

Report of the Director of Environment & Sport to the meeting of the Keighley Area Committee to be held on Thursday 15th September 2016

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Subject:

Parks & Green Spaces Service Annual Report

Summary statement:

The annual report for the Parks & Green Spaces Service reviews activity during the past year and also considers the significant issues that will have an effect over the coming 12 months and presents options where appropriate for future service delivery.

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1. SUMMARY

The Council's Executive on 9 October 2012 identified the Parks & Green Spaces Service to report to Area Committees through the devolution agenda.

The Annual Report for the Parks & Green Spaces Service considers the significant issues that will have an effect over the coming 12 months and presents options where appropriate for future service delivery.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Parks & Green Spaces Service

Currently sits in the Sport and Leisure Service, which is part of the Environment & Sport Department and the main function is the management and maintenance of the district's parks and green spaces. The area of land managed by the section totals over 1,000 hectares of parks/grassed areas and around 850 hectares of woodland.

In total, utilising its 95 permanent gardeners, the service manages, develops and maintains 36 parks, of which 5 have achieved Green Flag status, 115 recreational spaces (which include football, rugby, cricket, tennis and bowls facilities) and 276 play areas. Property responsibility is also held for over 50 pavilion/changing rooms, 20 lodges and 5 cafes.

The service provides support to community, voluntary and friends of groups whilst co-ordinating all sporting fixtures on playing fields within the service remit.

This service includes the following operational activities managed and delivered within the Keighley Area:

- Management and development of sites including parks, buildings, sports provision and community events
- Maintenance of Parks and recreation grounds
- Maintenance of sports pitches and bowling greens
- Maintenance of play areas (other than play equipment)
- Maintenance of cemeteries
- Winter maintenance activity to Highways, Adult & Children's Services
- Maintenance of highway verges and green spaces vested in other internal clients

In addition to the above, the Parks and Green Spaces service is responsible for the following services, managed and delivered on a District wide basis:

- Highway weed spraying (delivered by an external contract)
- Plant production and floristry service (Peel Park Nursery)
- Technical Unit (including management of play equipment repair)
- Events relating to sports and parks (including Bingley Music Live) and development of 'Friends of' groups
- Trees & Woodlands (including highway trees)



- War Memorials
- Control and coordination of the Parks & Green Spaces Fleet

2.2 Managed Facilities in Keighley & Ilkley Area

Within the constituency there are 9 main parks that are managed and maintained by the service area teams:-

Central Park, Haworth, (Green Flag retained for 2016/17)), Cliffe Castle Park, Devonshire Park, Oakworth Park, Silsden Park, Lund Park, Crossroad Park, Riverside Gardens, Victoria Park.

There are also 37 recreation grounds, 23 equipped play areas, 3 MACA's (Multi Activity Communal Areas) and 7 skate/BMX parks. Other facilities include 37 Football/Rugby pitches (10 of which are exclusively for juniors), 11 bowling greens, 2 cricket pitches, 10 tennis courts, and 1 aviary.

In addition to horticultural works the service is responsible for the upkeep of all the associated structures within the above sites including 9 pavilions, 4 changing facilities and 3 lodges.

2.3 New Facilities

Completed/In Progress

- Holden Park Multi Use Community Area and associated footpaths - £110,000 of Yorventure funding
- East Morton Recreation Ground – new path, £12k through 106 monies
- Cross Roads Park – Fencing to bowling green and new MUGA, £120,000 in collaboration with the friends of Cross roads Park
- Braithwaite Play Area development - £100,000 working with local community groups
- Oxenhope Recreation Ground – New slide £10k

Planned

- Cliffe Castle HLF £4.5m renovation to the park and buildings. Funded jointly with Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Holden Park Trim trail extension - £5,000 funding from the friends group.
- Silsden Park – Pitch improvements TBC

2.4 Events

The Parks & Green Spaces Service stages and/or supports a high number of events throughout the year (over 150) in its parks & recreation grounds, some of which are major District events such as the historic Bingley Show, the renowned Moscow State Circus, Keighley Show and Ilkley Carnival.



The Sport & Leisure events team is responsible for organising, delivering and promoting a number of prestigious events. These include Skyride, Bradford City Run and the popular Bingley Music Live festival which attracts circa 40,000 people over the weekend. In addition the team were also actively engaged in the world famous Tour de France Grand Depart and as a legacy of the Tour de France are currently involved in the series of Tour de Yorkshire cycle races.

