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**Report of Director of Communities and Environment**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**Subject: Leeds Quality Park Assessments (Adaptation to Climate Change)**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

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**Summary of main issues**

1. The Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup> scheme sets the national benchmark standard for the management of publicly accessible, well managed parks and green spaces and in 2016/17 there are 7 parks in Leeds that achieved this award.
2. The award scheme 'field' based criteria are used in Leeds to assess parks and green spaces in what is known as the Leeds Quality Parks (LQP) standard. In 2016/17, 41 of the 63 community parks (65% of the total) reached the standard compared to only 22% in 2006 when assessments were first completed.
3. In February 2017 Keep Britain Tidy who manage the award published a new version of 'Raising the Standard' - the Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup> guidance manual. The ethos of the scheme and standard has not changed and there are still eight key criteria assessed.
4. The key change is the addition of 'climate change adaption strategies' which requires that any new landscape management, arboricultural and horticultural decisions consider the likely impacts of climate change. A decision is therefore required on how the Leeds Quality Park standard should change given that it is based on the Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup>.

5. There are 13 aspects of management that are highlighted as relevant for climate change adaption (which include a description and examples in the body of the report) as follows:
  - Buildings and built features
  - Community growing
  - Grassed areas
  - Lighting
  - Parking
  - Park-wide and non-site specific
  - Paths
  - Pitches
  - Planted beds
  - Play areas
  - Ponds and wetlands
  - Trees and woodland
  - Watercourses
6. Some of these measures can be implemented relatively easily and achieved in the short term. However, many are concerned with the long term vision for how parks and green spaces need to develop in order to mitigate the effects of climate change as well as adapt to the consequences.
7. In achieving this it is crucial that parks and green spaces retain the core benefits for people as important meeting places, for events and social gatherings, for recreation and sport as well as the related benefits to health and the local economy.

## **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that Executive Board approves the following:
  - The adoption of the revised Green Flag Award® guidance manual and field based scoring methodology for future assessments against the Leeds Quality Parks standard.
  - That Parks and Countryside work with community committees, 'friends' and volunteer groups to physically adapt sites in meeting the challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation.
2. To note that the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside is responsible for implementing this recommendation for assessments that take place from summer in 2017.

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report outlines progress made against the Leeds Quality Park standard and considers the implications of the revised national Green Flag criteria on future assessments of parks and green spaces in Leeds.

## 2. Background information

- 2.1 The Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup> scheme sets the national benchmark standard for the management of publicly accessible, well managed parks and green spaces. It is managed under licence from the Department for Communities and Local Government by Keep Britain Tidy. The award standard involves a field based assessment of each site along with a desk assessment of the management approach. In 2016/17 there are 7 parks in Leeds that achieved this award namely Golden Acre Park, Kirkstall Abbey, Middleton Park, Otley Chevin Country Park, Pudsey Park, Roundhay Park and Temple Newsam Estate.
- 2.2 Since 2004, the field based criteria of the award scheme has been used in Leeds to assess parks and green spaces in what is known as the Leeds Quality Parks (LQP) standard. Initially sites were assessed on a 3 year cycle and by 2006 over 140 sites had been assessed including all community parks. Since 2014 all community parks are assessed each year.
- 2.3 There are eight main criteria which are divided into 26 scoring elements each assessed out of 10 as represented on the following grid:

<b>0 1</b>	<b>2 3 4</b>	<b>5 6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>

On average, all scoring elements assessed must achieve a score of 7 in order for the site to achieve Leeds Quality Park standard.

