

Report of The Head of Parks and Countryside

Report to North East Outer Area Committee

Date: 24th October 2011

Subject: Annual Report – for Parks and Countryside Service in North East Outer Area Committee

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Alwoodley Harewood Wetherby		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. The report provides an area profile of key assets, information on park usage and a customer based perspective of the quality of the assets and services provided.
2. It highlights the current progress towards Leeds Quality Park (LQP) status for parks in the area. It provides the costs of achieving and retaining LQP status in parks up to the year 2020.
3. The report details capital improvements in parks, sport pitches and fixed play in the area for the last 12 months and expected improvements in the next 12 months.
4. It gives a detailed breakdown of events and volunteering in the area.

Recommendations

5. The Area Committee is requested to note the content of the report and to communicate priorities for investment in community parks, playing pitches and fixed play facilities in light of the issues raised

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks to further develop the relationship between the Parks and Countryside service and the North East Outer Area Committee, as agreed at Executive Board.
- 1.2 It provides an overview of the service and sets out some of the challenges faced along with key performance management initiatives. In addition it seeks to provide a positive way forward for delivering the extended role of the Area Committee ensuring that the benefits of the revised roles are secured.
- 1.3 In particular it sets out at an area level progress made in attaining Leeds Quality Park standard. It also sets out investment needs to attain LQP standards and to retain them.

2 Background information

Service Description

- 2.1 Leeds City Council has one of the largest fully inclusive local authority Parks and Countryside services, managing almost 4,000 hectares of parks and green space.
- 2.2 This includes 7 major parks, 62 community parks and 95 recreation grounds and 391 local green spaces, which include 144 playgrounds and 500 sports facilities ranging from skateboard parks to golf courses, and which play host to 600 events annually. The service also manages a nursery which produces over 4 million bedding plants each year, 96 allotment sites, over 800km of PROW, and 156 nature conservation sites, as well as 22 cemeteries and three crematoria.
- 2.3 The 2009 Parks and Countryside residents survey showed that the service attracts almost 68 million visits each year from Leeds' residents alone, and that approximately 96% of these are regular park users. These range from anybody using a park for informal recreation (e.g. walking, observing nature) to people who take part in formal activities (e.g. football clubs, conservation volunteers or to attend events). The user surveys also evidenced that 10m visits are made to our green space by Young People (12-19) compared to 3.6m by Children (5-11).

Description of Delegated Function/Enhanced role

- 2.4 The enhanced role for Area Committees relates to parks provision that have a wide range of facilities, including general recreation, sports pitches, play and formal and informal horticultural facilities.
- 2.5 Where developments are less significant or only impact on one site then ward members and community groups will be informed and consulted using established procedures. It is important to note that good levels of engagement with ward members exist and this role seeks to enhance this engagement.

3 Main issues

Area Profile of the Service

- 3.1 The following table summarises community green space assets managed by Parks and Countryside in the North East Outer Area Committee:

Asset	Quantity
Community parks	0
LQP Judged Parks	6
Playing Pitches:	
Football	10
Rugby League	1
Rugby Union	2
Bowling greens	1
Playgrounds	9
Multi-use games areas	1
Skate parks	2

Residents Survey

- 3.2 Analysis from the 2009 residents survey was carried out relevant to the parks in the area which are;

Site Name	Annual Number of Visits	Total Annual Visits to North East Outer Parks and greenspace is 1.6m approx.
Alwoodley POS	137,153	
Cranmer Bank	84,149	
Deepdale Recreation	249,642	
Lotherton Hall Estate	196,734	
Shadwell Lane/Osprey Grove	166,363	
Wetherby Ings	181,259	

- 3.3 The residents survey provides significant insight into the users of parks, demographics of users, how they get there and what they do. A detailed insight of each of these parks is given in appendix 1. The key analysis points are;

- Approximately 72% of visitors are adults with 28% children and young people.
- There are a wide range of reasons for visiting but nearly all visitors at some point go for relaxation or play. Enjoying the surroundings, exercise and for family outings are also very popular.
- 58% of visitors travel to the park on foot of which 51% take less than 10 minutes to travel there.
- Of the 38% who visit by car 50% take less than 10 minutes to get there. This figure is higher than most area committees but is heavily influenced by the statistics for Lotherton Hall Estate.
- 23% of visitors go to parks either every day or on most days, whilst 61% go at least once a week.

