

TITLE OF REPORT: Programme of Improvement of Green Spaces within Gateshead

REPORT OF: Colin Huntington, Strategic Director, Housing, Environment & Healthy Communities

SUMMARY

This report provides a full update on the current and planned programme of improvement of green spaces in Gateshead. An overview report outlining this programme was brought to OSC earlier in the year for their consideration and scrutiny.

Background

1. OSC have requested as part of their 2021-22 work programme a report on the programme of improvement of green spaces within Gateshead.
2. In July 2021, OSC received an introductory report outlining the areas and themes that will be covered in detail in this report. Scrutiny committee members were asked the particular areas of interest they would want included or a particular focus on.
3. This report provides a full update detailing the current and planned programme of improvement to green spaces in the borough, alongwith named contact officers for each activity if scrutiny committee members require further information.

Programme of Improvement to Green Spaces

4. The borough of Gateshead stretches almost 13 miles along the south bank of the river Tyne and covers 55 square miles, making it the largest of the five Tyne and Wear authorities. Around two thirds of the borough is rural. The definition of Green spaces referred to in this report includes;
 - general open green spaces owned or managed by the council across the borough, including estate greens,
 - 28 parks and 120 fixed play sites, with a range of facilities, managed by Gateshead Council,
 - over 20 Countryside sites including meadows, woodlands, local nature reserves and sites of special scientific interest, and
 - the green spaces owned and/or managed by our partners such as Durham Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission, local conservation groups, the National Trust and Woodland Trust.
5. *Appendix 1* to this report provides the detailed update on the current and planned programme of improvement of green spaces.

6. OSC will receive a full report and presentation including;
- update on the current programme of improvements already underway for 2021-22,
 - planned improvements or projects which are in development, subject to approval of external funding bids or that require permissions to proceed, and
 - future plans and longer term ambitions to further improve our green spaces in Gateshead.
7. Members will see from the breadth and depth of activities covered in Appendix 1, that there is a significant amount of work underway and planned across the borough to improve our green spaces, with resource commitments in place for 2021-22 and beyond. Any additions or revisions to these activities will have a resource impact including capacity to deliver the existing work programme.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC:
- (i) consider the update provided and invite views and comments from members on the current programme of improvement to green spaces and the future plans outlined in Appendix 1
 - (ii) identify any areas they feel they require more detail or require further scrutiny to be added to the OSC future work programme

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