

Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of The Bradford East Area Committee to be held on 22nd November 2018

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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 and proposed management structural changes 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:

Neighbourhood & Customer Safety

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Regeneration & Environment

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 and proposed management structural changes that will have an effect over the coming 12 months with options where available for future service delivery, investment and savings

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Parks & Green Spaces (PGS) Service

2.1.1 Following some re-alignment of Assistant Directors managed remits the PGS currently sits within the department of Neighbourhood & Customer Services, 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 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 6 schools in Bradford East 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 Bradford East

2.2.1 The following main parks are managed and maintained by the service area teams – Peel Park, Bowling Park and Bradford Moor Park – together with 19 recreational

spaces and playing fields containing 17 equipped play areas, 10 MACA's (Multi Activity Communal Areas) 3 skate/BMX parks and 19 pavilions, changing facilities and lodges.

2.2.2 Other facilities in use this season include 24 Football/Rugby pitches, 8 bowling greens, 4 cricket pitches and 2 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.

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 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 were almost negligible from local bowls clubs. This is certainly a reflection of the work of the gardeners involved and also possibly due to the closer working between management and the bowls leagues and also of the fact that 3 of the 6 clubs in the area adopted a 'self-maintenance type model' for this season. 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 patterns this year have been largely favourable despite a very dry 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 Peel Park following a 'secret shopper' visit by the judges.

2.4 New Works and projects

2.4.1 The following new projects have been successfully delivered in the last 12 months:

2.4.2 Peel Park Bridge Repairs – repair works completed and scaffolding removed

2.4.3 Assisted the Friends of Peel Park group to procure and install an interactive wooden play trail around the park

2.4.4 Assisted local bowls clubs to adopt a 'self-managed' maintenance scheme – Idle and Eccleshill bowls clubs are now cutting and maintaining the greens and surrounding areas themselves and Greengates are also cutting (only) their green.

- 2.4.5** Assisted the 'Friends of Greengates' Cenotaph to procure and install two life size aluminium figures, 'Tommies', in readiness for the 100 years centenary event.
- 2.4.6** Following some lengthy consultation with colleagues in Highways the East Area Committee has agreed to allocate some funding in relation to developing a traffic management scheme at Thornbury roundabout. There have been numerous vehicle incidents on a particular corner that have caused thousands of pounds worth of damage to the recreation ground infr-structure and it is hopeful the new scheme will alleviate this.
- 2.4.7** Both Parks and Officers from the Neighbourhood team carried out some collaborative working with the Community Payback Service in various areas including Seymour Street Recreation Ground and the Greenway. The works included litter picking and fly-tipping removal.
- 2.4.8** Complaints had been received about the excess food left around the lake area of Bradford Moor Park and officers from both services were involved in an education project around the feeding of birds/wildfowl and how an excess of food can attract vermin.
- 2.4.9** Officers have been engaging with Better Start in the Bowling, Barkerend, Bradford Moor and Little Horton wards to set up 'guided walks' around our parks and recreation grounds to encourage people to be more active and promote the health benefits that parks and exercise can offer the community.

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 45 events booked within the Bradford East area this year, some of which are regional championship events such as the Yorkshire Regional Cyclo-Cross Championships in Peel Park. In December.
- 2.5.2** Other events planned this year in Bradford East include:
- Fun Fairs in Peel Park (2), Bradford Moor Park (2), Bowing Park, Idle Recreation Ground, Harrogate Road Playing Fields and the gala at The Delph
 - Eid Festival – Bradford Moor Park
 - Diwali celebrations – Seymour Street Recreation Ground
 - Circus in Peel Park
 - Orienteering and cycling events
 - 26 one day play & activity sessions
 - Fitness session in Peel Park
 - Community Lunches and picnics
 - Friends of Group 'Pop Up Farm' – Peel Park
 - Better Start Project – Community events in parks celebrating community achievements and organised outdoor play
- 2.5.3** The team at Peel Park also facilitate events across the district by erecting market stalls in liaison with the Council's Markets Section.

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 Service Merger

3.1.1 Following the move into the Neighbourhoods & Customer Services area it is inevitable that there will also be some operational and structural changes to consider. A planned merger of the Parks & Cleansing services will take place which will positively create a larger more resilient workforce and will allow greater flexibility across the service areas.

3.1.2 A management re-structure will also take place which will see the creation of 5 new Parks & Street Cleansing Manager roles who will be responsible for the combined services and report directly to the Area Coordinators.

3.1.3 There will also be a post of a senior Parks & Green Spaces Manager based at a more strategic level and reporting to the Shipley Area Coordinator.

3.1.4 It is anticipated that the proposed new structure will be implemented early in the new year.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 Financial Performance 2016/17

4.2 Bradford East operations has a notional net budget of £423,000 and there are no potential concerns at this stage. The area continues to undertake additional internal and external contract works in an effort to gain additional income. A further review of Service wide budgets is planned during the current year and this issue remains one of the key priorities.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 There are no serious risk or governance issues associated with this report.

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.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

8.1 None

9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

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

10. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

10.1 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.

11. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no Community Safety Implications arising from this report.

12. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

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

13. TRADE UNION

13.1 Trade Unions at all levels are engaged in consultation over the proposals included in this report.

14. WARD IMPLICATIONS

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

14.2 Increased devolution of the services will allow the Area Committee to further address local priorities for those services within wards.

**15. AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS
(for reports to Area Committees only)**

15.1 There are no Area Committee Action Plan implications arising from this report.

16. IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

16.1 Refer to the guidance contained in the Report Guide.

17. ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

17.1 There are no Privacy Impact issues arising from this report.

18. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

18.1 None.

19. OPTIONS

19.1 None applicable to this report.

20. RECOMMENDATIONS

20.1 That East Area Committee note the content of this report and welcome the planned merger of the Cleansing service.

21. APPENDICES

21.1 None

22. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

22.1 None