3.4 Parks and Countryside provide annual pitch hire for sports teams in the area. The table below shows the number of teams with current bookings playing on pitches in the area; *(note this excludes clubs who have a long term lease in place)*

Age Group	No of Teams
Open Age	3
Juniors	9

Volunteering in the Parks and Countryside Service

3.5 Since the last report to Area Committees the service has focused resources for a community outreach team to increase the number of volunteers and value of activities which take place with the following key actions;

- Seeking a large increase in corporate volunteering due to enhanced marketing and communication.
- Continued and improved involvement with the many “in bloom” groups in Leeds.
- It is an ambition is to have a volunteer group for every community park.

3.6 It is estimated that volunteers across all groups contribute 5,764 days of voluntary work in the north east outer area over a 12 month period. The tables below give details of works undertaken in north east outer since December 2010 and the active groups in the area committee;

Work undertaken by volunteers working with the Rangers;

Site	Group / Organisation	Task
Adel Woods and Moor	ParkLane College	Scrub bashing
	Friends of Adel Woods	Step Building Footpath repair Cut backs Removing birch from heathland Dry stone walling
	Work Placement	Drystone Walling
	St Gemma's	Post and Rail fencing
	Yorkshire Bank	Footpath creation
Wetherby-Collingham Footpath	Lloyds	Footpath construction
Eccup Whin	Leeds Wildlife Volunteers	Glade management Boardwalk construction

Corporate volunteer actions;

Organisation	Site	Task	Number of Volunteers
Lloyds Banking Group	Collingham - Wetherby footpath	Footpath maintenance	18
Yorkshire Bank	Adel Woods	Footpath creation	12
Leeds Ahead	Linesway	Cut backs, litter, step maintenance	12

Summary of the groups who are active in the north east outer area committee or who carry out work within the area;

Group Name	Number of Volunteers	Estimated Volunteer Days
Friends of Adel Woods	30	120
Leeds Parks Volunteers	4	78
Leeds Voluntary Footpath Rangers	6	130
Leeds Wildlife Volunteers	12	216
Total	52	544

Existing in bloom groups within the north east outer area;

In Bloom Group	Number of Volunteers	Estimated Volunteer Days
Aberford	3	80
Alwoodley	15	280
Barwick	25	480
Boston Spa	70	1400
Bramham	30	600
Harewood	22	440
Shadwell	15	280
Wetherby	100	2000
Total	280	5560

Events

- 3.7 The bookings and licensing team has introduced improvements to the application process for events that occur in parks. They are providing greater assistance in helping community groups organise events with particular emphasise on ensuring legal and safety requirements are met but do not deter groups and organisations from organising activities. The table below shows a list of events held in the area committee so far in 2011;

Site Name	Month	Event	Total
Adel Woods	October	Airienteers	1
Eccup Whin	May	Boardwalk Construction - Leeds Wildlife Vol's	1
Harland Way	September	Wetherby Run 10k	1
Lotherton Hall	April	Book worm club	1
		Canopy Access Training	1
		Craft Fair	1
		Dawn Chorus	1
	May	Bat Walk	1
		Garden show	2
		Phoenix crafts	2
		RSPB	1
		Sponsored Walk - Stroke Association	1
	June	Band in the Park	2
		Book worm club	1
		Garden Gig	1
		Student ball	1
		Wedding	1
	July	Band in the Park	1
Phoenix crafts		1	
Vintage bike show		1	

Site Name	Month	Event	Total
	August	Kookaburra kids club	1
		Steam Rally	1
	September	Craft Fair	1
	October	Abbey House Vets -Sponsored Dog Walk	1
		Dog Show	1
		Fungal Foray	1
		Phoenix crafts	1
The Linesway	August	Bridleway work - Leeds Wildlife Vol's	1
Wetherby Ings	March	Charity Dog Walking	1
	July	Wetherby District Lions Funday (Pram Race)	1
Cranmer Bank Rec	July	Moor Allerton Gala & (Fair 14th - 17th)	1
Wetherby Wilderness	April	Weekly band concert held	1
Deepdale Rec	May	Charity Dog Show	1
Total			36

Leeds Quality Park Status

3.8 The Parks and Green Space Strategy was approved at Executive Board in February 2009 and sets out the vision and priorities to 2020. One of the key proposals contained in the strategy is the aspiration for all community parks to meet the Green Flag standard for field based assessment by 2020. The Green Flag Award Scheme represents the national standard for parks and green spaces. It has been developed around eight key criteria as follows;

