Agenda Item No:

West Wiltshire District Council

Cabinet

20 April 2005

Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment

1. Purpose

To consider the summary of findings of the Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment (LRNA) and to agree a way forward.

2. Background

In 2003 the Council accepted the recommendations of the District Plan Inspector that the Council should undertake a comprehensive recreation needs assessment, in line with new Government guidance, to inform a speedy review of the Council's open space planning policies.

Also in 2003, the Parks and Open Spaces Policy Project Group, set up to develop a strategy for the management of the district's parks and open spaces, following the recommendations of the Best Value review of grounds and cleansing management, recommended that a recreation needs assessment was required to provide a baseline study from which future policy on public open space could be developed.

Following a successful service revenue bid for 2004/05, a project brief was developed for the LRNA and consultants Kit Campbell Associates were selected to carry out the assessment in July 2004.

In January 2005 Kit Campbell presented initial findings at a consultation workshop to which all members were invited.

The LRNA is now nearing completion and a summary of findings prepared by Kit Campbell Associates is attached for Cabinet's consideration.

3. Key Issues

The completion of the LRNA is a critical task in meeting Objective 1 of the Council's spotlight area "Better Access to Recreation". Until we have assessed the leisure and recreation needs in the district, we cannot plan for the future.

The attached Summary of Findings provides the Cabinet with an overview of the key issues and opportunities identified in the LRNA. The full report and mapping when completed will set out the detailed recommendations.

The consultants have identified an over-riding objective and 5 guiding principles which they are recommending that the Cabinet should adopt as a starting point in the review of the Council's recreation and leisure policies.

The Over-riding Objective

> *To ensure that the District has a network of accessible, high quality spaces and sport and recreation facilities which makes West Wiltshire a place to be proud of, meets local needs and enhances the "liveability" of the District, promotes sustainability, supports bio-diversity and makes the best use of land*

The Guiding Principles

- The District's greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities should be a source of local pride
- Throughout most of the District, improving the quality of provision is more important than increasing and in some cases possibly even maintaining the quantity of it
- The Council should use the planning system to protect those greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities which are of real benefit to local communities and most valued by them.
- Improving the quality or accessibility of local provision, or both, will clearly be in the best long term interest of local communities throughout the District. This may require the District, Parish or Town Councils to enhance or dispose of some spaces or facilities order to concentrate their limited resources on others which are of greater benefit to local communities. As a broad principle, if the District, Town or Parish Councils dispose of any provision which is of little benefit to local communities, they should re-invest the proceeds in other provision in the community in which that provision is located. This also implies close liaison with local communities so that they can see the benefits which will flow from any proposals disposals.
- The District, Parish and Town Councils should seek to involve local communities in the management of the greenspaces which benefit them most.

The Next Steps

These will help the Council to prepare the next critical tasks: a strategy and policies for the delivery and management of leisure and open space in the District.

To ensure that issues of land use planning and leisure & open space management are addressed together, it is recommended that a combined Leisure and Recreation Strategy and Plan is developed.

A draft project plan is attached for member's consideration. This project plan proposes the development of a preferred strategy by September/October 2005. This would feed into the service planning process for the financial year

2005/06 and provide a framework for the development of future planning policies.

Council agreed in January 2005 a timetable for the production of a Recreation Plan, which will include future planning policies and proposals for recreation and leisure. This will be the first Development Plan Document, within the Council's Local Development Framework and the timetable provides for adoption in April 2007.

The project plan proposes the setting up of a Steering Group to consist of relevant portfolio holders and officers. This Group will identify issues and options arising from the LRNA and will develop a draft strategy. This Group will consult a Policy Project Group to be chaired by the Leisure Portfolio Holder, which will provide an opportunity for non-executive members to have an input into the process.

Financial implications: None relating to this report. The development of a strategy and plan will require the development of a resource plan to be implemented through the service planning process.

Legal issues: None relating to this report.

Other implications: The LRNA is a key document contributing directly towards the Council's spotlight area "Better Access to Recreation" Objective 1 - understand and address the leisure and recreational needs of the district.

Human rights: None relating to this report.

4. Options

The LRNA is the first critical task in understanding the leisure and recreational needs in the district. The final report will set out a series of issues and options for the Council to examine and address through a strategy and spatial plan.

The attached project plan programmes in further public consultation to finalise preferred options as part of the development of this strategy and plan.

5. List of Background Papers

File Ref: Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment
File Location: Leisure / Planning Policy and Conservation Services

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet:

(i) Notes the Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment Summary of Findings;
(ii) Supports the objectives and principles set out in the Summary of Findings;
(iii) Supports the development of a strategy and plan in accordance with the attached project plan;
(iv) Agrees to set up a Policy Project Group as set out in the attached project plan.

Plain English Guidance Given ✍

Cllr Ernie Clark Portfolio Holder Leisure	Mark Russell Planning Policy & Conservation Manager
Cllr Michael Mounde Portfolio Holder Planning	Trevor Savage Leisure Services Manager

11 April 2005

List of Appendices
LRNA Summary of Findings
Leisure and Recreation Strategy and Plan Project Plan