WILTSHIRE COUNCIL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE STUDY

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL SURVEY FEBRUARY 2020 GUIDANCE NOTE

1.   Why do we need your help?

1.1   Wiltshire Council is updating its Open Space (OS) and Green Infrastructure (GI)[1] data to inform the review of the Local Plan. This builds on the work done by the council in 2015 with help and input from you, the Town and Parish Councils at that time. With this new survey, we are providing the opportunity for you to check the existing data that is already mapped, give feedback on the quality of your existing Open Spaces, and to provide the council with any improvement ideas you have for open space, and green infrastructure more generally.

1.2   Ideas identified through this survey may be used to inform requirements for open space to be delivered through development, or through the Playing Pitch Strategy, or incorporated within the Green Infrastructure Strategy if they are strategic in nature. Although it should be acknowledged at this stage that it may not be possible for all the ideas identified to be delivered, because there are many other influencing factors around land use: including cost of implementation, landownership, and whether it is achievable in terms of the planning system.

1.3   The council is working with consultants, Ethos Environmental Planning (Ethos), to complete the OS study. The OS study will provide current provision of OS within Wiltshire, defined by study areas and type of OS. The council will also use this evidence base in developing its new Green Infrastructure Strategy and creating policies for the Local Plan.

1.4   Alongside this survey, Ethos have put together a short **household survey**, which we would like you to publicise locally to your residents for them to fill out and return to us by e-mail. That survey will complement the information gained from this survey. We ask you to publish it locally, e.g. on your website, local magazine, and you may also wish to e-mail to relevant local residents or groups. Information is provided in the covering e-mail sent with this survey,

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[1] Please see below for definitions

2.   Town and Parish Council survey - How to respond

2.1   The survey consists of a survey questionnaire and two maps. These have been sent to you by post. The first map shows 'Existing Open Space' in your parish area, and the second is a blank map for you to annotate with any suggested 'Improvements'.

2.2   The survey questionnaire and maps have also been sent in electronic format and can be printed off. An accompanying list of 'open space' definitions, together with guidance on how to fill out the table in Question 6 have also been provided by e-mail to assist you in completing this.

2.3   Please note: The electronic maps in PDF format have been created in high resolution should wish to zoom in. If you feel the map does not do the area justice on the paper copies, you can zoom in on the PDF, take a screenshot, and highlight or annotate the area you want to show. Send any electronic maps along with the survey to the council by e-mail.

2.4   Please arrange for members of your Town Council or Parish Council, or other associated people to prepare your response to the survey. For example, you may wish to involve members of a neighbourhood planning steering group, or local green infrastructure group.

> Please send us your completed survey and maps **by Tuesday 31 March 2020**, as per the following checklist: Please use the **pre-paid envelope** to send us:
> - Two maps (both paper maps that have been provided by the council):
>   1) "Existing Open Space" map, with updated Open Space areas as per Question 3
>   2) "Improvements" map, annotated to show your future GI/Public Rights of Way/Cycle Route aspirations as pe Question 8
> - The filled-out survey and any extra paper/maps you have used/created
> - Copies of any meeting notes as needed as outlined in the following survey
>
> Please also send the following **by e-mail** to spatialplanningpolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk:
> - The completed survey (if completed electronically) and any electronic files supporting your responses (e.g. as per Question 7 & 8).
> - Please include in your e-mail a list of documents you have posted, and date posted.
>
> Save a copy of any electronic files for your own records.

If you have any questions, please e-mail spatialplanningpolicy@wilthire.gov.uk or phone 01225 713223

3. Definitions

Green Infrastructure (GI)

- Green Infrastructure (GI), as defined in the Wiltshire Core Strategy[2] (WCS) is a descriptive term used to characterise spaces such as:
  - Parks and Gardens: urban and country parks, formal gardens
  - Amenity Green Space: informal and formal recreation and sports spaces, domestic gardens, village greens, green roofs
  - Urban Green Spaces: urban commons, waste land and disturbed ground
  - Woodland, Downland and Meadows
  - Wetlands, Open and Running Water, Quarries
  - Green Corridors: rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridoes, cycling routes, pedestrian paths and rights of way
  - Allotments, Cemeteries and Churchyards
- It provides socio-economic and cultural benefits which underpin individual and community health and wellbeing. These include:
  - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
  - Providing wildlife corridors
  - Reducing noise and air pollution
  - Helping communities adapt to climate change through water and carbon management.
- In urban areas, functions include:
  - Providing routes (e.g. footpaths and cycleways) which link areas of open space within settlements
  - Providing sustainable drainage, flood storage and urban cooling
  - Providing a wide range of opportunities for engagement and active citizenship, relaxation and quiet contemplation, sport, recreation and children's play.