- **A welcoming place** - how to create a sense that people are positively welcomed in the park
- **Healthy, safe & secure** - how best to ensure that the park is a safe & healthy environment for all users
- **Clean & well maintained** - what people can expect in terms of cleanliness, facilities & maintenance
- **Sustainability** - how a park can be managed in environmentally sensitive ways
- **Conservation & heritage** - the value of conservation & care of historical heritage
- **Community involvement** - ways of encouraging community participation and acknowledging the community's role in a park's success
- **Marketing** - methods of promoting a park successfully
- **Management** - how to reflect all of the above in a coherent & accessible management plan or strategy and ensure it is implemented.

3.9 The Parks and Countryside service reports annual performance against two local indicators based upon the Green Flag Award scheme;

- The percentage of Parks and Countryside sites assessed that meet the Green Flag standard.
- The percentage of Parks and Countryside community parks which meet the Green Flag standard. Performance against these indicators is illustrated in section 3.21.

3.10 The indicator includes an assessment of each park. The scheme is known as the Leeds Quality Park (LQP) standard. The following table provides a summary of these assessments for the North East Outer Area Committee;

Site	Year Assessed	Welcoming Place	Healthy, Safe, Secure	Clean, Well Maintained	Sustainability	Conservation / Heritage	Community Involvement	Marketing	Meets Standard?
Scotland Wood	2008								No
The Harland Way	2009								No
Cranmer Bank	2008								No
Moss Woods	2008								No
Lotherton Hall Estate	2010								Yes
Wetherby Ings	2009								No

Notes – Assessments due in 2011 are currently taking place but have not yet been recorded in full so no data will be shown in this report.

Key:

Meets Leeds Quality Park Standard on average for this key criteria	
Below Leeds Quality Park Standard on average for this key criteria	

3.11 From this table, there is 1 park identified that meet the Leeds Quality Park Standard in the area, with 5 not reaching the standard. It should be noted that Lotherton Hall Estate holds the full Green Flag Award.

3.12 The residents survey in 2009 enables an assessment of visitor numbers and satisfaction rating (scored out of 10) for a number of criteria for each park, set out in the following table:

Site	Design and Appearance	Cleanliness and Maintenance	Ease to Get Around	Range of Facilities	Horticultural Maintenance	Nature Conservation	Facilities for Families	Sports Facilities	Overall Impression
Alwoodley POS	7.3	7.3	9.0	5.3	7.0	6.7	6.0	6.5	6.3
Cranmer Bank	6.7	5.7	7.7	6.0	6.7	6.0	6.0	6.7	6.4

Site	Design and Appearance	Cleanliness and Maintenance	Ease to Get Around	Range of Facilities	Horticultural Maintenance	Nature Conservation	Facilities for Families	Sports Facilities	Overall Impression
Deepdale Recreation	5.7	5.7	8.2	4.6	5.7	5.8	5.6	5.9	5.8
Lotherton Hall Estate	9.1	9.1	9.1	8.1	8.8	8.9	8.1	6.6	8.9
Wetherby Ings	7.4	6.4	8.3	5.9	7.1	6.8	6.0	7.5	7.5

Key:

Generally meets LQP expectations	7.0 - 10	
Generally below LQP expectations	0.0 – 6.9	

This table broadly correlates with the professional audit undertaken for the Leeds Quality Parks assessment set out in paragraph 3.10. There are however issues identified with the range of facilities and facilities for families at most sites.

Playing Pitches

- 3.13 The residents survey in 2009 allowed respondents to rate sport facilities in parks. The results are shown in the table below;

Rating of Sports facilities	2009 (North East Outer)	2006 (North East Outer)
Fair to very good	81.5%	76%
Poor or very poor	18.5%	24%

The results show an increase in those rating facilities as fair or higher standard. This data is related to the table set out in paragraph 3.12.

Fixed Play

- 3.14 The residents survey in 2009 allowed respondents to rate facilities for children and their parents. The results are shown in the table below;

Rating facilities for children	2009 (North East Outer)	2006 (North East Outer)
Fair to very good	79.8%	83.6%
Poor or very poor	20.2%	16.4%

Results shows a small reduction in those rating the facilities as fair or better.

