

Report of the Director of Environment and Sport to the meeting of the Bradford South Area Committee to be held on 28th November 2013

AG

Subject:

Parks & Green Spaces Budget Overview

Summary statement:

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

This report details the overall Parks & Green Spaces budget, setting in context the area budgets devolved to Area Committees

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:



1. SUMMARY

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

The overall budget for the service area is set through the Council formal procedures and levels of budget provision will need to be reviewed, subject to any savings requirement placed upon the Council in future years.

This report details the overall Parks & Green Spaces budget, setting in context the area budgets devolved to Area Committees for operational activities managed and delivered within Area Committee boundaries and quoted in reports presented to date. This budget breakdown was initially requested by Bradford South Area Committee but is believed to be of value to all Area Committees.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Parks & Green Spaces section sits in the Sports 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, open spaces and woodlands.

In total the service manages and develops 36 parks, 115 recreational spaces and over 188 play areas. The service also provides support to voluntary groups, friends of groups and assists with all sporting fixtures on playing fields within the service remit.

- 2.2 This service includes the following operational activities managed and delivered within Area Committee boundaries –

- Management and development of sites including 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)
- Grave digging and cemetery maintenance
- Winter maintenance activity to Adult & Children's Services
- Maintenance of highway verges throughout the district

- 2.3 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

- Co-ordination of Parks & Green Spaces Fleet

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The constituency based services listed in 2.1 are managed by Area Parks Managers, based in each area. The Area Managers report directly to the Principal Manager Parks & Green Spaces who in turn reports to the Assistant Director (Sports & Leisure).

Within each area there is at least one operational depot, (2 in Shipley/Bingley and Keighley/Ilkley) where all staff and plant are based, however, some area managers are based at satellite offices.

- 3.2 The majority of the District wide activities (2.2 above) are managed as part of the Bereavement and Amenities Manager's portfolio although there is a separate 4th tier manager responsible for events. Both these posts also report directly to the Assistant Director (Sports & Leisure).

- 3.3 Service Relationships/Contacts

- Portfolio Holder
- Elected Members
- 'Friends of' Groups
- Community Groups such as 'In Bloom' committees
- Village Societies
- Area Co-ordinators Officers
- Bereavement Service
- Adult Services
- Children's Services

4. OPTIONS

- 4.1 To note this report for information only
- 4.2 To note this report and request a similar budget report to be presented annually

5. FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

5.1 The Overall Parks & Green Spaces Budget

The 2012/3 Parks budget as recorded in the Councils financial system is reported in the table below split into 16 activity areas. This information, extracted in August 2013, does not include budgets devolved to Facilities Management for repair of buildings nor capital costs or departmental/corporate recharges all of which are applied at the end of the financial year.

The third column indicates whether the activity is constituency based (CB) or operated District wide (DW).

Parks & Green Spaces Budget Split (in £000s)		Net Budget	Income	Activity Base
1	Bfd West Park Operations	541	131	CB
2	Keighley Park Operations	456	308	CB
3	Bradford East Parks Ops	281	404	CB
4	Shipley Park Operations	274	456	CB
5	Bradford South Park Ops	251	514	CB
6	Parks Operational Support	145		
7	Trees Woodlands	398	96	DW
8	Nursery/Floristry	181	134	DW
9	Play Equipment Maintenance	69	13	DW
10	Fleet	1,060		DW
11	Parks Events	99	465	DW
12	Highway Weedspraying	145		DW
13	Technical Unit	250	416	DW
14	4th Tier Managers	200	3	
15	AD wide support	52		
16	War Memorials	8		DW
		4,410	2,940	

5.2 High Level Commentary on Parks & Green Spaces Budget

- The net controllable budget for Parks and Green Spaces is £4.41m
- The total budgeted spend is £7.35m with a challenging income target representing some 40% of turnover.
- Almost 3m of the 4.4m net parks budget is allocated to constituency based working (including the 1m spend on fleet that is monitored and controlled centrally but mainly deployed in the devolved area operations)
- Previously reported indicative net budgets devolved to Area Committees have a wide range of variance (251k to 541k), however the gross budgets taken from the above table are more closely aligned (672k to 765k)

5.3 Financial Commentary on District Wide Activities

- As reported in 3.2, there is a 'residual' budget of some £1.4m allocated to District wide operations
- 900k of this figure is budgeted for delivery of other front line services (Trees/Woodlands, Nursery, Play Equipment Repair, Footway Weedspraying, Parks Events & War Memorials)

- The Technical unit accounts for half of the remainder (250k) whilst a further 50k is devoted to service support across the assistant director's range of services.
- The final 200k is vested in the 4th tier management structure and consists of 125k salaries plus a 75k allocation for infrastructure repairs, projects or emergencies across both parks and bereavement services. This management layer clearly has responsibility for a mixture of constituency and District wide service delivery.
- This financial analysis demonstrates that less than 5% of the service budget is held centrally for discretionary spend on infrastructure repairs, projects or emergencies (75k) and joint/prime pump funding of projects within the technical service (75k).

6. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 6.1 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.

7. LEGAL APPRAISAL

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

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 EQUALITY AND 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.

8.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Increased local decision making has the potential to create more sustainable solutions to local issues.

Contact the Sustainability Co-ordinator (Policy), on Bradford 434123 or e-mail jamie.saunders@bradford.gov.uk for further guidance.

8.3 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.

8.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no Community Safety Implications arising from this report.

8.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

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

8.6 TRADE UNION

There are no Trade Union implications.

8.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

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

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

9. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

There are no not for publication documents.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bradford South Area Committee notes the content of this report and comments on future presentation of information and when it needs to be brought forward to this committee.

11. APPENDICES

None

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None