

Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of the Keighley 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 6 have 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 Keighley & District

- 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 2018

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 relationship between management and the bowls leagues and it was also good to see that clubs engaged with the 'options' offered around management and Crossroads adopted a 'self-maintenance type model' for this season with both Oxenhope and Denholme opting to 'part self manage' and cut their own greens. 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 Central Park, Haworth and of course the newly refurbished Cliffe Castle also gaining the award

2.4 New Works

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

2.4.2 Assisted local bowls clubs to adopt a 'self managed' maintenance scheme – Oxenhope are now cutting their own green with the council attending to other requirements and treatments and Crossroads have adopted a full maintenance package agreement with both process's working well over the season.

- 2.4.3** Continued drainage works on Silsden Park rugby pitch and the works are soon to be completed with the pitch open for fixtures next summer.
- 2.4.4** Assisted to facilitate the new Park Run at Cliffe Castle which has proved very popular.
- 2.4.5** Officers in both Parks and Neighbourhoods assisted in the setting up of a new Friends of Riverside Gardens Group at Ilkley. The group have been active throughout the last few months and have arranged regular litter picking events.

2.5 Events

2.5.1 Planned events this year 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
- Keighley Show – Marley - September
- Cliffe Castle and Haworth's bandstand concerts
- Riverside Gardens - Ilkley Xmas Tepee's
- EID prayers - Cliffe Castle
- Park Run – Cliffe Castle
- Christmas at the Castle – Cliffe Castle
- Manorlands Monster Dash – Cliffe Castle

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1** 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 The Keighley Service area has a notional net budget of £370,000 and there are no significant concerns at this stage. The area continues to undertake both additional internal and external contract works in an effort to gain additional income. A further review of service wide budgets I 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 Right 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

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

16. IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

16.1 None

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 the Keighley 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