

South Tyneside Open Space Community Consultation Response by East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum

1 Introduction

- 1.1 East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum (EBNF) was informed of this consultation by one of our Councillors and note that it will help form the evidence base for the upcoming Local Plan.
- 1.2 EBNF is disappointed that we have not been consulted directly on this important consultation. We also have major concerns over the way in which STMBC is conducting this particular consultation. Whilst we appreciate the constraints on the Council's budget, we believe the online consultation is inappropriate, has not been publicised fairly or sufficiently and the timetable is too limited. The public is generally unaware of the consultation and the evidence it will produce will, therefore, not reflect the true situation, will be inaccurate and compromised.
- 1.3 Given the importance of the issue and that the results will be used to inform the local plan, EBNF formally request that the Council reconsider the way in which this issue is being dealt with and adopts a more open, honest and democratic means to establish the value of open spaces to the public.
- 1.4 The policies within the neighbourhood plan were arrived at after extensive face to face consultation with the local community. The importance of open and green spaces to the residents of East Boldon was highlighted time and time again at the open and democratic meetings held between 2019 and 2021 to enable the public to have a say concerning the Neighbourhood Plan, including the value of open spaces. Analysis of the consultation is set out in the background papers which sit behind the policies. The external Examiner in her comments complemented East Boldon Forum on the thoroughness of the consultation process.
- 1.5 East Boldon has a major park, two children's play areas, a cemetery, an allotment, 5 Local Wildlife sites and many other important formal and informal local green spaces and public open spaces. It also has many public footpaths, bridleways, and cycle paths. Our consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan showed that these are highly valued by our residents and where they are accessible are well used.

2 East Boldon Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The EBNP was approved by referendum in October 2021 and was subject to a three year consultation process with our residents and businesses.

- 2.2 Objective 3 of the Plan states that we should plan positively for the creation, protection and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure in the neighbourhood plan area including ensuring that there are linkages to wider green infrastructure networks.
- 2.3 The Plan includes Policy EB5 Green and Blue Infrastructure which states that new development should seek to protect and where practical, improve and extend the green and blue infrastructure network.
- 2.4 Policy EB16 Local Green Space and Policy EB17 Protected Open Space are key policies to protect these spaces from development. 9 local green spaces are identified and 5 open spaces are protected.
- 2.5 The 9 Local Green Spaces are: Grange Park; Glencourse / Burnside; Victoria Allotments, South Lane; Cemetery, DipeLane; War memorial and garden, Front Street; Land adjacent to St George's Church; Cricket, Squash and Archery grounds, Newcastle Road; Boldon Lawn Tennis Club, Dipe Lane; and Mundles Lane Play Area.
- 2.6 The Protected Open Spaces are: Boldon Golf Course; Land at Lyndon Grove; Land at North Drive/ Kendal Drive; Land at Beckenham Avenue/Ravensbourne Avenue and East Boldon Junior and Nursery School playing fields and playgrounds.
- 2.7 Policy EB 23 Walking and Cycling Network supports proposals to create improve or extend the walking and cycling network within the plan area.
- 2.8 The plan includes Community Action 2 designed to improve and enhance existing open spaces and recreation facilities. This would include better management and supervision and improved interpretation.
- 2.9 Community Action 6 supports the development of a sporting hub to be located at the cricket club. It also contains an action to improve the play areas in Grange Park and Mundles Lane.
- 2.10Community Action 9 contains improving the conditions of footpaths, cycleways and the wider public rights of way network and enhancing signage to and along the rights of network.
- 2.11The East Boldon Design Code includes Code EB.SN.08 Public Open Space and play. This gives detailed advice as to how new spaces should be designed.

3. Online Survey

- 3.1 The Forum has encouraged our members to take part in the online survey. Here are some general comments that the Forum would make in response to the survey questions:

- Part A - We know that all of our open space and recreational facilities are well used.
- Part B – we are working with others to increase access to more of our local green spaces. A multi use games area has recently been constructed in the grounds of the Junior School.
- Part C – we rate the majority of our open spaces and recreational facilities as very good. However we are also striving to improve them through our community actions.
- Part D – we are striving to make all of our spaces accessible within 10 minutes by walking or cycling.
- Part E –for most facilities our priority is for improvements, however for some we are seeking better access. Our priorities are set out in our Community Actions.

East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum

1st November 2022