- 3.15 Improvements to parks and open spaces during 2011 are as follows;

- Deepdale Recreation Ground – New entrance fencing and access works.
- Crag Lane – Refurbished play area.

3.16 The following table provides a perspective on the average level of investment required to achieve the LQP standard for the remaining parks. It also includes the level of reinvestment required across all the LQP parks in order to sustain the LQP pass up to 2020;

Site Name	Cost to Achieve (excluding fixed play)	Reinvestment (excluding fixed play)
Average cost per site	£52,000	
Total to achieve LQP	£260,000	
Average annual reinvestment		£24,047
Total reinvestment to 2020		£216,423
Overall Total Investment to 2020		£486,423

3.17 Reinvestment levels are estimated according to the expected lifespan of equipment and infrastructure as set out below;

Description	Timescale for Recurring Investment
Signage and interpretation	5 years
Fixed play (including MUGA's/skate parks)	10 years
Bins and benches	15 years
Paths and infrastructure	25 years
Landscaping	25 years

3.18 Planned improvements in parks for the next 12 months are;

- Deepdale Recreation Ground – Fencing around play area.
- Aberford Rec Ground – Planned MUGA.

3.19 In terms of fixed play, work has been undertaken to set out refurbishment requirements over a 10 year rolling programme in support of the outcomes of the Fixed Play Strategy. The average cost of a new playground is currently about £120k; Multi-use games areas and skateparks are slightly cheaper on average at about £90k each. The table below shows the capital investment required on an ongoing basis to fund the area committees existing fixed play sites;

Fixed Play Type	No.	Total Replacement Cost £'s	Required Average Annual Spend £'s
Play Areas	10	1,200,000	120,000
Multi Use games Areas	1	90,000	9,000
Skate Parks	2	180,000	18,000
Totals		1,470,000	147,000

Area Committee funding for additional on site gardeners

3.20 A number of area committees provide additional funding for gardeners to increase site based presence at parks in the area.

Analysis shows that complaints to both Ward Councillors and the Parks and Countryside Service have declined on sites with increased daily presence through

site based gardeners. In addition, the service has observed an increase in the number of residents using parks and open spaces which is backed up by the residents survey data.

The site based gardeners increase working relationships with users, local residents and community groups. These site based staff further increase users satisfaction and support the aspiration to increase volunteer groups working within parks.

3.21 The following table highlights key performance indicators relevant to the service;

PI Code	Description	2009/10 Actual	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target
LKI-GFI / CP-PC50 / EM38	The percentage of parks and countryside sites assessed internally that meet the Green Flag criteria	23% (Target 21%)	23% (Target 23%)	26.2%	29.4%
LKI-PCP 22	Overall user satisfaction with Parks and Countryside (from the user survey)	7.37 (Target 7)	N/A	N/A	7
New	The percentage of parks and countryside community parks which meet LQP status	n/a	33.9%	40%	47.5%

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Close liaison with community and ward members is already in existence, utilising a variety of mechanisms, for example through residents' surveys, multi-agency meetings and community forums. In addition volunteers, Friends of groups and local residents are regularly consulted on local projects with input on design and physical implementation of a wide range of site improvements.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 This report does not have an impact on equality and diversity. Further information is available on analysis of the residents survey 2009 specifically regarding equality issues on request.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The contents of this report set out how the Executive Board requirements can be met by taking a more proactive approach to involve and engage Area Committees in matters relating to community parks.

4.3.2 The information within the report contributes significantly to the sustainable economy and culture city priority plan.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 The central government's Comprehensive Spending Review has had significant impact on local government budgets and it is anticipated that the budget allocation for Parks and Countryside will continue to be very challenging.

4.4.2 The service undertakes to sustain and develop the services provided to the public and has traditionally used a number of sources of financial support to achieve developments. These include grants from bodies such as Green Leeds Ltd, Sustrans, Natural England, National Lottery funding and developer contributions via section 106 (S106) funds.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 This report has no legal implications and is not subject to call in. There is no information which is confidential or exempt.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There are no significant risk management issues contained within the report, its conclusions and recommendations.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Community green space contributes in many ways to the delivery of the Corporate Priority Plan. They provide places for relaxation, escape, exercise and recreation. They bring communities together and make a positive contribution to the local economy, education, improve public health and well-being, and generally make a better place to live, work and visit.

