

# **Report of the Director of Environment & Sport to the meeting of the Bradford West Area Committee to be held on Wednesday 20 July 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 with 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 reviews activity during the past year and also considers the significant issues that will have an effect over the coming 12 months with 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 75 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 Bradford West 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)
- 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 Bradford West**

Within the constituency the following main parks are managed and maintained by the service area teams in addition to the horticultural maintenance of the city centre and inner ring road:-

Lister Park - Horton Park - Ladyhill Park - Victoria Park Clayton - West Park - Greenwood Park – Prune Park.

These parks along with 37 recreational spaces contain 19 equipped play areas, 10 MACA's (Multi Activity Communal Areas) and 3 skate/BMX parks. Other facilities include 11 Football/Rugby pitches, 11 bowling greens, 5 cricket pitch, 2 tennis courts, 1 boating lake and a café.

In addition to horticultural works the service is responsible for the upkeep of all the infrastructure (fences, walls and footpaths) and associated structures within the above sites including pavilions, changing facilities and lodges.

## **2.3 Review of last year**

Last year, throughout the peak activity 'summer' season maintenance teams performed to a high standard resulting in all parks and green spaces being maintained to the specified standard.

In addition to this, all flower beds, hedges and shrub beds met specified standards and through the dedication of both the staff and management retained 'Green Flag' status for Peel Park, Harold Park, Lister Park, Roberts Park, Central Park, Haworth and St Ives Estate.

Once again, consistency proved to be a key factor in the Bradford West area and all the operational targets were met along with providing the additional support to partners and events.

The following new or refurbished facilities have been successfully delivered in the last 12 months:

- Lower Grange Community Centre: new play area funded by s106 to the value of £90,000.
- New all weather cricket pitch at Haworth Road Recreation Ground - Approx £10k funding from ECB

### **Planned for 2016/17**

- Horton Park Outdoor Gym £25,000 – Presently looking at a smaller scheme as the funding target is proving difficult to attain.
- Ongoing discussions with regard to the installation of an outdoor gym and the possible refurbishment of the play area in Greenwood Park, Sandy Lane



## 2.4 Service delivery update 2016/17

With regard to this year there is very little changed proposed for the way the grounds maintenance service will be carried out or delivered across the district other than the revised specifications for flower beds and hanging baskets – see 3.1.

Officers have continued to engage with partners, such as, Members, colleagues in Neighbourhoods, Friends of Groups and other local action groups, and this has provided benefit to all parties in providing regular updates on service matters and events and also provides the opportunity for positive dialogue. Some of the positive outcomes achieved are as follows:-

- Supporting and assisting events held in parks & recreation grounds
- Continued support of the Friends of Horton Park
- Continued assistance and support with Clayton Parish Council on a number of schemes
- Working with Sandy Lane Parish Council on the installation of a new war memorial
- Providing assistance with the installation of the new V.C. memorials in the City Centre
- Continued assistance and support with City Centre Manager and other civic issues

## 2.5 Events

The Parks & Green Spaces Service stages and supports a high number of events throughout the year (over 150) in its parks & recreation grounds, some of which are major events such as the prestigious Bingley Music Live festival which is held at Myrtle Park, Bingley each year.

Events planned this year in Bradford West include:

- 2 Fun fairs in Lister Park one at Easter and one in August
- Various Sponsored Walks in Lister Park – Throughout the year
- Pentecost in the Park Event Lister Park –May
- Child Safety Week Family Fun Day, Lister Park - June
- Cancer Research Race for Life, Lister Park - June
- Queens Birthday Celebration, Victoria Park Clayton - June
- Eid Prayer in Lister Park - July + Sept
- Allergrange Fun Day, Ladyhill Park - July
- Friends of Horton Park Family Day Out, Horton Park - August
- Dickensian Market Victoria Park Clayton - December
- Various smaller local community events and activities
- Children's summer activities – across all wards
- Band Concerts & Ranger Events in Lister Park
- Park Run in Lister Park & Horton Park every Saturday
- Disability, Youth and Ladies Cycling sessions in Lister Park

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.

### **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **3.1 Floral Display Review Update – Flower Beds/Hanging Baskets**

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:

- Clayton Parish Council agreed to take on the responsibility for the flower bed on the roundabout and have since planted it up with seasonal plants.
- The Bradford 'Fresh Start' project engaged with Horton Park 'Friends of Group' and have agreed to adopt and develop 2 flower beds by the entrance.



- Officers engaged with members of the Bronte Bell Chapel and agreed a scheme where they would assist them in developing a bed containing sustainable planting

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 West, 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 Water Courses and Reservoirs

The parks & Green spaces department are responsible for a number of water courses/features on its own land which range from small streams in the botanical gardens at Lister Park to the larger park lakes and ponds around the district and one such feature are the reservoirs at Chellow Dene. The site consists of 2 large lakes with the lower one consisting of a large dam/banking which requires regular safety and operational inspections to ensure that all the sluice/overflow mechanics are maintained correctly and that the structure of the banking is not showing signs of any defects.

Unfortunately a recent inspection survey revealed that some works are required to the banking, and whilst the defect is not highlighting any immediate structural dangers, it is imperative that remedial works are carried out to ensure the ongoing safety of the site. The nature of such works have to be carried out by specialist companies and, as such, can be very expensive, and the proposed works in this instance will be in the region of £280,000. The department will be submitting a P.A.G. application to cover these essential works and will endeavour to keep the ward members and the local community informed of progress.

## 4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

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

4.1.2 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:

<b>Parks and Green Spaces Savings Targets</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
	(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
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>210</b>

## 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 Bradford West Area Committee:

1 Note the content of this report and in particular:

- The bowls club agreement.
- The outcome following consultation around the flower bed provision.

## **11. APPENDICES**

Flower Bed reclassification proposal (Appendix 1)

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None



### Appendix 1:- Bradford West Flower Bed Proposals

LOCATION	Number of Plants	Proposals
LISTER PARK	23030	Reduce scale and use 50/50 permanent/bedding plants
CENTENARY SQUARE	1750	Permanent Planting
CITY CENTRE TUBS	1300	Reduce scale and use permanent planting
CLAYTON PARK	980	Reduce scale and use permanent planting
		Reduce scale and use permanent planting
HORTON PARK	2480	Outcome following consultation:- The partner organisation 'Fresh Start Project' are to work with the 'Friends of Group' and adopt 2 of the large flower beds inside the park entrance. There will be further engagement and discussion on how these beds will be developed.
JACOBS WELL R'BT	1500	Reduce scale and use permanent planting
LAW COURTS	290	Permanent Planting
MANNINGHAM LANE TUBS	510	Permanent Planting
OAKLEIGH GDNS	150	Permanent Planting
		Permanent Planting
ST JAMES'S GRAVEYARD	260	Outcome following consultation:- Officers met with representatives and volunteers from Bronte Bell Chapel and agreed a scheme to develop a bed with sustainable planting.
THORNTON CEM	2020	Reduce scale and retain perpetuity graves as bedding
		Remove
CLAYTON ROUNDABOUT	862	Outcome following consultation:- Officers met with representatives from Clayton Parish Council as they had expressed an interest in taking on the planting and maintenance of the beds on the roundabout. Discussions are ongoing on this matter.
RING ROAD SITE (LEEDS RD)	6200	Remove
CHANNING WAY	1680	Permanent Planting already installed

