Contents

1. Why have a Wellbeing Space Strategy? ...................................................... 1
2. How have we produced the Wellbeing Space Strategy? ......................... 3
3. What is wellbeing space? ............................................................................. 6
4. National guidance, best practice and our current approach ................. 8
5. Key wellbeing issues in Tandridge ............................................................. 10
6. Current wellbeing space in Tandridge ..................................................... 12
7. Conclusions and recommendations .......................................................... 13
1. **Why have a Wellbeing Space Strategy?**

1.1 Open space such as parks, commons, sports pitches, woodland and allotments play an important role in helping people lead healthy lives.

1.2 Access to good quality green space is associated with a range of positive health outcomes including better self-rated health; lower body mass index scores, overweight and obesity levels and improved mental health.¹

1.3 Indeed, evidence shows that people with close access to green space live longer than those without, even adjusting for factors such as social class, employment and smoking. The health of older people increases where there is more space for walking near home, with parks and tree-lined streets nearby. Children become more active when they live closer to parks, playgrounds and recreation areas. The impact of access to green space is most significant amongst the least well off.²

1.4 Local authorities play a key role in facilitating access to green space, whether through strategic planning policies which set out how much space should be provided, transport infrastructure enabling access or through investment in, maintenance of and promotion of parks, recreation facilities and other open spaces.

1.5 The importance of this role is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is clear about the role open space plays in delivering sustainable, healthy places and it requires local authorities to consider this both within plan-making and decision-taking.

1.6 In addition, with public health responsibilities transferring back to local authorities through the Health and Social Care Act 2012, there has been an increased emphasis on closer working between planning and public health departments to develop community infrastructure that encourages people to be more active, social and ultimately healthier.

1.7 Nevertheless, it must be recognised that faced with ongoing budget pressures, the days when local authorities had vast amounts of funding to spend on open space and recreation facilities have passed and many local authorities are now struggling to maintain their existing open space let alone providing additional.

1.8 As a local authority, we therefore need to make sure that what resource we do have is targeted as effectively as possible and to do this we need to have a clear understanding of what our local need is. We need to, for example, ask ourselves questions such as ‘How much space should we provide?’, ‘Where and what type of space is needed?’, ‘Who should we consult?’ and ‘How can we best maintain our open space and promote its use?’.

1.9 This Wellbeing Space Strategy will seek to address those questions and in turn provide us and our partners with a clear understanding as to how and where resource is best targeted so we can provide open space that helps our residents lead healthier lives.

1.10 The Strategy will also inform our emerging Local Plan which will set out strategic planning policies on the provision of open space. It should be noted that until growth projections have been identified in the Local Plan, this Wellbeing Space Strategy will act as a baseline document, looking solely at the current situation. It is envisaged
that once growth projections are available in the Local Plan, an updated Strategy will be produced that looks at future need and provision.
2. **How have we produced the Wellbeing Space Strategy?**

2.1 In developing the Wellbeing Space Strategy, we have reviewed national guidance and best practice about how local authorities can provide and promote open space that helps people lead healthier lives. We have also looked at what our current approach is to providing, maintaining and promoting open space.

2.2 To understand our local need we have looked at our current demographics and identified the key wellbeing issues across the district. Where data has been available, we have tried to do this at as local a level as possible.

2.3 These findings have then been considered alongside the outcomes from the 2015 Tandridge Open Space Assessment (*Appendix A*) which sets out what space we currently have and whether it meets standards for quantity, quality and accessibility.

2.4 We have also considered the views of local communities through consultation with residents and Parish Councils as part of the Open Space Assessment. This was to identify local attitudes to existing provision and local expectations for additional or improved provision.

2.5 The idea is that by better understanding our wellbeing issues, existing provision and what local communities want, we and our partners can target resource more effectively and where it will have the greatest impact.

2.6 The first part of the Strategy therefore outlines national guidance and examples of best practice. It also outlines our current approach. The second part of the Strategy looks at what our wellbeing needs are and the third at the open space we currently provide.

2.7 The Strategy then identifies whether there are opportunities for us to do things differently so that we can better provide open space that helps people lead healthier lives.