Other significant events planned this year Keighley & Ilkley Area include:

- 2 Fun fairs at Victoria Park, 1 East Holmes Field
- Ilkley Gala, Eastholmes Fields - May
- Central Park –Haworth 1940's weekend in May
- Marley Armed Forces Day - June
- Marley Junior Football Tournament - July
- East Holmes Field Race For Life July
- Cliffe Castle – Fresh Aire - August
- Children's summer activities – across all wards
- Marley –Keighley Show –September
- Cliffe Castle – 6 bandstand concerts
- Riverside Gardens – Ilkley Xmas Teepees
- Eid Prayers – Cliffe Castle

All the above events create a very large footfall in our parks and green spaces from both the local community and the wider population of the district; indeed, some of the larger events attract people from all over the country.

2.5 Trees & Woodlands update

In addition to the ongoing maintenance of trees within parks, highways and the continued management of woodlands the department has been engaged with some other projects within the area.

Heavy winter rain caused a landslip on land owned by Keighley Rifle Club (Park Wood Quarry). This caused considerable damage to a key public path in Park Wood requiring closure and re-routing. Engineers were satisfied that the movement has abated and steps are being taken to reroute the path.

Officers and staff were heavily involved with the preliminary works in relation to the HLF refurbishment of Cliffe Castle Park by undertaking extensive tree removal and pruning throughout the site.

The department is now in its second full year of carrying out highway “visual tree inspections” and this is nearing completion in Keighley Central and West with other areas to follow. Visual tree inspections will cover Parks, Highways and Woodlands (paths and edges).



3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Floral Display Review

The Council historically has prepared flower beds and hanging baskets for summer displayed at various street scene, parks and green spaces locations throughout the District and then again in the winter for the flower beds only.

Through the 2015/16 budget setting process the council made a decision to reduce the level of funding allocated to this provision which had an effect on the appearance of flower beds and hanging baskets across the district. Hanging basket provision for summer 2016 has been handed across for local areas to fund with no baskets being provided by the department. It was also agreed to reduce the expenditure on flower beds by 80% across the district due to the closure of the central nursery with any future plant requirements being contract grown externally.

There remain a number of beds identified across the district which need to remain planted to prevent claw back of lottery grants and there is also a requirement to provide bedding to a number of graves under the perpetuity planting scheme.

As a starting point the parks team considered each flower bed and RAG rated (Red Amber and Green) them based upon a set of perception criteria to show their priority and then identified a type of treatment proposed for each flower bed based upon the rating and the available resources (See appendix 1).

However, in order to minimise the effect of the necessary saving, committee agreed that officers should consider other options/ideas and these included the following:-

- Grass over the flower beds in low priority areas
- Reduce the size and/or density of planting in some beds
- Continue to plant a very limited number of high profile flower beds
- Introduce planted beds that produce colour all year round with minimal maintenance
- Introduce a community planting and maintenance scheme through a 'friends of the flowers' model
- Use precept charges to support the future cost of flower bed provision in some areas
- Use voluntary sector groups to grow plants to support the planted beds

Members also requested a consultation exercise with various interested user groups which resulted in the following beneficial outcomes for the sites highlighted within 'Appendix 1' and following further meetings and discussions the following outcomes were achieved:

- Consultation with Ilkley in Bloom took place over the proposed changes and they are now assisting greatly with the majority of the bedding schemes in Ilkley. Indeed, in addition to this they have agreed to manage and fund some areas and continue to work with officers in further development of flower beds.



- At Haworth Central Park, officers consulted with the Friends of Group and following further wider consultation agreements were made with regard to the initial proposals. Further development may take place at Haworth next year.
- Keighley in Bloom were also consulted over the proposals and they too have agreed to maintain some planters and tubs in the town centre ensuring that floral displays are continued. Officers will continue to engage and assist with K.I.B. for future development.
- Following further consideration and discussion officers have agreed to plant some of the larger flower beds within town centres with some spring flowering plants. This will add further seasonal interest to areas that would have otherwise have been left fallow and will also enable the development of further sustainable planting schemes to be adopted.

It was suggested that the timing of full implementation of the agreed changes to the floral displays across the district would be likely to take place over two winter periods, however, due to early consultation and a concerted staff effort over 90% of the new proposals have been completed this winter/spring, although it is anticipated that further development will continue through the newly formed partnerships in this area.