Open Space (OS)

- Open space as described in the NPPF[3] is all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

- Definitions for each individual OS type used in this survey are set out below.

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[2] Adapted from Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted January 2015, Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure, page 269
[3] National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised February 2019, Annex 2: Glossary, page 69

Specific Definitions of Open Space

Definitions[4] of Open Space typologies used on the accompanying map(s) provided by the council.

I.   Allotments - An allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family. (n.b. 40 Poles equals 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A Pole can also be known as a Rod or Perch.) as described in The Allotment Act of 1922.

II.   Natural Green Space - natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copses all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment.

III.   Amenity Green Space - The category is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics:

- Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.
- Predominantly lain down to (mown) grass.
- Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks).
- They may have shrub and tree planting, and occasionally formal planted flower beds.
- They may occasionally have other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts).

IV.   Parks and Recreation Grounds - This typology brings together the function of Parks and Recreation Grounds and Outdoor Sports Space as identified in the former PPG17 typology. The distinction between the two typologies in the study area is blurred, with very few formal gardens and many parks and/or outdoor sports space having multi-functions used for both informal and formal recreation.

- Park and Recreation Ground. This comprises the general open space surrounding play areas, sports facilities etc used for general recreation.
- Outdoor Sport (Pitches). This comprises publicly accessible sports pitches (including football and rugby).

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[4] Definitions have been provided by Ethos Environmental Planning.

- Outdoor Sport (Fixed). This comprises all other non-pitch based provision including publicly accessible tennis courts and bowling greens.

V. Play Space: Children and Youth provision - There are a number of recognised types of play area including Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs), School Playgrounds, informal ball courts, and 'hang out' areas.

VI. Outdoor Sport (Private) - Outdoor sports space with limited public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the study area, and forms an important part of the community facilities. The private sports spaces have been mapped separately to publicly accessible sites, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision.

VII. Education - Many schools and colleges have open space and sports facilities within their grounds. This may range from a small playground to large playing fields with several sports pitches. More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted and in many cases forbidden.

VIII. Pond[5] - a body of water (normally fresh water, but occasionally brackish), which can vary in size between 1 square meter and 2 hectares (this is equivalent in size to about 2.5 football pitches), and which holds water for four months of the year or more.

IX. Lake[7] - a large standing water bigger than 2 ha in area. We think of them as natural, but there are now a lot of man-made lakes as well – the result of gravel extraction, and other mineral mining, and the damming up of rivers for water supply.

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[5] Definition taken from "https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/habitats/pond/"

Guidance: How to fill out the table in Question 6 (on soft copy, 7 on printed copy).

Site Name: Please state the official recognised name of the Open Space

Typology: Please use the following Open Space typologies (as per Page 4).
Accessible Natural Green Space
Allotments
Amenity Green Space
Churchyards and Cemeteries
Education
Natural Green Space (Limited Access)
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)
Outdoor Sport (Pitches)
Outdoor Sport (Private)
Park and Recreation Ground
Play Space (Children and Youth) - Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs), School Playgrounds, informal ball courts, and 'hang out' areas.

Age Range(s):   **0-5**
5-12
12-18
18+
Mixed
All

Usage: **High** (multiple people, daily)
Medium (some days without use)
Low (rarely used)

Quality: **Very Good** (fit for purpose, well maintained, serves the local population well, no issues to report)
Good (fit for purpose, well maintained, small potential for improvement e.g. new/more benches)
Adequate (fit for purpose, potentially showing age or in need of minor maintenance)
Poor (potential to fall into disrepair, still safe to use)
Very Poor (dilapidated/ not fit for purpose/ hazard to safety)

Evidence of Maintenance?: **Yes**
No

Improvement Required?:   **Yes**
No

Does it meet local need?: **Yes / No**

Factors to consider could be:

- Is there good and safe access (e.g. suitable entrances and access to and within the site);
- Is the site welcoming (e.g. are the entrances welcoming, with signage (if appropriate), and consideration of the overall ambiance of the site); Is the site well designed, with appropriate facilities?;
- Is there good management and maintenance of hard and soft landscaping and furniture/facilities?;
- Are there issues with litter and/or dog fouling – and are there appropriate provision of bins?;
- Is the site healthy, safe and secure? (e.g. is there informal surveillance from neighbouring properties, are there signs of vandalism);
- Is the site managed to maximise biodiversity?;
- Is there community involvement?

<u>Further information</u>

- For more information on Green Infrastructure please visit Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance page http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033 and download the file named NE176: Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance.