

Report of the Director of Environment & Sport to the meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee to be held on Thursday 19th November 2015.

N

Subject:

Parks & Green Spaces Service Flower Beds

Summary statement:

This report provides an update on the Parks & Green Spaces Service proposals with regard to the change in flower bed provision in the Bradford East Area.

Steve Hartley
Strategic Director Environment and Sport

Portfolio:
Environment and Sport

Report Contact
Ian Wood
Principal Manager Parks & Green Spaces

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Phone: (01274) 432648
E-mail: ian.wood@bradford.gov.uk



1. SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Parks & Green Spaces Service proposals with regard to the change in flower bed provision in the Bradford East Area

2. BACKGROUND

A report was presented to the Bradford East Area Committee on 25th June 2015 detailing the decision to reduce expenditure on flower beds by 80% across the district.

It should be noted that there are a number of beds across the district which will need to remain planted to prevent claw back of lottery grants. It should also be noted that there is a requirement to provide bedding to a number of graves under the perpetuity planting scheme.

It was resolved that the Grants Advisory Group undertakes further consultation to explore alternative approaches towards flower beds in the Bradford East area and the consultation also include the consideration of options to retain Peel Park Nursery. In addition a report be presented in November 2015 outlining the Grants Advisory Groups options for the Committees final consideration.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Floral Display Review

3.1.1 Introduction

The Council historically has prepared flower beds for summer and winter display at various street scene, parks and green spaces locations throughout the District.

The Council has made a decision to reduce the level of funding allocated to this provision for future years which will have an effect on the appearance of the flower beds across the District.

The current adopted methodology for service reductions resulting from budget savings is to apply the reduction from the current position equally across the district as follows:

Summer Bedding Plant Provision by Constituency

Summer Bedding Plants by Constituency 2015 (Indicative numbers)		
	Current	Future
Bradford South	13,000	2600
Bradford East	11,000	2200
Bradford West	43,000	8600
Shipley	46,500	9300
Keighley	87,500	17500
Total	201,000	40200



3.1.2 Floral Displays/Flower Beds

In an effort to achieve the above level of savings it was therefore proposed to offer some new alternative models of service delivery and a range of options were suggested for consideration and the ideas with the greatest potential were suggested as follows:

- Grass over the flower beds in low priority areas
- Reduce the size and/or density of planting in some beds
- Continue to plant a very limited number of high profile flower beds
- Introduce planted beds that produce colour all year round with minimal maintenance
- Introduce a community planting and maintenance scheme through a 'friends of the flowers' model
- Use precept charges to support the future cost of flower bed provision in some areas
- Use voluntary sector groups to grow plants to support the planted beds

It was proposed that all of the above options would need to be agreed in detail with the appropriate area committee and then consulted with organisations, partners and community groups. The mix of solutions will be different in each area, but all will reflect a cost saving proportionate to the 80% reduction from the existing position. However, if the mix of solutions is managed correctly then the medium to long term effect of the change should be less severe than that suggested by the scale of the budget reduction particularly if the specification for flower bed planting is changed as suggested by the 4th option above.

The majority of the new provision could be through permanently planted flower beds, which would flower at different times during the year. They would be maintained and litter picked periodically and would be refreshed during the traditionally quieter winter period by the park service. The regular maintenance work could be carried out by the parks team, and/or a facilitated interest group or independent community 'friends of the flower' community group.

As a starting point the parks team considered the flower beds and RAG rated (Red Amber and Green) them based upon a set of perception criteria to show their priority and then classified them for a type of treatment that is proposed for each flower bed in the committees area based upon the rating and the available resources (See Appendix 1).

This initial assessment has been based on the amount of resources that are available in each area. If different options were identified then the proportion of each element would be affected and further analysis would be required to ensure the proposal is within the available budget.

The timing of full implementation is likely to take place over two winter periods to enable all of the conversions to take place within the existing staff resources and funding available for the purchase of flowers.



3.2 Consultation

As previously agreed, Officers carried out a consultation exercise with the Grants Advisory Group and this did prove to be very successful in gaining differing views and addressing individual concerns. The outcomes and proposals are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1.1 The Parks and Green Spaces Service has been given savings targets for both the current year and also for 2016/17 financial year.

4.1.2 The savings will be challenging to achieve in year, but work has commenced to deliver the saving and minimise the impact as far as possible.

A summary of the savings to be achieved is as follows:

Parks and Green Spaces Savings Targets	2015/16	2016/17
	(K)	(K)
Review the workforce to reflect seasonal variations	65	85
Management Restructure	100	0
Bowling Greens	25	25
Achieve 100% of events at zero cost	25	50
Reduce floral displays and close the nursery	150	50
Total Savings	365	210

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 The financial risks posed are limited by the nature of the expenditure delegated. However, there is potential to reduce efficiency and overall quality of the service in specific areas if any proposed change is not considered for the wider implications. It will be important to establish a financial governance regime to devise and ensure sound stewardship of the limited resources available. This is work in progress and must be in place to support effective devolution.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 The contents of this report are in accordance with the decisions of the Executive on 9th October 2012 and 16th April 2013.



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. The proposal to move to permanently planted flower beds is more sustainable for both economic and environmental reasons.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

The Parks and Green Spaces 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

Members are asked to consider the proposals as detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report to achieve the budget savings, increase efficiency and retain significant floral displays within the resources available.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Bradford East Area Committee note the content of this report and consider and approve the proposals for each flower bed as detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report.

11. APPENDICES

Bradford East Flower Bed Proposals (Appendix 1)

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None



Appendix 1:- Bradford East Flower Bed Proposals

Location	Indicative Historic Number of Plants	Proposals
Bolling Hall Museum	300	Reduce size and use permanent planting Outcome following GAG consultation:- It was agreed to adopt the initial proposals but include looking at options to use 'age appropriate plants'. It was also suggested to adapt the present bed to be 'period appropriate' for the location.
Bowling Cemetery	850	Reduce scale and use permanent planting Outcome following GAG consultation:- It was agreed to retain as perpetuity planting but to also explore the option of incorporating more permanent planting options.
Greengates Cenotaph	1775	Reduce scale and use permanent planting Outcome following GAG consultation:- It was agreed to retain the initial proposals but that the Greengates Community Group would engage with Officers and look to take on the ownership and maintenance of the existing beds. This has now been agreed.
Peel Park	7500	Reduce scale and use permanent planting Outcome following GAG consultation:- Outline proposals accepted and agreed although there is further ongoing consultation with Friends of Group to explore how they may assist with alternative management of beds. Also ongoing discussion regarding the development of a Heritage bed with FOG.
Industrial Museum	120	Remove Outcome following GAG consultation:- Agreed to use permanent planting but design to be in keeping with museum settings. Further options to be discussed with museum with regard to them possibly providing plants and carrying out future maintenance.
Whiteoak Hostel	120	Removed

