather than other infrastructure requirements.

- Convenient access to open space will be a requirement when delivering new development being planned for locally. It was important that the Council was driven by the large growth agenda and that there was clarity in delivering convenient accessibility to local open space.
- Indoor cycling facilities are not included in the Leisure Strategy despite its growing popularity. The Policy and Strategy Manager clarified that indoor cycling facilities are a specialist activity and these are not within the scope of the strategy, however, cycling activities are included in Chapter 4: the Physical Activity Strategy.
- How quality improvements had been defined. The Policy and Strategy Manager clarified that quality recommendations were based on site-specific research which could be used to inform how Town and Parish Councils could achieve developer funding, or apply for external funding. At the next stage the Council will consult with asset owners to assess schemes in terms of viability and this information will be used in the Action Plans which will be developed
- Whether it was feasible to expect Town and Parish Councils to provide funding and deliver schemes. The Assistant Director Planning commented that Members might wish to consider whether additional capital funding was necessary to provide a fund that groups could draw from in order to deliver specific schemes. The Council would support
- Town and Parish Councils in applying for other pots of external funding that might be available to deliver schemes.
- Arrangements that could be put in place to ensure smaller towns and villages were prioritised for funding that arose from a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Assistant Director Planning commented that arrangements for prioritising the use of CIL would be developed after members had considered what an appropriate level of CIL should be. At that point, the Committee would get the opportunity to consider how the use of CIL might be prioritised.

RECOMMENDED that Executive

1. Following formal consultation required for adoption as Technical Guidance, approve the minor amendments to the adopted Leisure Strategy Chapter 1: the Leisure Facilities Strategy
2. Note the comments of the Committee in relation to the process and proposed policy standards and facility recommendations of the draft Leisure Strategy, Chapters 2 and 3.
3. Adopt the Leisure Strategy (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) for Central Bedfordshire and as Technical Guidance for development management purposes.