

## Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of the Bradford West Area Committee to be held on Wednesday 25 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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### Portfolio:

**Environment, Sport and Culture**

### Overview & Scrutiny Area:

**Environment and Waste Management**

## **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 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 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 Bradford West**

- 2.2.1 The following main parks are managed and maintained by the service area teams – Greenwood Park, Horton Park, Ladyhill Park, Lister Park, Victoria Park Clayton, West Park Girington– together with 25 recreational spaces and playing fields containing 20 equipped play areas, 10 MACA's (Multi Activity Communal Areas) 3 skate/BMX parks and 15 pavilions, changing facilities and lodges.
- 2.2.2 Other facilities in use this season include 7 Football/Rugby pitches, 9 bowling greens, 1 cricket pitch and 2 tennis court. 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.

## **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 weather pattern this year have been largely favourable despite a relatively wet summer, the major operational challenge remains that of litter and fly tipping, this interferes with other programmed activity (such as general grass cutting) due to the need to clear excessive litter prior to completing other tasks.
- 2.3.4 Officers continued to engage with partners such as Friends of Groups, local community groups, 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 Award for Lister Peel Park and a Gold Award from Yorkshire in Bloom.

## **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:

**Park Avenue Cricket Ground:** Phase one and two of the refurbishment of the iconic Cricket Ground. Works include the construction of 8 artificial practice nets and an inclusive changing pavilion. Further works include refurbishment of the score box, new wickets and a groundsman store and office.

**Haworth Road** Construction of a new walking track and entrance way improvements

**Horton Park** Installation of Outdoor Gym equipment throughout the park.

Construction of a new play area at **Thornaby Drive**, Clayton with in association with Clayton Parish Council

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

**Greenwood Park** Play Area refurbishment

**Woodhead Road** Rec boundary securing works

**Park Avenue Cricket Ground** refurbishment of main pitch cricket wicket

2.4.3 Bradford West Section 106 Recreation Receipts (as 23/08/2017)

	Total	Unallocated	Allocated	Allocated Projects
<b>City</b>	95,554	55,259	40,295	Horton Park Outdoor Gym
<b>Clayton &amp; Fairweather</b>	39,956	0.00	39,956	Thornaby Rd Play Area
<b>Heaton</b>	27,312	0.00	27,312	2180 to Barrier & remainder to Haworth Rd Walking Track
<b>Manningham</b>	0	0.00	0.00	
<b>Thornton &amp; Allerton</b>	153,670	93,670	60,000	Greenwood Park Play Area
<b>Toller</b>	0	0.00	0.00	

## 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 over 50 events community Events booked within the Bradford West area this year.

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 events planned this year in Bradford West include:

- Bollywood Feature Film “Gold” filming days in Lister Park
- Churches Together, Pentecost in the Park -Lister Park
- Cycling sections, Orienteering and Band Concerts Lister Park

- Eid Prayers, Lister Park, Infirmary Filed & Woodhead Road Rec
- Friends of events in Horton Park
- Fun Fairs in Lister Park (2) and Infirmary Fields Recreation Ground
- Hockney Birthday Celebrations Lister Park
- Park Run in Horton & Lister Park
- Sandy lane Parish Council Fun Day Greenwood Park
- Tour De Yorkshire Lister Park
- Various one day play & activity sessions
- Various sponsored runs and walks Horton & Lister Parks

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 None

### 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.

	17/18
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; there are currently no Bradford West sites within the first phase of implementation.

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 Bradford West operations has a notional controllable net budget of £466,000 with an indicative underspend in the region of £14,000 (3%) for last year. This operational area has a long standing tradition of delivering annual financial outcomes within plus or minus 5% of the allocated budget.

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

5.1 The majority of Ward Action Plans reflect support for outdoor play, recreation and sport, many recognising the need to retain local parks and green spaces whilst maximising their potential for healthier living initiatives. Improvements to play areas and community recreation space also features widely within the plans.

5.2 The value of 'Friends of groups' is recognised under the People Can initiative particularly at Horton Park.

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**

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. OPTIONS**

**9.1 None**

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Bradford West Area Committee:

10.1 Note and welcome the content of this report

**11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None