3.2 Bowling Greens - Update

The Council has agreed savings target from the operation of bowling greens throughout the district for both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The original proposal was for maintenance savings to be achieved through a 'Community Club' model where each club would maintain the greens through their own members (e.g. mow their own greens). This option is still available to the clubs, however it was not taken up during 2015/16, but might be adopted in 2016/17 by some clubs. It will be for the clubs to determine if this is the way they wish to progress.

On the basis that all clubs continue to take the Council Services, we have agreed to step up the annual charges in line with the savings targets of £25k in 2015/16 and an additional £25K in 2016/17.

All clubs collected, recorded and paid £15 per player in 2015/16 under a mutually agreed method. A single invoice to clubs was issued in early August 2015 to an agreed sum representing all the 'pay per player' contributions at each club.

The Council will continue to set the fees for a 'pay per player' model and continue to develop the 'Community Club' model with any club that wishes to investigate that option further.

The 'pay per player' model will be £25 per player in 2016/17; the latter will be invoiced in early April 2016 to coincide with the start of the bowls season.



3.3 Community Asset Transfers (CATS) – Town & Parish Councils

Whilst the Service continues to work with colleagues on a number of individual CATs, predominantly around sports pitches/facilities, there is a growing interest from Town and Parish Councils in making applications covering assets across a number of different services. The most current application, not within Keighley/Ilkley, includes buildings from both theatres and libraries together with the vast majority of the green spaces in the parish, together with the management and horticultural maintenance of the latter.

A senior officer group is currently considering the councils response to such applications with the intention of selecting one or more as pilot schemes to allow a protocol to be developed to inform the Council's future approach.

3.4 Riddlesden Golf Club

Following the closure of Riddlesden Golf Club the site was handed back to Sports & Culture in March of this year. Officers worked alongside colleagues in Estates, Legal and Facilities Management to ensure a smooth handover took place.

Once the insolvency practitioners had cleared the site all the buildings were made secure and the main points of access were fully defended.

Throughout the growing season Parks & Landscapes staff ensured that a basic level of maintenance was carried out to the main grass areas and public rights of way to alleviate the site becoming overgrown.

The council is presently considering all its options as to the future use of this 58 acre site and is also considering the values and benefits from both a commercial and community use.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 The Parks and Green Spaces Service has been given savings targets for both the current year and also for 2016/17 financial year.

The savings will be challenging to achieve in year, but work has commenced to deliver the saving and minimise the impact as far as possible.

A summary of the savings to be achieved is as follows:

Parks and Green Spaces Savings Targets	2015/16	2016/17
	(K)	(K)
Review the workforce to reflect seasonal variations	65	85
Management Restructure	100	0
Bowling Greens	25	25
Achieve 100% of events at zero cost	25	50
Reduce floral displays and close the nursery	150	50
Total Savings	365	210



5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 The financial risks posed are limited by the nature of the expenditure delegated. However, there is potential to reduce efficiency and overall quality of the service in specific areas if any proposed change is not considered for the wider implications. It will be important to establish a financial governance regime to devise and ensure sound stewardship of the limited resources available. This is work in progress and must be in place to support effective devolution.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 The contents of this report are in accordance with the decisions of the Executive on 9 October 2012 and 16 April 2013.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Area Committee decisions will need to be made in line with Equal Rights legislation. This will require Area Committees to assess the potential equality impact of any decisions they make.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Increased local decision making has the potential to create more sustainable solutions to local issues. The proposal to move to permanently planted flower beds is more sustainable for both economic and environmental reasons.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

The Parks and Green Spaces service provides a pro-active approach in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the local deployment of its maintenance teams. Teams are based in areas in an effort to reduce travelling times with its fleet/plant resulting in reduced fuel consumption. In addition to this parks and recreation grounds/trees/woodlands provide communities with 'green lungs' which can naturally assist with the filtering of polluted air.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no Community Safety Implications arising from this report.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.



7.6 TRADE UNION

Trade Unions at all levels are engaged in consultation over the proposals included in this report.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The information in this report is relevant to all Wards in the area.

Increased devolution of the services will allow the Area Committee to further address local priorities for those services within wards.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

Members are asked to consider the content of this report and in particular to offer comment on the way the service engaged with other user groups to achieve a satisfactory outcome in relation to the proposed flower bed proposals.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Keighley Area Committee:

Note the content of this report and in particular:

- The bowls club agreement
- The outcomes achieved following the flower bed consultation.

