



Committee and Date

Environment and Services
Scrutiny Committee

13th June 2016

Item

10

Public

**SHROPSHIRE'S PUBLIC OPEN SPACE,
SPORT & RECREATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

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1. Summary

Shropshire Council has a significant role to play, as a key policy maker with regulatory/statutory frameworks, such as Planning, to create the right environment to promote opportunities for play and recreation. This requires a robust and up-to-date assessment of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities to inform the need to make new provision through new development, via on site design and developer contributions.

Planning Policy and Outdoor Partnerships have appointed a consultant to update existing Public Open Space (POS) Sport & Recreation information which was collected in 2009 and to review future needs across the county, based on projected population growth for the period to 2036. The result of the survey, through a short term contract, to be completed by September 2016, will provide an up to date evaluation of the adequacy of the supply of particular POS types, now and in the future.

The up-to-date needs assessment will inform the proposed review of the Local Development Plan. It will enable Shropshire Council and local communities to identify and prioritise POS needs, alongside informing the most appropriate delivery mechanism, whether through on site design, s106 planning obligations, CIL or other monies. It will thereby support investment in new and existing POS, sport & recreational facilities, as part of the 18 area Place Plans.

2. Recommendations

- i. That Councillors comment on the progress made to date with work to review and update evidence which will inform the current and future provision of POS within Shropshire's 18 Market Towns.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The inclusion of public open space is critical to the continuing health and wellbeing of the local residents. Public open space meets all the requirements of Public Health to provide space and facilities for adults and children to be both active physically and mentally and to enable residents to meet as part of the community.

The risk of not undertaking a POS, sport & recreational needs assessment, is that communities, through increased development, may well have a deficit of open space for play, sport & recreation to support the local population's health and wellbeing. Delivering this short term contract will therefore update local communities POS & recreational needs.

4. Financial Implications

£10K has been allocated from Outdoor Partnership budgets to fund the POS & Recreational Needs Assessment. A brief has been developed (appendix 1) for a short term contract to be undertaken by a consultancy, Red Kite Ltd, based in Coalport, who have just been awarded the contract. Red Kite has experience in undertaking similar POS and recreational strategy/needs assessments for authorities within the West Midlands.

5. Background

The National Planning Policy Framework states that 'access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities'. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

Shropshire Council's SAMDev Plan Policy MD2 requires all development to provide adequate open space, set at a minimum standard of 30sqm per person (equivalent to 3ha per 1,000 population). For residential developments, the number of future occupiers will be based on a standard of one person per bedroom. For developments of 20 dwellings and more, the open space needs to comprise a functional area for play and recreation. This is intended to deliver a single recreational area, rather than a number of small pockets spread throughout the development site, in order to improve the overall quality and usability of the provision.

Although the requirement to provide open space within developments has been provided for within the above policy, what has not been required or monitored, particularly within smaller development of between 15-30 houses, is how these open spaces are being used, i.e. as per the POS typologies set out below. The usage of the open space infrastructure, such as play equipment, is to be determined by local communities and Shropshire Council through the allocation of CIL funding.

- local parks
- amenity open space
- provision for children
- provision for young people
- natural and semi natural open space

- allotments

As reported to Scrutiny on 30th March 2015, a comprehensive local assessment of all types of open space provision was undertaken by consultants PMP (2009) who brought together a series of surveys which were completed between 2005 and 2008, on behalf of Shropshire Council and its predecessor authorities. The assessment provided a robust evidence base for determining local needs and has informed the development of current local plan policies. However, the above assessment is nearly 10 years old and there is now a need to update it to inform the planning and delivery of future requirements.

Planning Policy and Outdoor Partnerships have recently appointed a consultant to survey existing provision, including POS which has been provided by development since the last survey in 2009 and to identify future needs, based on projected population growth. The result of the survey, through a short term contract, will provide an up to date evaluation of the under or over supply of particular POS types, now and in the future.

Shropshire Council will use the revised data to update the Place Plans, which are central to the delivery of sustainable places, providing place based infrastructure and investment plans. They assist Shropshire Council and local communities in making informed decisions on infrastructure priorities and recommended delivery mechanisms, including the allocation of CIL revenue. Town and Parish Councils will have the opportunity, through the results from the survey, to review and assess what their own community POS requirements are, for example Church Stretton Town Council has recently appointed Shropshire Playing Fields Association, to undertake an in-depth review to provide an Assessment of Need and Opportunities for Open Spaces, Sport, Play and Recreation Facilities within Church Stretton.

The experience of the work undertaken by Shropshire Playing Fields Association is helping with the POS & Recreational Needs Assessment contract, as they are part of a small steering group.

6. Conclusions

There is still a need for further investment and development of existing POS, sport and recreational requirements. With no specific revenue budget likely to be available in the future, communities and local members will need robust evidence to prioritise local needs and support future investment decisions. The survey will provide an up-to-date POS needs assessment that will enable communities to look in more detail at their POS opportunities and to use some of the Neighbourhood CIL money towards play improvements and may well be able match this with small community grants.

The survey data will also update the Place Plans, which are central to the delivery of sustainable places, providing place based infrastructure and investment plans.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL'S PLAY AREA PROVISION REPORT 30th March 2015

Cabinet Member's (Portfolio Holder)

Stuart West - Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture

Malcom Price - Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing, Regulatory Services and Environment

Local Member

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Shropshire Public Open Space and Recreational Needs Assessment Brief