

Report of The Head of Parks and Countryside

Report to South Inner Area Committee

Date: Tuesday 8th November 2011

Subject: Annual Report – for Parks and Countryside Service in South Inner Area Committee

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	🖂 Yes	🗌 No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	Beeston & Holbeck City & Hunslet	
	Middleton Park	
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	Yes	🛛 No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	🗌 Yes	🛛 No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	🗌 Yes	🛛 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 community parks in the area. It provides the costs of achieving and retaining LQP status in community parks up to the year 2020.
- 3. The report details capital improvements in community 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.
- 5. It provides a perspective on actions contained in the 2008 2011 area delivery plan.

Recommendations

6. 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 South Inner 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 Public Right of Way (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 Priority Advisory Function

- 2.4 The priority advisory function for Area Committees relates to community 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 function 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 South Inner Area Committee:

Asset	Quantity
Community parks	5
Playing Pitches:	
Football	26
Rugby League	6
Bowling greens	13
Playgrounds	15
Multi-use games areas	4
Skate parks	2

Community Parks

3.2 Analysis from the 2009 residents survey was carried out relevant to the 5 community parks in the area which are;

Site Name	Annual Number of Visits	
Cross Flatts Park	1,080,684	Total Annual Visits
Holbeck Moor	352,458	to South Inner
Hunslet Lake	141,215	Community Parks is
Hunslet Moor	117,035	1.7m approx.
Penny Pocket Park	*	

*Penny Pocket Park had no respondents in the survey therefore visitor figures can't be calculated.

- 3.3 The residents survey provides significant insight into the users of community parks, demographics of users, how they get there and what they do. A detailed insight of each community park is given in appendix 1. The key analysis points are;
 - Approximately 78% of visitors are adults with 22% children.
 - There are a wide range of reasons for visiting but nearly all visitors at some point go for relaxation or exercise, another popular reason is for play.
 - Over 90% of visitors travel to the park on foot of which 68% take less than 10 minutes to travel there.
 - Of the 5% who visit by car 75% take less than 10 minutes to get there.
 - 58% of visitors go to community parks either every day or on most days, whilst 81% 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	19
Juniors	17

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 1,848 days of voluntary work in the south inner area over a 12 month period. The tables below give details of works undertaken in south inner since December 2010 and the active groups in the Area Committee;

Site	Group / Organisation	Task
Hunslet Cemetery	Friends of Hunslet	Topping off graves
	Cemetery	
Middleton Park and	Youth Offending Service	Rose garden
Woods		maintenance
	Leeds Wildlife Volunteers	Rhododendron
		bashing
		Dry stone wall repairs
	International Personal	Rose garden
	Finance	maintenance
	Manor Park Housing	Litter pick
	Association	
	02	Painting crash barrier
		Bowling green
		improvements

Work undertaken by volunteers working with the Rangers;

Corporate volunteer actions;

Organisation	Site	Task	Number of Volunteers
Leeds Ahead - International personal finance	Middleton Park	Rose Bed maintenance	18
Leeds Ahead – 02	Middleton park	Painting crash barrier, bowling green maintenance	34
First Direct	Middleton park	Balsam bashing	9
Leeds Initiative	Middleton park	Pruning rose garden. Hedge trimming.	25

Summary of the groups who are active in the south inner area :

Group Name	Number of Volunteers	Estimated Volunteer Days
Friends of Beeston Cemetery	5	5
Friends of Cross Flatts Park	20	120
Friends Of Holbeck Cemetery	5	5
Friends of Hunslet Cemetery	5	10
Friends of Middleton Park	30	180
Leeds Parks Volunteers	4	78
Leeds Voluntary Footpath Rangers	6	130
Leeds Wildlife Volunteers	12	216
Total	87	744

Existing in bloom groups within the south inner area;

In Bloom Group	Number of Volunteers	Estimated Volunteer Days
Beeston	10	200
Cottingley	10	200
Coupland Road	15	280
Holbeck	12	240
Middleton	24	480
Total	71	1400

Events

3.7 The bookings and licensing team has introduced improvements to the application process for events that occur on 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 inner south area so far in 2011:

