

## **Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of the Keighley Area Committee to be held on 14 September 2017.**

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### **Subject:**

**Parks & Green Spaces Service Annual Report**

### **Summary statement:**

The annual report for the devolved 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 available for future service delivery, investment and savings.

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## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The annual report for the devolved 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 available for future service delivery, investment and savings.

## **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **2.1 The Parks & Green Spaces (PGS) Service**

- 2.1.1 PGS currently sits in the Sport and Culture Service, which is part of the Department of Place and the main function is the management, maintenance and development of the district's parks and other 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.

- 2.1.2 Woodland management, tree works, play area maintenance, highway weed-spraying and technical services are all delivered on a District wide basis whilst the management and maintenance of local parks and green spaces is provided through at least one operational depot based within each Area Committee boundary. The operational areas, using a total of 74 permanent gardeners, manage and maintain:-

- 36 parks, of which 5 retain Green Flag status
- 115 recreational 'grounds' (including football, rugby, cricket, tennis and bowls facilities)
- 283 outdoor play/fitness facilities across 163 sites
- 50 pavilion/changing rooms,
- 20 lodges and 5 cafes
- 40 War Memorials

- 2.1.3 The PGS service also provides support to community, voluntary and 'friends of' groups, including the booking of some 230 events held annually within Parks and Green Spaces ranging from Bingley Music Live to the local village gala.

- 2.1.4 PGS provides a grounds maintenance service to schools and numerous council services including Estates Management, Bereavement Services, Highways, Libraries, Museums, Sports Centres, Adults and Children's Services (including winter gritting operations).

- 2.1.5 PGS has provided growing support to the council's highway winter gritting operation with some 25 staff now regularly employed as drivers to cover precautionary gritting routes or ride-on tractor operatives to treat footways.

### **2.2 Managed Facilities in Keighley**

- 2.2.1 The following main parks are managed and maintained by the service area teams – Cliffe Castle, Haworth Central, Riverside Gardens, Crossroads, Devonshire, Holden, Lund, Silsden and Victoria, – together with 31 recreational spaces

containing 27 equipped play areas, 5 MACA's (Multi Activity Communal Areas) and 4 skate/BMX parks.

2.2.2 Other facilities include 41 Football/Rugby pitches, 11 bowling greens, 2 cricket pitches and 7 tennis courts. In addition to horticultural works the service is responsible for the upkeep of all the infrastructure (e.g. fences, walls and footpaths) and associated structures within the above sites including 16 pavilions, changing facilities and lodges.

### **2.3 Operational Depot Review of 2017**

2.3.1 The adopted requirement for maintenance standards remain at minimum levels for general grass cutting, hedges, flower and shrub bed maintenance. Budgets are set to reflect the levels of workforce required to maintain these minimum standards with little or no resource resilience. Service performance throughout the peak season is therefore highly susceptible to unseasonal weather or unexpected staff absence.

2.3.2 The operational staff have successfully delivered all maintenance works to the highest possible standard throughout the year. As a result of this it has been notable that complaint numbers have fallen in general and by almost three quarters from local bowls clubs, certainly a reflection of the work of the gardeners involved and also possibly due to the closer working between management and the bowls leagues. The adoption of more sustainable flower bed regimes appears to have been successful, particularly as the herbaceous planting begins to become established.

2.3.3 Given that the weather pattern has been favourable, the major operational issue remains that of litter and fly tipping with other programmed activity (such as general grass cutting) suffering due to the need to clear excessive litter. The purchase of two solar powered, compacting Bigbelly bins for Riverside Gardens has proved more than useful although costs (£5,000 each) determine that the service is unlikely to be able to provide any further significant numbers.

2.3.4 Officers have continued to engage with many partners such as Friends of Groups, Town/Parish Councils, local community groups, In Bloom committees, councillors and the Neighbourhood Service to deliver a wide range of improvements to the Area's green spaces as evidenced by the retention of the Green Flag' status for Central Park.

### **2.4 New Works (Including Section 106 Monitor)**

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

Cliffe Castle - Restoration Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for People nearing completion.

Addingham Recreation Ground - improvements to MACA surfacing, provision of new benches and picnic area.

Cross Roads Park - MACA design, delivery and project management of scheme.

2.4.2 Over the coming year the Technical Unit will be engaged in delivering the following projects:

Silsden Park - rugby pitch drainage work with Silsden Rugby Club

Hainworth Wood - new play area and MACA with Airedale Partnership

Haworth Central Park - Garden of Reflection with Friends Group

Highfield Road - food co-operative community productive garden

Cross Roads Park – aspirations for relocation of play area, new skate park, bike pump track, walking circuit and drainage improvements with friends group

North Dean - play area additional work

2.4.3 Keighley/Ilkley Section 106 Recreation Receipts

	Total	Unallocated	Allocated	Allocated Projects
<b>Craven</b>	78,219	52,556	25,663	Silsden pitch drainage works
<b>Ilkley</b>	30,566	30,566	0	
<b>Keighley East</b>	6,557	6,557		
<b>Keighley West</b>	52,830	0	52,830	Cliffe Castle Park HLF project & North Dean Play Area
<b>Keighley Central</b>	0	0	0	
<b>Worth Valley</b>	19,820	7,005	12,815	Cross Roads Park improvements

## 2.5 Events

2.5.1 PGS administers, stages and/or supports a high number of events throughout the year in its parks & recreation grounds (over 230) with 76 events expected within the Keighley area this year, some of which are major District events such as the historic Keighley Show.

