

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**DOWNS COMMITTEE
November 21st 2011**

Report of: Service Director, Environment and Leisure

Title: Downs 5 Year Management Plan

Ward: Stoke Bishop.

Officer Presenting Report: Robert Westlake, Downs Ranger

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 9736210

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee approve and where necessary amend the revised Downs Management Plan and the proposed budget of £875 for design and printing costs of the updated plan.

Summary

The Downs first received Green Flag status in 2007 when the original Management Plan was produced. The Green Flag has been retained in subsequent years and the Management Plan is now due for review, five years later.

The plan sets out to describe the Downs as they are today and to explain why it looks and works the way that it does. It seeks to identify the current and sometimes conflicting demands made of The Downs by the users and it proposes a management regime that will maximise the access and recreational value of The Downs in a sustainable way.

A key element of the plan is the 5-year work plan that is reviewed and updated annually with stakeholders and key members of staff. The implementation and monitoring of the plan will be the responsibility of the Estate Manager and the plan will continue to be reviewed and re-printed every 5 years.

Policy

1.The production of the management plan has been guided by, and relates to wider strategies. National and local strategies provide guidance and help to steer and formulate aims and objectives contained within the document. Actions within the Downs management plan relate directly to the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.

Consultation

2.Internal

Richard Bevan, Manager,Parks Estates,Play, Cemeteries & Crematoria.
John Williams, Estates Manager.
Russell Horsey, Senior Arboricultural Officer.
Helen Hall, Nature Conservation Officer.
Robert Westlake, Downs Ranger.
Tony Whitlock, Principal Accountant.
Vicki Abel, Project Development Officer.

3.External

Chris J Westcott, Natural England
Mandy Leivers, Avon Gorge and Downs Biodiversity Education Officer.
Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge

Context

The reasons for producing the plan are to:

- Assist The Downs Committee to look at the long-term management of the site.
- Provide continuity by providing a stable plan when personnel change (staff, management and committee members retire or move on).
- Enable the committee to identify significant projects that are presently beyond their financial resources so that additional capital and revenue funding can be sought, (possibly from outside organisations).
- Provide sound aims with which to approach other organisations and council departments with a view to working together to achieve mutual objectives.
- Allow parks officers to prepare a rolling 5-year work plan that will be reviewed annually to manage the site in the medium term.
- Enable the in house team to prepare detailed 3-month work plans that

will be implemented through ongoing maintenance and manage the site in the short term.

- Inform all interested user groups and individuals about the long-term future of The Downs and explain to them both the daily maintenance regime and the reasons behind any major changes.

Other useful advantages include: -

- Everyone i.e. Bristol City Council, The Downs Committee, Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project, contractors, community groups and outside institutions can work together to the same ends.
- Consultation with service users gives 'validity' to decision making.
- It provides open and 'transparent' decision-making.
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- It will help to address and hopefully resolve conflict created by different demands.
- Enable The Downs Committee to retain Green Flag status.

4. Enjoyment:

Actions within the Downs Management Plan will aim to secure Durdham Down and Clifton Down as places for public recreation and to ensure that The Downs continue to be a great asset to present and future generations of Bristolians as a place for enjoyment.

Access:

The management plan will ensure that The Downs are accessible to all within the natural constraints of the site.

Wildlife:

The management plan will help to ensure that semi-natural wildlife habitats are both maintained and enhanced and provide maximum opportunities for education and enjoyment of The Downs.

Landscape:

Actions within the Management Plan will ensure that The Downs landscape retains its strong character and remains in good condition.

Anti Social Behaviour:

The management plan will ensure that antisocial behaviour is controlled and its impact reduced.

Management and Resources:

Actions within the management plan will ensure that The Downs are well managed, and well resourced, balancing all the various public uses

with the heritage value of the site.

Proposal;

That the Committee review and amend the revised management plan, and authorise the expenditure of £875 to fund the necessary design work and printing costs for 25 bound copies of the management plan and 25 CDs.

Other Options Considered

4.No other options considered

Risk Assessment

5.No risk assessment has been carried out.

Public Sector Equality Duties

6a) *Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:*

i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.

ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --

- remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;

- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);

- encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant

protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –

- tackle prejudice; and*
- promote understanding*

6b) *Not Applicable.*

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

None directly arising from the report.

The Clifton and Durdham Downs Act (Bristol) 1861 provides that the Downs should remain as a place for the resort and recreation of the citizens of Bristol, and that a committee should be appointed to manage them. The recommendations of this report are within the powers conferred by this statute.

Financial

(a) Revenue

Funding for design and printing work for the Management Plan can be met from existing budgets

(b) Capital

Not applicable

Financial advice provided by Tony Whitlock, Principal Accountant

Land

The land is under the control of the Downs Committee.

Personnel

Not applicable

Appendices:

5 year Plan - please see separate link

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: *None*