5.2 Improvements to community parks, fixed play and playing pitches remain a priority, and there already has been investment made to deliver improvements along with further schemes identified. Issues are being addressed through the Parks and Green Space Strategy along with implementation of the Fixed Play Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy.

5.3 Community engagement remains a key activity for the service with regular correspondence, attendance at meetings and briefings, along with more localised consultation where required. The principle consultation through the residents survey to 35,000 households is scheduled to take place again in 2012.

5.4 A programme of activities is planned for which updates and reports can be provided to the Area Committee to help inform, consult and influence community green space management.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Area Committee is requested to note the content of the report and to communicate priorities for investment in community parks, playing pitches and fixed play facilities in light of the issues raised.

7 Background documents

7.1 Area Committee Roles, North East Outer Area Committee, 4th July 2011

7.2 Annual Report for Parks and Countryside Service in North East Outer Area Committee, North East Outer Area Committee, 6th December 2010

7.3 Parks and Greenspace Strategy, Executive Board, February 2009

7.4 Fixed Play Strategy, Executive Board, September 2002

Appendix 1: Detailed Residents Survey Information

1.1 Total Number of Annual Visits (Sample Size 103)

	LQP Parks	Other P&C Sites	Total
North East Outer	594,266	976,803	1,571,069

1.2 Reasons for Visiting – respondents select their five main reasons (The 24 choices have been grouped in this table)

Reason	Alwoodley POS %	Cranmer Bank Recreation Ground %	Deepdale Recreation %	Lotherton Hall Estate %	Shadwell Lane/Osprey Grove %	Wetherby Ings %	North East Outer Total %
Exercise	50	33	45	83	100	47	61
Play	100	100	95	65	100	53	74
Dog walking	50	77	10	26	0	37	24
Enjoy the surroundings	17	33	10	83	50	32	50
Family outings	83	100	45	100	50	26	62
Relaxation	50	100	80	100	100	63	91
See Wildlife	17	17	5	87	0	16	34
Sport related	17	33	40	9	25	26	21
Other	0	0	5	0	25	5	7
Events	0	17	5	26	25	5	12

1.3 Age Profile of Visitors

Site	Age 20 – 39	Age 40 – 59	Age 60+
Alwoodley POS	20%	40%	40%
Cranmer Bank	50%	50%	0%
Deepdale Recreation	43%	38%	19%
Lotherton Hall Estate	26%	52%	22%
Shadwell Lane/Osprey Grove	40%	20%	40%
Wetherby Ings	5%	42%	53%
North East Outer Total	28%	40%	32%

How visitors get to the parks and how long it takes to get there

1.4 Visitors on Foot – Journey Time

Site	% of visitors on foot	Less than 10 mins	10–20 mins	20-30 mins	30+ mins
Alwoodley POS	83%	40%	60%	0%	0%
Cranmer Bank	83%	60%	40%	0%	0%
Deepdale Recreation	83%	46%	33%	21%	0%
Lotherton Hall Estate	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Shadwell Lane/Osprey Grove	100%	75%	25%	0%	0%
Wetherby Ings	67%	25%	58%	17%	0%
North East Outer Total	58%	51%	40%	9%	0%

1.5 Visitors by Car - Journey Time

Site	% of visitors by car	Less than 10 mins	10–20 mins	20-30 mins
Alwoodley POS	17%	100%	0%	0%
Cranmer Bank	17%	100%	0%	0%
Deepdale Recreation	11%	100%	0%	0%
Lotherton Hall Estate	96%	28%	54%	18%
Shadwell Lane/Osprey Grove	0%	~	~	~
Wetherby Ings	28%	80%	20%	0%
North East Outer Total	38%	50%	40%	10%

1.6 How long do visitors stay. (Detailed information on each park is available on request).

Time	Summer Stay		Winter Stay	
	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday
Less than 30 Minutes	8%	14%	31%	38%
30 minutes to 1 hour	58%	60%	45%	34%
1 to 2 hours	22%	13%	12%	5%
2 to 4 hours	8%	6%	7%	1%
4 or more hours	2%	0%	0%	0%
Do not visit	1%	7%	5%	21%

1.7 How often do visitors go. (Detailed information on each park is available on request).

	Summer	Winter
Every Day	10%	8%
Most Days	13%	9%
Once or Twice a week	38%	22%
Once every two weeks	26%	18%
Once a month	13%	29%
Seldom or never	0%	13%