2.5.2 The Sport & Culture events team is responsible for organising, delivering and promoting a number of prestigious destination events across the District. These include Skyride, Bradford City Run and the popular Bingley Music Live festival which attracts in the region of 40,000 people over the weekend.

2.5.3 Other significant events planned this year in Keighley area include:

- Fun fairs in Victoria park (2), Eastholmes field (1),
- Ilkley Gala - Eastholmes field
- Haworth's 1940 and 1960 weekends May and August
- Marley Armed Forces Day.
- Marley junior football tournament
- East Holmes field Race for Life
- Keighley Show – Marley - September
- Cliffe Castle and Haworth's bandstand concerts
- Sue Ryder Colour Run - Marley

- Riverside Gardens - Ilkley Xmas Teepee's
- EID prayers - Cliffe Castle

2.5.4 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 Restoration of Cliffe Castle Park

3.1.1 The work to restore Cliffe Castle Park is all thanks to a successful £3.5m bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund "Parks for People Programme". The Council has also contributed £1m to restore many of the parks original features including construction of a new palm house and glasshouses, part of which will house a fully accessible and refurbished café and toilets.

3.1.2 The two marble fountains have been returned to use overlooking the site of the restored pond in its original position whilst horticultural beds and features have been restored. A new and sizeable aviary is being constructed together with a more central entrance from the car park. Various historic and interpretative features are being introduced.

3.1.3 Work started in June 2016 and is expected to complete October 2017 after delays due mainly to the increased scope of works. PGS has appointed a dedicated Heritage Parks Officer as part of its on-going revenue contribution towards maintenance of the park with a role to develop a mixed programme of cultural, social and educational events and activities.

### 4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

#### 4.1 Budget Savings 2017/18

4.1.1 The Service is charged with a savings target of £180,000 for the current year as part of the adopted Outcome Based Budget Process.

	<b>17/18</b>
CAT's Town/Parish Councils	25
Car Parking Charges	40
BML	50
Woodlands	40
Bowling Greens/Sports Pitches	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>

4.1.2 Members will note that further savings are required from Bowls Clubs in conjunction with other Sports Clubs using playing pitches. The overarching principle remains that of community management of facilities as delivered through implementation of the Playing Pitch Strategy, however other options based on increased voluntary activity will also be considered.

- 4.1.3 Devolution of the management and maintenance of parks and open spaces to local town/parish councils will be pursued where a significant cashable saving is available; Burley Town Council has already completed such a lease involving a range of service providers. The introduction of car park charging within identified parks and woodlands remains challenging and it is unlikely that the cumulative saving will be achieved during the current year; Riverside Gardens and Ilkley Lido are included within the first phase of sites to be included for parking charges.
- 4.1.4 Proposed savings within the Trees & Woodland unit reflect completion of management plans for all Woodlands together with reduced volumes of activity following the introduction of a higher threshold requirement for authorising tree works and the introduction of a new tree management system.

## **4.2 Financial Performance 2016/17**

- 4.2.1 Keighley area has a notional net budget of £357,000 and returned an indicative overspend in the region of £20,000. It is estimated that a structural pressure in the region of £50,000 exists once release of debt provision is considered. Half of this will be removed when funding for the Heritage Parks Officer at Cliffe is transferred, however the remainder will remain subject to the final deal for the disposal of Riddlesden Golf Club.

## **5 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The majority of Ward Action Plans reflect support for the positive use of local parks and green spaces. One measure of success is that of organised event activity with such numbers in Keighley being the highest for parks across the District. .
- 5.2 The value of community action and 'Friends of groups' within the People Can initiative is also recognised to enhance any low maintenance regimes; examples are community action within Haworth Churchyard and the Friends of Utley Cemetery.
- 5.3 Littering remains an issue with Riverside Gardens specifically identified and linking to actions taken by PGS under Section 2.3.3 above.
- 5.4 PGS continues to work closely, and generally successfully, with the Neighbourhood Service to deliver such joint aspirations.

## **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
- 6.2. The Council has various powers to provide parks and pleasure ground and other recreational facilities but is under no duty to do so. The management of such facilities is a matter for the Council subject to its general duties under Occupiers Liability legislation or Health and Safety.
- 6.3. Members should note that Section 106 Agreements entered into after the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 will no longer contain recreational contributions. These will now be subject to

the CIL Charging Schedule and the use and distribution of such infrastructure funding will become a matter for the Executive. However S106 contributions payable under agreements entered into before that date can still be used for the intended purpose. It should also be noted that in areas where there are local councils 15% of CIL monies received for their areas will be distributed to them to spend on infrastructure projects including parks and recreation.

## **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.

### **7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

The PGS 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. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Keighley Area Committee:

- 9.1 Note the content of this report
- 9.2 Welcome the investment of the Heritage Lottery Fund and acknowledge the efforts of the Cliffe Castle Park Conservation Group and other stakeholders in delivering the restoration of the park.

**10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None