11. APPENDICES

Flower Bed reclassification proposal (Appendix 1)

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None



Appendix 1:- Keighley Areas Flower Bed Proposals

LOCATION	Number of Plants	Proposals
BOW STREET	1600	Reduce size and use permanent planting – Already completed
BRIDGE STREET	300	Permanent planting – Ilkley In Bloom consulted and agreed plan
SILSDEN MEM GDN	235	Reduce scale and use 80/20 permanent/bedding plants – Awaiting further feedback
ADDINGHAM MEMORIAL	1700	Reduce scale and use 80/20 permanent/bedding plants – Awaiting further feedback
BROOK STREET	5190	Reduce scale and use permanent planting - Ilkley in Bloom consulted and agreed as above
GROVE PARK	2527	Reduce scale and use permanent planting – Proposal to turf over beds and re-design new beds
MEMORIAL GDNS	5428	Reduce scale and use 80/20 permanent/bedding plants – Ilkley in Bloom consulted and agreed proposals to include herbs and roses
THE GROVE	5370	Reduce scale and use 50/50 permanent/bedding plants – Ilkley in Bloom consulted and agreed proposal
TOWN HALL	500	Reduce scale and use permanent planting – I in B consulted and will manage with Parish Council to fund
HAWORTH WAR MEM	300	Reduce scale and use 80/20 permanent/bedding plants – Agreed as above
STEETON MEM GDN	2100	Reduce scale and use 80/20 permanent/bedding plants – Awaiting further feedback
HAWORTH PARK	13630	Reduce scale and use 50/50 permanent/bedding plants – Friends of Group consulted and agreed as above proposal
FOUNTAIN BASE	2250	Reduce scale and use 50/50 permanent/bedding plants – I in B consulted and have agreed to manage area and seed with wild flowers
HIGH ST R'BT	2500	Reduce scale and use 80/20 permanent/bedding plants – Change to mix of perennials and roses
Perpetuity Graves	500	Retain as bedding – As above
SKIPTON RD R'BT	8000	Reduce scale and use 80/20 permanent/bedding plants – Proposal is to reduce scale and plant with roses
BUS STATION TUB	260	Remove – Consulted with Kly in Bloom and awaiting response
CAVENDISH ST	430	Remove – Consulted with Kly in Bloom and awaiting response
HOLME WOOD RES	190	Remove – Change to perennial planting
ILKLEY CONGS CH	1200	Remove – Following consultation with Ilkley in Bloom it would remain as annual bedding but Ilkley in Bloom to fund
MAIN STREET	845	Remove – Awaiting response following consultation
SPRING GDNS LN	2050	Reduce size and use permanent planting – As above proposal
BARK LANE	400	Remove – As above proposal
BOLTON ROAD	380	Remove – Awaiting response following consultation
CHURCH FORT	8340	Reduce scale and use permanent planting – Following consultation with Ilkley in Bloom it is agreed to reduce scale but plant with both perennials and annuals



COWPASTURE ROAD	1500	Reduce scale and use permanent planting – Following consultation with Ilkley in Bloom agreed to as above but to include annual planting
ILKLEY CEM	620	Reduce scale and use permanent planting – Following consultation with I in B agreed as above
MIDDLETON REC	802	Remove – Following consultation with I in B agreed to leave but change to perennial planting
OLD STATION WAY	180	Remove – Awaiting further feedback
SCHOOL LN ADDIN	150	Remove – Awaiting further feedback
SUGAR HILL	1200	Reduce scale and use permanent planting – Awaiting further feedback
OAKWORTH CEM	3830	Reduce scale and use permanent planting – As above
SILSDEN PARK	2360	Reduce scale and use permanent planting – Awaiting further feedback
INGROW LANE	25	Remove – To plant with annual bedding
LUND PARK	270	Remove – Change to perennial planting
ST ANDREWS CH	160	Remove – As above and turf over
WORTH WAY	1500	Remove – Change to perennial planting
CASTLE RD RSIDE	300	Remove – Already removed
CHURCH STREET	380	Remove – Awaiting further feedback
MEWS PROMENADE	100	Remove – Following consultation with Ilkley in Bloom this will change to perennial planting
SPENCERS GDNS	461	Remove – Ilkley in Bloom to manage and plant
WELLS PROM ILK	300	Remove – Ilkley in Bloom to agree to change to wildflower/poppy mix
KING STREET	860	Remove – As above
WHEATLEY LANE	100	Remove – Following consultation Ilkley in Bloom are to fund wild flower planting/seeding

Omitted additions –

Morton Cemetery – Change to perennial planting

Utley Cemetery – Change to perennial planting