Site Name	Month	Event	Total
Cross Flatts Park	June	Beeston Festival	1
	July	(25th - 28th) Breeze Event	1
		Interfaith Sports Project	1
	August	LCC Youth Bus	2
		LCC Youth Bus	2
		Wednesday in the Woods (Family	
		Fun)	1
	September	LCC Youth Bus	1
Grove Rd Rec Hunslet	June	Hunslet Festival Gala	1
Holbeck Moor	May	9th - 16th Funfair (Waddington)	1
	July	Holbeck Gala	1
		Hope 11 in Leeds 11 Fun Day	1
	September	26th - 3rd Funfair (Waddington)	1
Hunslet Moor	May	16th - 23rd Funfair (Waddington)	1
Middleton Park	January	Airienteers	1
	February	Airienteers	1
	March	Banardo's 5k run	1
	April	Dry Stone Walling - Leeds Wildlife Vol's	1
	May	Bands in the Park (FoMP)	1
		Bluebell Walks (FoMP)	2
		Doggy Fun with the tailwagger club (FoMP)	1
		Plant Bring & Buy Sale (FoMP)	1
	June	Balsam Pulling - Leeds Wildlife Vol's	1
		Band in the Park	1
		Circus Skills Workshop (FoMP)	1
		Heritage day	1
		Oddstocks Theatre Co (FoMP)	1
		Teas in the park (FoMP)	1
		Winthorpe Whirlers Marjorettes (FoMP)	1
	July	Band in the Park	1
		Bands in the Park (FoMP)	1
		Mines guided walk (FoMP)	1
		Teas in the park (FoMP)	1
	August	Band in the Park	1
		Circus Skills Workshop (FoMP)	1
		Play schemes (funded by childrens services) held twice per week.	10
		Re'new Leeds Ltd	1
		Teas in the park (FoMP)	2
		Wednesday in the Woods (Family	
		Fun)	2
	September	Bands in the Park (FoMP)	1
		FoMP Craft, Flower & Produce Show (FoMP)	1
		Teas in the park (FoMP)	2
	October	Play schemes (funded by childrens services) 24 th – 28 th Oct	2
South Leeds S Centre	May	Youth Service Football Coaching 25/5 - 20/7	1

Site Name	Month	Event	Total
	August	Youth Service Football Coaching	1
Throstle Rec Ground	August	Igen NEET day	1
Total			61

Community Parks – 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 3.23.
- 3.10 The indicator includes an assessment of each community park which has particular relevance to Area Committee engagement. The scheme is known as the Leeds Quality Park (LQP) standard. The following table provides a summary of these assessments for the South Inner Area Committee.

Site	Year Assessed	Welcoming Place	Healthy, Safe, Secure	Clean, Well Maintained	Sustainability	Conservation / Heritage	Community Involvement	Marketing	Meets Standard?
Cross Flatts Park	2010								Yes
Holbeck Moor	2009								No
Hunslet Lake	2010								No
Hunslet Moor	2009								No
Penny Pocket Park	2008								No

<u>Notes</u> – Assessments due in 2011 (2008 inspections above) 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 4 not reaching the standard. This is an increase of 1 pass since the last Area Committee report.
- 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
Cross Flatts Park	7.0	6.6	7.9	5.5	7.5	6.8	6.1	6.5	6.7
Holbeck Moor	7.8	6.4	9.2	6.0	8.2	7.7	6.8	7.8	7.6
Hunslet Moor	3.2	3.2	7.2	3.5	4.8	4.4	4.0	4.0	3.6

Note – Penny Pocket Park and Hunslet Lake had insufficient responses to be able to accurately produce satisfaction data

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 assessments. There are however issues identified with the range of facilities and facilities for families offered in many of the parks.

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 (South Inner)	2006 (South Inner)
Fair to very good	67.6%	64.4%
Poor or very poor	32.4%	35.6%

The results show a slight increase in those who felt sports facilities were of at least fair 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 (South Inner)	2006 (South Inner)
Fair to very good	49.7%	50.3%
Poor or very poor	56.5%	43.5%

Results show little change in those who rated facilities as fair or better.

- 3.15 Improvements to community parks during 2011 are as follows;
 - Hunslet Lake Removal of hedging and replaced with fencing.
 - Penny Pocket Park Installation of new bins.
- 3.16 With regards to sports pitches in the last 12 months the following works have been undertaken in the area;
 - Middleton Sports Centre Pitches Continuation of pitch relaying, drainage and access works.
- 3.17 The following table provides a perspective on the minimum level of investment required to achieve the LQP standard for the five remaining parks. It also includes the level of reinvestment required across all the community parks in order to sustain the LQP pass up to 2020;

Site Name	Cost to Achieve (excluding fixed play)	Reinvestment (excluding fixed play)
Holbeck Moor	£14,800	
Hunslet Lake	£73,500	
Hunslet Moor	£66,073	
Penny Pocket Park	£5,450	
Total to achieve LQP	£159,823	
Average annual reinvestment		£10,228
Total reinvestment to 2020		£92,056
Overall Total Investment to 2020		£251,879

3.18 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

- 3.19 Planned improvements in Community Parks¹, sports pitches and on fixed play for the next 12 months are;
 - Cross Flatts Park repairing of the vandalised steps.
 - Holbeck Moor relocation of skate park from South Leeds Sports Centre to the park.
 - Beggars Hill refurbish play area.
 - Hunslet Lake Work to replace items of equipment in the play area.
 - Middleton Sports Centre Pitches Continuation of works on site to include 3G area, MUGA, Drainage and fencing works on pitches, improved changing rooms, floodlights and access works.
- 3.20 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 Play Strategy. The average cost of a new playground is currently about £120k; Multiuse 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	15	1,800,000	180,000
Multi Use games Areas	4	360,000	36,000
Skate Parks	2	180,000	18,000
Totals		2,340,000	234,000

Area Committee funding for additional on site gardeners

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

¹ It should be noted that Middleton Park (City Park) is within the area committee and has received significant Heritage Lottery Funding for works to be carried out.

