

QLDC Council
6 October 2016

Report for Agenda Item: 3

Department: Property & Infrastructure

Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to approve the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for public consultation.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Approve** the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for public consultation.

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20/09/2016

Reviewed and Authorised by:



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21/09/2016

Background

- 1 The previous Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) Parks Strategy was developed in 2002 – at the time it was envisaged this would be a 10 year strategy.
- 2 Since then, the District has experienced rapid residential growth and a huge increase in visitor numbers. New subdivisions in greenfield developments are being created, and intensification of part of the existing urban area is planned.
- 3 A relevant strategy is required to ensure the existing open space network and new reserves meet the needs of the community, can provide for growth and will continue to be protected and enhanced.

- 4 The development of a new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is on the Chief Executive's work plan and has been taken to several Council workshops this year.

Comment

- 5 The draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (the draft Strategy) (included as Attachment A to this report) has been developed to provide direction on:
 - The function, distribution, location and configuration of open space sought by the council
 - Development and use of existing open space
 - Spending of Development Contributions
 - Ecological and biodiversity enhancement
- 6 The draft Strategy sets out a vision, objectives and several key methods for achieving the above including development of park types, minimum walking distance from open space from residential areas, design guidance for the configuration of reserves, the types of facilities to be found on the different park types and provision guidelines for greenfield developments.

Key changes from 2002 Strategy

- 7 The main aim of the draft Strategy is to provide a diverse range of experiences and improve the quality of existing reserves. The previous 2002 strategy focussed on a quantitative approach - this methodology does not make appropriate provision for intensification in existing urban areas where residential population will increase but the amount of reserve land will not.
- 8 For open space to be 'accessible' a Local Park should generally be within a 600m walk (5 to 10 minutes easy walking). This is a change from 800m (from a reserve) in the previous strategy to better align with national best practice and to reflect the steep topography of much of the District.
- 9 The provision guidelines in the draft Strategy specify what park types are required by developers, minimum sizes, and how many household units these should serve. This is stronger guidance than the 2002 Strategy and developers are required to engage with Council early when planning for reserves within developments.
- 10 QLDC will no longer acquire small areas of open space (pocket parks) that primarily serve amenity purposes for a development or are too steep or narrow to develop, unless they have an important linkage or conservation function as part of the wider open space network. Stormwater reserves will not be accepted to offset reserve contributions if they have no recreation value and do not meet the criteria in the provision guidelines.
- 11 The names of some of the park types have changed to reflect the uses and to align with Council's levels of service park categories.
- 12 The name has been amended to the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy to better reflect the wider values of parks and reserves.

Next Steps

- 13 The draft Strategy is in text format only. Should this draft be approved by Council for public consultation a series of graphics and images will be included for the final version and the maps will be finalised. The maps have been created as base maps that will be finalised prior to public consultation. Examples of these maps and images are included as Attachment B. The text will remain unchanged.
- 14 It is proposed that the draft is consultation for a period of two months. Consultation will include being advertised on Council's website, and targeted consultation with sports groups, developers, clubs, community associations, volunteers and partners and schools etc.
- 15 Once the consultation period closes feedback will be used to inform the final Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. This will then be reported back to Council for adoption. It is not proposed that there will be a public hearing.

Options

- 16 This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002.
- 17 Option 1 Adopt the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for public consultation.

Advantages:

- 18 The public will have the opportunity to engage on the draft Strategy and provide input so Council can be sure it is meeting the communities needs for Parks and Open Spaces. Once adopted the District will have a relevant Strategy that will ensure the existing open space network and new reserves meet the needs of the community, can provide for growth and will continue to be protected and enhanced.

Disadvantages:

- 19 Some people may not be supportive of the proposed changes.
- 20 Option 2 Do not adopt the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for public consultation.

Advantages:

- 21 None.

Disadvantages:

- 22 Parks and Open Spaces provision will not keep up with growth, there will be less guidance on how Council should develop and enhance the existing parks and open spaces network, the quality of parks and reserves will not be improved, the future needs of the community will not be met.

23 This report recommends Option 1 for addressing the matter because it will ensure Council can plan for a quality parks and open spaces network and can respond to growth.

Significance and Engagement

24 This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy due to the extent to which the draft Strategy will impact on the environment, culture and people of the District.

Risk

25 This matter relates to the strategic risk SR1 Current and future development needs of the community (including environmental protection), as documented in the Council's risk register. The risk is classed as high. This matter relates to this risk because the draft Strategy provides policy and guidance for providing the future open space needs of the community.

Financial Implications

26 There will be no impacts of the decision on the 2016/17 Annual Plan. As the draft Strategy gives guidance to future reserve provision and improvements, the final Strategy when adopted by Council will have implications on future Annual Plans and Long Term Plans, particularly in respect of Development Contributions.

Council Policies, Strategies and Bylaws

27 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- The 10-Year Plan 2015 - 2025
- Proposed and Operative District Plan
- Subdivision Guidelines
- Subdivision and Development Infrastructure Code of Practice

28 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policy/policies.

29 This matter is not included in the 10-Year Plan 2015 – 2025 or the 2016/17 Annual Plan.

- The draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is not included as there are no financial requirements to develop the Strategy as has been developed internally.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions

30 The recommended option:

- Will help meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses by providing a strategy to ensure that the existing open space network and

new reserves meet the needs of the community, can provide for growth and will continue to be protected and enhanced.

- Can be implemented through current funding under the 10-Year Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not alter significantly the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council, or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Consultation: Community Views and Preferences

31 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are the residents/ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes district community, property developers and visitors to the area.

32 The Council has conducted a preliminary online survey of residents and undertaken stakeholder consultation to get initial feedback on the draft Strategy. If the draft Strategy is adopted it will be fully notified to the public.

Attachments

- A Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- B Example images and graphics