

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	SOUTHAMPTON COMMON PLAN		
DATE OF DECISION:	18 DECEMBER 2018		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC REALM		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
NOT APPLICABLE			
BRIEF SUMMARY			
The most recent management plan for Southampton Common relates to the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is out of date and does not embrace the full use of the common.			
The Council has therefore worked with the Southampton Common Forum (SCF) Group to come up with a framework plan which will enable a way forward to produce more detailed delivery plans. This report therefore seeks to get the Southampton Common Plan 2019-30 (the Plan) adopted so that The Council and The SCF can then move forward and produce delivery plans for the various other activities on the Common.			
As part of the governance and delivery of the Plan the Council is seeking to move forward in partnership with the Common Forum to create a charitable foundation. The charitable foundation will then work in parallel with and complementing the work of the Council.			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	To adopt the Southampton Common Plan 2019 – 30.	
	(ii)	To delegate to the Service Director Transactions & Universal Services the power to work with the Southampton Common Forum to establish a charitable foundation.	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	Adopting the Plan will give a clear way forward for the enhancement of Southampton Common enabling a framework for future management and governance to be delivered.		
2.	This will enable us to provide a robust governance and management system for Southampton Common.		
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED			
3	Do Nothing – This would leave Southampton Common without any clear management plan for the future or effective governance arrangements. Working with the SCF would continue in an ad-hoc way with no terms for engagement.		

4	Complete a detailed management plan covering all aspects of the maintenance and use of Southampton Common – this was considered to be too onerous as a one off project. The Southampton Common Plan is designed to facilitate a framework of more detailed plans to be written in a timely fashion, enabling engagement of stakeholders at the appropriate time and reducing the risk of non-adoption due to disagreements over minor/detailed points.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
5	Southampton Common is an area of Council owned parkland straddling the Shirley and Portswood Wards. It is approximately 148 hectares in size and provides wildlife habitat, recreation, wellbeing and events space for the residents of and visitors to Southampton.
6	In 1993, following a designation on part of the Common to become an SSSI, a 20 year management plan was drawn up, consulted on and adopted by the Council. A further plan was then written in 2003 in order to give guidance to the original plan and to address other issues which had not been covered in the original plan. Although much of these plans are still relevant, they are out of date and require reviewing and updating.
7	Since 2008 resource levels within the Parks and Street Cleansing teams have been diminishing, in line with Council resources as a whole. This has had a negative impact on the maintenance standards at the Common. Some areas of the Common have become overgrown, scrub and tree cover has increased and the open space footprint has reduced as a result.
8	This reduced maintenance led to residents forming a community group with a view to working in partnership with the Council to manage and maintain the Common into the future. Their first step was to carry out an extensive consultation (over 2100 replies) asking what facilities they use on the Common, for likes, dislikes and any improvements. . The results of this consultation were published and a press release sent out. These findings provided a good basis for the development of the plan and the future management of the Common.
9	A working group was set up with the SCF in order to draw up an overarching plan which could provide a framework for the more detailed delivery plans that would be required. The SCF consulted on an early draft of this plan, with very positive results, and this then became the basis for the Southampton Common Plan 2019-30 (the Plan).
10	<p>The Plan was drafted and an engagement with residents and visitors was undertaken between 28th June 2018 and 30th July 2018. Engagement using social media and email alerts ran from 2nd July – 22nd July 2018 and received 842 responses. We used the following media to engage with the public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of emails and posts • Facebook: 4 posts throughout July. • Twitter: 4 tweets throughout July. • LinkedIn: 1 LinkedIn post • E-alerts (including Your City Your Say; Community news and events; City news): included in 5 email alerts of 3 different mailing lists across July.

	The results have been analysed and interpreted in the attached Common Plan questionnaire results document. In summary they showed a strong agreement with the Plan, its vision and the priorities set out within it.
11	The only area which was slightly less well supported was to increase the proportion of open and accessible space. The Council worked with the SCF to reword this section to reflect comments made and to give residents confidence that there will not be a significant impact from this priority on the other priorities within the plan.
12	The Plan (as attached) is therefore the result of working closely with SCF, taking on their consultation work and testing this through the Council's own engagement process. It is a robust document which provides a good way forward to start to deliver management plans that will improve the Common for residents and visitors.
13	With regards to future working with the SCF, they are keen (as are the Council) to continue to work together. There are a number of options and the attached paper explores these in more detail (enc. 3). The preferred option would be for the Council and SCF to work together to establish a charitable foundation. This would provide associated benefits such as fundraising, recruiting volunteers and implementing an annual volunteer work schedule, promoting the Common and providing independent viewpoint regarding the management of the Common.
14	The formation of a charitable foundation would provide a governance model which would enable it to provide resources through its charitable goals. It is envisaged that the goals would be set to help to manage, maintain and improve Southampton Common and donations to the charity would be apportioned accordingly. Through a memorandum of understanding the Council and the Foundation would work together to achieve the charitable goals, providing greater engagement, accountability and transparency leading to greater ownership and successful delivery of outcomes by stakeholders in the management of the Common. The exact form of the foundation will be explored through ongoing work with SCF and may involve a city wide foundation.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
15	There are no direct cost implications for capital or revenue to adopt the plan. Officer time will be required to both liaise with the SCF and write the delivery plans, which will be contained within existing staffing budgets. There will also be a resource implication for setting up the charitable foundation. There is no cost associated with registration, other than voluntary donation. The foundation would be run on a voluntary basis, and input from Southampton officers. Again this would be covered from existing staffing budgets. The foundation will not involve any transfer of asset or liability, and therefore no long term commitments to Southampton City Council. Setting up a charitable foundation will provide an opportunity to raise funding which would not otherwise be available to the Council.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
16	A new governance model is likely to have implications on the way this land is managed, the charitable foundation model proposed does not, however,

	remove the Common from the Council ownership or affect its status as an important public open space and registered common in the heart of Southampton.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
17	S.1 Localism Act 2011 permits the Council to work with residents and interested parties to prepare management and engagement plans relating to the use of public space and land within the City.
18	The Public Health Acts 1865 – 1944, together with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, The Hampshire Act 1983 and the Local Governments Act 1972 and 2000 confer a variety of land management powers and duties on the Council that have been considered in the formulation of the proposed plan.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
19	The Southampton Common Plan is fully in line with Council policy and current legislation and should not therefore have any significant legal implications
20	The model of governance proposed will have legal implications to ensure that any charitable foundation is correctly set up and complies with the Charities Act 2011. There will need to be Legal input into the process and further public consultation on the proposal. The proposals will also be considered in the context of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act together with relevant land holding powers, procurement legislation and other material considerations.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
21	The risk of adopting this high level plan is that it is not delivered due to unforeseen circumstances. This could have implications for the Council's organisational reputation with stakeholder's expectations not being met.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
22	The Southampton Common Plan has been written following the Council's policy framework and golden thread. The proposals are supported by and not contrary to the Council's approved Policy Framework.

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	The whole city and in particular Shirley and Portswood wards
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	The Southampton Common Plan Engagement Results
2.	The Southampton Common Plan
3.	Options Appraisal Governance Southampton Common

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None.	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.		Yes
Data Protection Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.		No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)	
1.		
2.		