2.8 Before we start, it will first be useful to establish what, for the purposes of this Strategy, we consider wellbeing space to be.
3. **What is wellbeing space?**

3.1 To keep things simple, the Strategy will consider the same types of space that were considered in the 2015 Open Space Assessment (Appendix A). These categories were informed by both government and Sport England guidance and include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of open space</th>
<th>Primary purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks and gardens</strong></td>
<td>Two main types: Formal Parks located within settlements and are extensively managed and maintained. They may contain formal flower beds and a vast array of facilities and landscaping. Country Parks are larger sites often located outside of settlement boundaries. They offer a less structured environment and act as a gateway to the wider countryside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. Landscaped features such as lawns and flower beds also add to ascetic appeal of surrounding local area. They also frequently offer ecological benefits, particularly in more urban areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural and semi-natural green spaces</strong></td>
<td>Includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. down lands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education awareness. The recreational opportunities provided by these spaces are also important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor sports facilities</strong></td>
<td>Facilities included under this category are playing pitches (including football, rugby, cricket, hockey), synthetic turf pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens, and athletics tracks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in outdoor sports. They are often a focal point of a local community, functioning as a recreational and amenity resource in addition to a formal sports facility.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Amenity greenspace</strong></td>
<td>Amenity greenspace essentially covers village greens, informal recreational areas, and greenspace in and around housing. Typically they will be little more than a small area of useable grassland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provision for children and teenagers</strong></td>
<td>This typology encompasses a vast range of provision, from small areas of green space with a single piece of equipment (similar to the typology of amenity greenspace) to large, multi-purpose play areas. It considers equipped provision only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broad objective is to ensure that children and young people have opportunities to interact with their peers and learn social and movement skills within their home environment. At the same time, they must not create nuisance for other residents or appear threatening to passer by.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allotments</strong></td>
<td>Allotments include community gardens, and city (urban) farms;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 As per the Open Space Assessment, we have only considered sites which are accessible to the wider public. That is to say, we have not included private sports or recreation facilities.

3.3 Whilst the Assessment also acknowledges the importance of ‘Green corridor’ space such as public rights of way and cycleways it does not provide the same level of detailed assessment as it has for other open space categories. This is because Surrey County Council is currently in the process of a detailed review of ‘Green
corridor’ space. We will seek to integrate the findings from their review in an updated version of the Wellbeing Space Strategy.

3.4 It should also be noted that at the time this report was produced, detailed information about ‘Allotments’ was not yet available so whilst this type of open space has been analysed it has not been to the same degree as other types. Once again, we would look to provide more detailed findings in an updated version of the Wellbeing Space Strategy.
4. National guidance, best practice and our current approach

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear about the role open space plays in delivering sustainable communities which promote health, wellbeing and improve people’s quality of life.

4.2 It states that planning policies should be based on robust, up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area.

4.3 It also sets out criteria for not building on open space unless the space is surplus to requirements; would be replaced by something the same or better; or where there is greater need for alternative provision that outweighs the loss of the existing (except where there is already an overprovision).

4.4 The NPPF also encourages local authorities to take account of health improvement strategies and involve key health stakeholders such as the Director of Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups in plan-making and decision-taking.

4.5 Organisations such as the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), Public Health England (PHE), The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Sport England have made a number of recommendations as to how this should happen, including:

- Engagement with health representatives on major planning applications at an early stage.

- Involvement of health representatives in infrastructure planning and funding such as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

- Requirement for Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) to be carried out when developing planning policies or deciding planning applications.

- Requirement for large developments to meet standards set by external profession bodies in the provision and design of open space.

- Being more proactive about monitoring the impact of a planning decision on health and wellbeing outcomes to provide a future evidence base.

4.6 Nationally, there are a number of examples of best practice that show where health and wellbeing needs have been considered in the provision and promotion of open space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brighton &amp; Hove:</th>
<th>pioneered a Planning Advice Note on food growing to urge developers to include space for growing food in new development proposals.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bristol:</td>
<td>wrote a development protocol between public health and planning that sets out criteria for when development applications should be forwarded to public health for comment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke-on-Trent:</td>
<td>has produced a Healthy Urban Planning Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that includes a healthy planning checklist and guidance on when to</td>
</tr>
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</table>
conduct health impact assessments.

4.7 At a more local level, links between open space and health are also acknowledged in both the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy which highlights the importance of sustainable places and communities and the Surrey Physical Activity Strategy which recommends physical activity be considered when planning projects and housing developments.

4.8 In Tandridge, whilst the existing Core Strategy (which will be replaced by the emerging Local Plan) includes planning policies about the importance of protecting, enhancing and in some cases providing open space it does not provide detailed guidance about how this should be done, who should be involved or when and how any additional space should be provided.

4.9 In practice, our planners work with developers of major sites to ensure that some open space is provided. This is based on what planners feel is appropriate for the site. In some cases, this will take account of a wider community need and/or existing space however mostly, details about the type of open space to be provided is left to the discretion of the developer.

4.10 Our Planning team also oversee the distribution of Community Infrastructure Funding (CIL) which is able to fund a wide range of infrastructure including new or enhanced open space. At this stage, we are still in the process of working with partners to decide how this funding will be spent in local areas.

