

# Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of the Bradford West Area Committee to be held on 28 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 Services**

## Overview & Scrutiny Area:

**Regeneration & Environment**

## **1. SUMMARY**

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 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 Girdlington– 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 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 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. As part of the previous offer to clubs around 'self-maintenance' Clayton bowls club did take up the option to cut their own green with the council attending to all the other maintenance issues and this has gone well this season. The previous adoption of more sustainable flower bed regimes appears to have been successful, particularly as the herbaceous planting begins to become established and the borders to the front of Cartwright Hall and beds in the City Centre have looked impressive all season.

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, and this interferes with other programmed activity (such as general grass cutting) due to the need to clear excessive litter prior to completing other tasks. This can be quite challenging in Lister Park due to the amount of events that take place there, although, not every event creates problems.

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 Park and a Gold Award in Yorkshire in Bloom.

## **2.4 New Works/Projects**

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

2.4.2 Following the folding of Horton Park Bowls Club officers were able to look at the repurposing of the assets. The buildings and bowling green areas are now occupied

by the Youth Service who are running various inter-active sessions from the site. It also allowed the New Libya Society to establish a base there for its members.

**2.4.3** The play area at Greenwood Park was refurbished and refreshed with some new equipment being installed.

## **2.5 Events**

**2.5.1** PGS administers, stages and supports a high number of events throughout the year in its parks & recreation grounds (over 230) with 43 events being held in the Bradford West area. These events include both sporting, fun and charity and include the following:

- Cycling sections, Orienteering and Band Concerts Lister Park
- Eid Prayers, Lister Park, Infirmary Field & Woodhead Road Rec
- Friends of events in Horton Park
- Fun Fairs in Lister Park (2) and Infirmary Fields Recreation Ground
- Park Run in Horton & Lister Park
- Sandy lane Parish Council Fun Day Greenwood Park
- Various one day play & activity sessions
- Various sponsored runs and walks Horton & Lister Parks
- Lantern Parade – Lister Park
- Thornton Gala
- Dickensian Market – Victoria Park, Clayton
- Allerton Partnership Fun Day – Ladyhill Park
- Well Bradford NHS 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations – West Park

**2.5.2** 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.

## **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**

##### **4.2 Financial Performance 2018/19**

- 4.2.1** Bradford West operations has a notional net budget of £447,000 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 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**

**15.1** PGS do not feature widely within many of the Ward Action Plans, however there is clear support for existing 'Friends of Groups' such as Friends of Horton 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.

**5.3** PGS continues to work closely, and generally successfully, with the Neighbourhood Service to deliver such joint aspirations.

## **16. IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

**16.1** There are no implications arising from this report.

## **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 West 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