

## **Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of the Shipley Area Committee to be held on 11 October 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 Shipley/Bingley**

- 2.2.1 Within the constituency the following 8 main parks are managed and maintained by the service area teams with the Trees & Woodland unit managing St Ives Estate:-

- 2.2.2 Prince of Wales Park: Myrtle Park: Foster Park: Harden Park: Menston Park: Crowgill Park: Northcliffe Park: Roberts Park and Greenwood Park.
- 2.2.3 There are also 26 recreation grounds, 37 equipped play areas, 8 MACA's (Multi Activity Communal Areas) and 7 Skate/BMX parks and a number of public open spaces. Other facilities include 18 football pitches, 9 bowling greens, 2 cricket pitches, 14 tennis courts and an aviary.
- 2.2.4 In addition to horticultural works the service is responsible for the upkeep of the entire infrastructure (fences, walls and footpaths) and the associated structures within the above sites including 13 pavilions, 2 cafes, 3 changing facilities and 7 lodges one of which is the parks office for Roberts Park and the Shipley Area.

## **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 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 the play area at Roberts Park have 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 Roberts 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 Avenue Play Area refurbishment

Cliffe Avenue Play Area Table Tennis table

## Cliffe Avenue Teen Shelter

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

Roberts Park Play Area refurbishment

Oakleigh View (toddlers) Play Area refurbishment

Thompson Lane additional play equipment to supplement existing play provision

Cliffe Avenue West playing fields improvements (with Baildon Dynamos)

### 2.4.3 Shipley/Bingley Section 106 Recreation Receipts

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Unallocated</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Allocated Projects</b>
<b>Baildon</b>	56,612	17,470	39,142	Cliffe Ave Play & Pitch
<b>Bingley</b>	87,064	87,064	0	
<b>Bingley Rural</b>	27,862	27,862	0	
<b>Shipley</b>	34,107	34,107	0	
<b>Wharfedale</b>	14,340	14,340	0	
<b>Windhill &amp; Wrose</b>	53,717	53,717	0	

## 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 43 events expected within the Shipley area this year: some of which are major District events such as the historic Bingley Show, Saltaire Heritage Weekend and Festival.

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 Shipley/Bingley area include:

- 3 fun fairs at Thompson Lane Recreation Ground and Menston Park
- Saltaire Festival, Roberts Park
- Full events list at Roberts Park (bands, theatre groups)
- Summer long galas and fun days at several parks/recreation grounds
- Cycling event in various parks
- Children's summer activities – across all wards
- Boot Camp fitness at Roberts Park and Menston Park

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 Community Asset Transfers (CATs) to Town/Parish Councils**

- 3.1.1 The first CAT involving the transfer of all PGS assets within a Town/Parish Council boundary took effect from April of this year. In addition to the leasehold transfer of most PGS assets (tree work not yet devolved), Burley Parish Council have also taken over the maintenance of all highway sites in the Parish through a Service Level Agreement.
- 3.1.2 The PGS Service, therefore, no longer visits Burley and staffing budgets have been reduced to reflect this change as part of the savings programme.
- 3.1.3 Wilsden Parish Council also has a longstanding commitment to carry out a similar exercise and officers continue to consider the available options.

### **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. St Ives Estate is included within the first phase of sites to implement 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 With a notional net budget of £339,000 the Shipley operational depots returned an indicative underspend in the region of £50,000. Following adjustments to allow for transfer of members of staff and bearing in mind the high levels of overspend in previous years, the current assessment suggests budget levels are adequate for the resources required to deliver the required standards.

## **5 WARD PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 PGS do not feature widely within many of the Ward Action Plans, however there is clear support for existing 'Friends of Groups' such as Prince of Wales Park together with an aspiration to develop further activity. Partnership working with a number of the local councils is recognised with significant elements relating to the provision of green space and horticultural features.
- 5.2 There is a clear commitment to support local councils and other groups considering or preparing to take on responsibility for community facilities or services such as Burley Parish Council – see section 3.1.
- 5.3 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 Shipley Area Committee note the content of this report.

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.