

# REPORT FOR DECISION



<b>DECISION MAKER:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>10 JUNE 2015</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>BURRS COUNTRY PARK STRATEGY (FINAL PUBLISHED VERSION)</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>CABINET MEMBER – COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>MICHAEL WHITEHEAD – SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER</b>
<b>TYPE OF DECISION:</b>	<b>CABINET (KEY DECISION)</b>
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:</b>	This paper is within the public domain
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	<p>This report concerns the final publication of a strategy for the future development of Burrs Country Park over a time period of 15 years from 2015 to 2029, which aims to establish Burrs as a 'destination park' of regional significance. A number of projects are identified within the strategy to help modernise and sustain Burrs as a family tourist attraction, the most significant of which is the construction of a station on the East Lancashire Railway which will assist in unlocking the combined potential of Burrs and the heritage railway.</p> <p>A 4-week public consultation on the strategy in March/April of this year has generated a small number of responses, many of which express support for the proposals and suggest changes to improve the document. Some minor changes have been made where appropriate.</p>
<b>OPTIONS &amp; RECOMMENDED OPTION</b>	<p><b>Option 1 (Recommended Option)</b> That Members approve the final publication of the Burrs Country Park Strategy as a material planning consideration in assessing planning applications at Burrs Country Park.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> That Members seek revisions to the Burrs Country Park Strategy. Members to specify the nature of any revisions to be sought.</p> <p><b>Reasons</b> Option 1 would enable the Burrs Country Park Strategy</p>

	to be taken into account in assessing planning applications, will provide an agreed vision for the park between partners and the community, and will support the implementation of individual projects including funding bids.
<b>IMPLICATIONS:</b>	
<b>Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:</b>	<p>Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework?</p> <p>The draft strategy is in line with the principles of the following policies and proposals of the Unitary Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal RT3/1/4 on Protection of Existing Recreation Provision in the Countryside (Burrs Country Park);</li> <li>• Policy RT4/1 on Tourism Development;</li> <li>• Proposal RT4/6/3 on East Lancashire Railway (Proposed Station Halt, Burrs Country Park).</li> </ul>
<b>Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:</b>	<p>The strategy has been developed within existing resources.</p> <p>Future implementation of the strategy will be dependent upon availability of external funding.</p>
<b>Statement by Executive Director of Resources:</b>	Implementation of the strategy will ensure compliance with any planning considerations, and be in line with the Council's overall Asset Management Strategy
<b>Equality/Diversity implications:</b>	<p>No</p> <p>An initial screening has been undertaken (see attached assessment) which did not identify any negative impacts on equality.</p>
<b>Considered by Monitoring Officer:</b>	Yes <span style="float: right;">JH</span>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Elton, Moorside, North Manor
<b>Scrutiny Interest:</b>	

**TRACKING/PROCESS**

**DIRECTOR: STEPHEN KENYON**

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Cabinet Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet/Committee	Council	
	<b>10<sup>th</sup> June 2015</b>		

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## **1.0 BACKGROUND & ISSUES**

- 1.1 Burrs Country Park has much to offer the visitor and the Council is proud of the transformation undertaken to-date in developing a formerly derelict site into the Green Flag Award-winning flagship park it is today. Burrs remains one of the Borough's major visitor attractions in a growing local cultural and tourism sector although the site is in need of a refresh to help modernise and sustain the park as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century community facility and to aid in realising its potential.
- 1.2 The strategy sets a 15-year timeframe and is split into three phases aimed at establishing a 'destination park' which is both a regional attraction and forms a key element of the town's tourism portfolio. The strategy includes a number of projects, the most fundamental being the development of a railway station at Burrs on the East Lancashire Railway and an extension to the Caravan Club site under Phase 1. The completion of these two projects will be essential in enhancing the Borough's growing visitor offer, creating a direct link between the park and the attractions and businesses in Bury town centre and along the wider Irwell Valley, increasing the family appeal of Burrs and acting as a catalyst for further improvements such as a new visitor centre and the restoration and enhancement of archaeological and water features.
- 1.3 Members approved a draft version of the strategy at Cabinet on 4 March 2015 for a 4-week public consultation. The draft strategy was made available for comment between 12 March 2015 and 9 April 2015 on the Council's website, at the Town Hall, at the Planning Services reception at Knowsley Place, and at libraries in Bury, Moorside and Brandlesholme.

### **Consultation responses and changes made to the strategy**

- 1.4 In response to the consultation, 14 separate comments were received from members of the local community, landowners, interest groups and statutory agencies and were broadly supportive of the proposals. Some of the key issues raised included the need for more detail on or a commitment to the role of the canal feeder in the development of the area, the generation of on-site energy, opportunities for the historic environment, improving the condition of the River Irwell and the enhancement of ecological value on the site. A suggestion was also made by Bury Canoe and Kayak Club that the proposed station could allow paddlers to access the train with canoes at Burrs and then travel downriver from other stations further upstream.
- 1.5 In response to the consultation comments, the strategy will include a commitment to using low carbon sustainable build materials, the inclusion of a delivery section to highlight the partners who will assist the Council in implementing the strategy proposals, added detail on the work needed to improve the canoe slalom and weir, and new references to the control of invasive species and the enhancement of the river for fish in partnership with local angling bodies under Phase 2.

### **Final publication and continued use of the strategy**

- 1.6 Following consideration of the consultation comments, the Council now wish to publish the final version of the strategy to help set down the agreed 15-year vision for Burrs between partners, the local community and landowners.

Officers have already engaged with a series of key partners to develop the Strategy to-date including the ELR Trust, the Friends of Burrs Country Park and the Caravan Club. In relation to the latter, the Caravan Club have agreed to provide a monetary contribution towards the Burrs Station project and will be taking on additional land following the construction of the platform and associated development to facilitate the extension of their existing site.

- 1.7 Once published, the strategy will be a material planning consideration for decisions made on applications in the park. It will also help with the implementation of individual projects, and in terms of the Burrs Station project will assist with a funding application to landfill bodies by providing evidence of the Council's ambition for Burrs. The support from partners and organisations for this bid is critical to its success and therefore the strategy will be used to promote the Council's proposals and help build momentum through ongoing dialogue.

### **Risk Management**

- 1.8 The intention is to set up a separate working group involving all partners to help drive forward and monitor each of the projects. There is a risk that the individual projects within the Strategy will change over time as different opportunities arise and budgets and priorities fluctuate, although the strategy can be updated to accommodate any changes.

## **2.0 CONCLUSION**

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the final published version of the Burrs Country Park Strategy as a material planning consideration and allow it to be progressed for implementation purposes.

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### **List of Background Papers:-**

- Burrs Country Park Strategy
- East Lancashire Railway 2020 Strategy (Locum Consulting)

### **Contact Details:-**

Michael Whitehead  
Senior Planning Officer  
3 Knowsley Place  
Duke Street  
Bury  
BL9 0EJ  
Tel: 0161 253 6154  
Email: m.whitehead@bury.gov.uk