4.11 Maintenance of Council-owned open space is currently funded from the Council’s Community Services Committee revenue budget and a programme of works are developed annually by the Parks and Countryside team. This maintenance include activities such as grass cutting; tree surgery; and repair of equipment, furniture, pavilions and play areas. Maintenance tends to be prioritised according the health and safety risk and how often a space is used.

4.12 The Community Services Committee also agrees an annual capital budget for investment in playgrounds. Once again, the Parks and Countryside team develop an annual programme as to where and how this should be spent. This is based on feedback from our regular Council playground inspections; input and support from local communities and Parish Councils; availability of external funding and Play England standards relating to frequency of use, play value of existing equipment and age of equipment.

4.13 Interestingly, the 2015 Open Space Assessment (Appendix A) highlighted that whilst the greatest number of open spaces across the district were owned and maintained by us, there were several sites either owned privately which we maintained at little or no cost or where ownership was unclear and we had assumed responsibility for maintenance.
5. **Key wellbeing issues in Tandridge**

5.1 Access to good quality green space is associated with a range of positive health outcomes including better self-rated health; lower body mass index scores, overweight and obesity levels; improved mental health; improved learning amongst children; and reduced risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.

5.2 Evidence shows that people with close access to green space live longer than those without, even adjusting for factors such as social class, employment and smoking. The health of older people increases where there is more space for walking near home, with parks and tree-lined streets nearby. Children become more active when they live closer to parks, playgrounds and recreation areas. The impact of access to green space is most significant amongst the least well off.

5.3 If we use this evidence as a basis for looking at our own demographics and health issues, it is clear there is a need for access to good quality open space.

5.4 In regards to obesity for example, currently 18% of adults in Tandridge are classified as obese. Whilst this is below the national average of 23% this is no real cause for celebration considering the number of adults who are classified as overweight in Tandridge (45%) is above the national average (41%). This therefore means that over 6 in 10 adults in Tandridge are either overweight or obese.

5.5 Interestingly, whilst the number of adults in Tandridge who are overweight is above the national average, so too are the number of adults who meet recommended levels of physical activity (150 minutes a week), with 62% of adults meeting this standard against a national rate of 56%.

5.6 This would suggest that adults in the district will make relatively high use of open space and recreational facilities for exercise and general health benefits and this is backed up by the findings from the consultation with residents and Parish Councils which was carried out as part of the 2015 Open Space Assessment (Appendix A).

5.7 Results from the consultation indicate that about three quarters of respondents use open space once a week or more and over half (56%) use it for health and exercise benefits.

5.8 If we look at obesity amongst children, currently 12% of Year 6 students in Tandridge are classified as obese. This figure increases significantly in wards such as Warlingham West (24% - 4th highest ward in Surrey), Westway (20%) and Warlingham East, Chelsham and Farleigh (19%). This is in contrast to wards such as Dormansland and Felcourt (9%), Harestone (10%) and Lingfield and Crowhurst (12%) which have much lower levels of obesity. District-wide this figure increases to 26% when including children who are also classified as overweight.

5.9 It is interesting to note, that whilst acknowledging obesity is linked to a range of socioeconomic factors such as income, housing and diet, these results indicate higher levels of child obesity in areas which are more built up and don't perhaps have the same opportunities for access to open space as other parts of the district. This is an issue that will need to be investigated further using the findings from the Open Space Assessment.

5.10 Improved mental health is also linked with access to open space, however unlike obesity this is a much more difficult issue to measure at a local level due to a lack of
specific data. What we do know though is that district-wide, the rate of hospital stays for self-harm is above the national average.\textsuperscript{5}

5.11 We also know that in regards to social isolation, those who live alone are more at risk of becoming socially excluded and developing mental health issues such as depression. Currently, in Tandridge over a quarter of households are of single occupancy and of these 15\% are aged 65 or over.\textsuperscript{4}

5.12 In deciding how we provide open space, we must also take account of both current and future demand for it. For example, whilst we currently have slightly more young people under 15 living in the district than the national average, growth forecasts up to 2033 suggest that this demographic will decline and we will see an increase in people above retirement age. This could for example, result in a greater demand for open space suitable for older people and a reduced demand for playground space. This impact will need to be further investigated once growth projections in the Local Plan are available.
6. **Current wellbeing space in Tandridge**

6.1 The 2015 Open Space Assessment *(Appendix A)* identified and reviewed a range of open space across the district ranging from our flagship sites such as Queens Park in Caterham which is home to a large collection of sports associations, sports facilities, pavilions and the largest children's play area in the district to well-used commons such as Limpfield Common which offers an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways to small, less accessible sites such as a copse near Mill Lane in Hurst Green.