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

3.22 The following table summarises actions identified in the Area Delivery Plan (2008 – 2011) and a commentary from a service perspective. During the development of the 2011-2015 Business Plan by Area Management these will be reviewed;

Ref.	Action	Comments
Culture 5	Area Well Being capital funding allocated towards outdoor improvement projects - Beeston Community Football Scheme (£10k).	Completed
Environment	Support provided to' In Bloom' and 'Friends of' groups across Inner South Leeds	The service continues to provide dedicated officer support to local in bloom groups

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

PI Code	Description	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
		Actual	Actual	Target	Target
LKI-GFI / CP-PC50	The percentage of parks and countryside sites	23%	23%	26.2%	29.4%
/ EM38	assessed internally that	(Target	(Target		
	meet the Green Flag criteria	21%)	23%)		
LKI-PCP 22	Overall user satisfaction with Parks and Countryside	7.37	N/A	N/A	7
	(from the user survey)	(Target 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, Inner South Area Committee, 4th July 2011
- 7.2 Annual Report for Parks and Countryside Service in South Inner Area Committee, Inner South Area Committee, 29th November 2010
- 7.3 Parks and Greenspace Strategy, Executive Board, February 2009
- 7.4 Play Strategy, Executive Board, September 2007

Appendix 1: Detailed Residents Survey Information

	Community Parks	Other P&C Sites	Total		
South Inner	1,691,392	2,363,230	4,054,622		

1.1 Total Number of Annual Visits

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

Reason	Cross Flatts Park %	Holbeck Moor %	Hunslet Moor %	South Inner Total %
Exercise	86	85	67	84
Play	55	46	83	55
Dog walking	12	31	17	17
Enjoy the surroundings	28	15	17	24
Family outings	29	15	33	27
Relaxation	86	77	67	84
See Wildlife	11	23	0	11
Sport related	14	23	33	16
Other	20	0	0	15
Events	38	15	0	31

1.3 Age Profile of Visitors

Site	Age 20 – 39	Age 40 – 59	Age 60+
Cross Flatts Park	31%	46%	22%
Holbeck Moor	31%	31%	38%
Hunslet Moor	33%	17%	50%
South Inner Total	32%	41%	27%

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

Site	% of visitors on foot	Less than 10 mins	10–20 mins	20-30 mins	30+ mins
Cross Flatts Park	92%	65%	34%	1%	0%
Holbeck Moor	90%	77%	23%	0%	0%
Hunslet Moor	80%	75%	25%	0%	0%
South Inner Total	91%	68%	31%	1%	0%

1.4 Visitors on Foot – Journey Time

1.5 Visitors by Car - Journey Time

Site	% of visitors by car	Less than 10 mins	10–20 mins	20-30 mins
Cross Flatts Park	5%	100%	0%	0%
Holbeck Moor	10%	0%	100%	0%
Hunslet Moor	0%	~	~	~
South Inner Total	5%	75%	25%	0%

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

	Summer Stay		Winter Stay	
Time	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday
Less than 30 Minutes	14%	24%	31%	57%
30 minutes to 1 hour	32%	41%	45%	25%
1 to 2 hours	32%	24%	10%	6%
2 to 4 hours	18%	6%	2%	0%
4 or more hours	4%	2%	0%	0%
Do not visit	0%	4%	12%	12%

available on request).				
	Summer	Winter		
Every Day	26%	13%		
Most Days	32%	23%		
Once or Twice a week	23%	21%		
Once every two weeks	9%	8%		
Once a month	11%	23%		
Seldom or never	0%	13%		

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

1.8 Information taken from comments made in the survey.

Site	General satisfaction comments	What would make you stay longer or encourage more use	Any other comments
Cross Flatts Park	Broken glass is an issue at times.	Improved feeling of safety within the park.	Several people comment on improvements
	Dog fouling and control of dogs is a significant issue for people.	Catering facility of some kind.	seen over recent years.
		More events.	
	Some are impressed with the number of facilities others want/think there should be more.	Improved play area.	
Holbeck Moor	Improvements to football pitches.	Reduction in vandalism. More seating – which faces into the park.	Removal of boundary hedge has reduced wildlife.
Hunslet Moor	Litter/broken glass reduction.	Bowling green access, members keep it locked.	~
		Better play area.	