6.2 Sites were assessed against standards for quantity, quality and accessibility. These standards have been based on national guidance, benchmarks from other local authorities and also take into account perceived community need identified through consultation with residents and Parish Councils.

6.3 In regards to quantity, the Assessment found that we currently have adequate provision of all types of open space with the exception of ‘Play provision for children and young people’ where it identified a lack of appropriate space for older children. The Assessment noted that this could be addressed through adapting existing spaces.

6.4 In general, this tallied with the consultation responses from residents and Parish Councils who in addition, highlighted a need for more parks with exercise equipment; parks with gardens and places to sit; and bridleways. A lack of suitable cycleways was also identified as a key concern with over half of residents referring to this.

6.5 Overall, the quality of our open spaces ranged from ‘good’ to ‘very high’ though a number of sites such as Talbot Road Recreation Ground and Stychens Way Open Space received low scores. Reasons for low scores included poor signage to sites; lack of amenities such as public toilets, seating, dog foul bins; limited access for disabled users; concerns over personal safety; litter/dog fouling; poor visual quality; and no distinct purpose for particular sites as a result of lack of facilities.

6.6 This once again correlated with feedback from residents and Parish Councils who in addition, suggested stricter measures on dogs on leads; improvements to drainage of footpaths in wet weather; and floodlighting of playing fields.

6.7 The Assessment also found that the majority of open space met accessibility standards in terms of how far people have to travel. The only minor deficiency identified was for ‘Allotments’. Responses from residents and Parish Councils once again highlighted the need for improve cycleways with residents suggesting they would be willing to cycle to open space but felt existing provision was too limited or not suitable to enable this.

6.8 The Assessment noted that whilst overall our open spaces met accessibility standards a number of sites were difficult to find and not well signposted. This included larger open spaces that should be easy to find.

6.9 Notably, in addition to looking at current provision, the Assessment also looked at possible growth based on ONS forecasts up to 2033. It identified a number of types of open space where it forecast a deficit including ‘Outdoor sports facilities’, ‘Play provision for children and young people’ and ‘Amenity green space’.
The Assessment highlighted the impact an increase in particular types of properties such as flats and terraced houses (which have limited or no garden space) would have on the need for open space. This impact will need to be further investigated once growth projections in the Local Plan are available.
7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Based on national guidance, examples of best practice and a clearer understanding of both our wellbeing needs and current wellbeing space provision there are a number of steps we can take to ensure our resource is better targeted at providing open space that helps our residents lead healthier lives. This includes:

a) Endorsement of the quantity, quality and accessibility standards in the 2015 Open Space Assessment;

b) So that we are providing the right type of open space that will have the greatest impact on our residents health, closer links between:
   - our Planning team and health representatives in plan-making, decision-taking and infrastructure decisions;
   - our Parks and Countryside team and health representatives in maintenance of and investment in existing spaces;

c) A review of Council-owned and maintained open space to establish whether there are opportunities for more cost effective approaches that enable resource to be used more effectively. This review should consider:
   - Open space that was assessed as being low quality in the Open Space Assessment;
   - Sites we maintain that are privately-owned or where ownership is unclear; and
   - Accessibility of open space, in respect of how easy they are to find and how accessible they are for disabled people.

The review should be mindful of National Planning Policy Framework guidance preventing open space being lost unless it is replaced by something equivalent, better or through alternative provision that outweighs any loss (except where there is already an overprovision);

d) Further work with Surrey County Council to better understand ‘Green Corridor’ provision with a particular emphasis on cycleways.

e) A review of the Wellbeing Space Strategy once growth projections are available in the Local Plan to better understand future need and provision. This should also, as per the 2015 Open Space Assessment recommendations, provide more information about outdoor and indoor sports provision, common land and allotments.

7.2 Whilst this Strategy recommends closer working between the Council and health representatives in ensuring the right type of wellbeing space is provided, we must also acknowledge the importance of working with our local communities and Parish Councils in understanding what is most appropriate locally.

7.3 Over the years, we have for example, developed a strong relationship with Parish Councils in providing play areas for children and young people that has resulted in well-used spaces, supported by local communities. Looking ahead, this type of engagement will need to continue if we are to provide open space that encourages people to be more active, social and ultimately healthier.
1 Public Health England & UCL Institute of Health Equity, (September 2014) ‘Improving access to green spaces’
2 Public Health England, (October 2014) ‘Everybody active, Every day’
4 Surrey County Council, ‘Surreyi’, www.surreyi.gov.uk
5 Public Health England, Tandridge Health Profile 2015