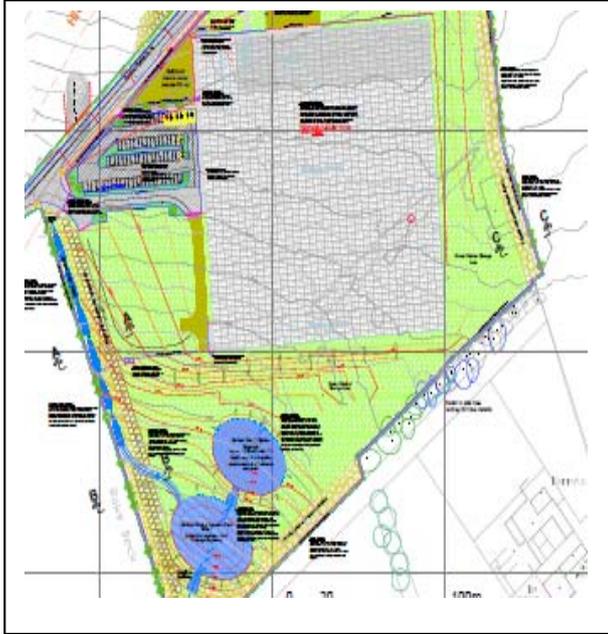
- 2.4 Parks are assessed by over 70 Parks and Countryside staff (including managers, gardeners and apprentices) many of whom have been trained to undertake judging nationally for parks in other local authorities. 11 volunteer judges from such as 'friends of' groups also took part in 2016 with further volunteer judges continually sought and encouraged to participate. The Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup> guidance manual is used as the basis of the award, and training has been conducted internally for all those that undertake LQP assessments.
- 2.5 A key aim of the Parks and Green Space strategy endorsed by Executive Board in 2009 is the aspiration for all community parks to meet the Green Flag standard for field based assessment by 2020. In 2016/17, 41 of the 63 community parks (65% of the total) reached the standard compared to only 22% in 2006 when the strategy was being prepared.
- 2.6 Adopting the Green Flag standard has been important for communicating progress on measurable outcomes as well as focussing attention on where improvement priorities should be delivered and thus improving public confidence that investment is being targeted appropriately. It has also been an important training tool for managers and staff in adopting and sustaining good practice. Achieving Green Flag awards was a funding requirement by the Heritage Lottery Fund for projects at Roundhay Park, Kirkstall Abbey and more recently at Middleton Park. The key benefit is focussing attention on delivering quality places (a key theme in the strategy) that encourage visits and social cohesion, improves health and wellbeing as well as economic benefits by encouraging businesses to locate, and people to live, in Leeds.

### 3. Main issues

- 3.1 In February 2017, Keep Britain Tidy who manage the award published a new version of 'Raising the Standard' - the Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup> guidance manual. The ethos of the scheme and standard has not changed and there are still eight key criteria albeit some that have been renamed. Each of the scoring elements now have a separate description contained in the manual with opportunity for further reading.
- 3.2 A summary of changes made is as follows:
- 'Appropriate provision of facilities' and 'quality of facilities' has been merged to form 'appropriate level of quality facilities and activities'.
  - 'Dog fouling' now encompasses control of dogs thus reflecting changes in the law in respect of dog control orders.
  - **Sustainability** has been replaced by the term **Environmental Management** which includes a new 'climate change adaption strategies' scoring element.
  - There are other minor semantic and classification changes.
- 3.3 A full list of relevant scoring element changes is included as Appendix 1 along with a reference to accessing the full manual and an extract from the section on climate change adaption strategies. As suggested, the key change is the addition of 'climate change adaption strategies' which requires that any new landscape management, arboricultural and horticultural decisions consider the likely impacts of climate change.
- 3.4 A decision is therefore required on how the Leeds Quality Park standard should change given that it is based on the Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup>. In order to inform a decision, the implications of what are referred to as 'climate change parks' are considered in more detail with reference to a resource provided in the guidance prepared by Greenspace Scotland. What might be considered a 'typical' urban park is illustrated as it may look before and how it might look after management actions are implemented. This is illustrated from the resource as Appendix 2.
- 3.5 There are 13 aspects of management that are highlighted as relevant for climate change adaption. These are now considered in turn along with some examples where these are already being adopted.

### 3.6 Buildings and Built Features

- 3.6.1 Many parks and green spaces have buildings and other built features that require maintenance and in the case of buildings, heating, cooling and lighting. Predicted climate changes will lead to greater demand for cooling of buildings during summer. There will be greater potential for storm damage due to intense weather events and an increased chance of flooding of buildings in at risk areas.
- 3.6.2 Actions that can be considered include planting shelterbelts which protect buildings and features from prevailing weather conditions and reduce maintenance costs. Green roofs (i.e. planted roof surfaces) can reduce water flow, improve thermal efficiency as well as having benefits to biodiversity. Buildings that might not be suitable for green roofs can offer opportunities for water capture and storage.
- 3.6.3 The new City Council Parks and Countryside nursery that is currently being built at Whinmoor has a very large area of glass roof and therefore considerable potential to harvest rainwater. This approach has been designed into the scheme and also includes two large lagoons that will store water and enable it to be reused for plant watering as shown in the plan below.



### 3.7 Community Growing

- 3.7.1 Community growing is traditionally associated with allotment gardening. Parks can also provide opportunities for community growing and changes to traditional park management may mean that spaces can be freed up for other uses.
- 3.7.2 Potential climate change actions include providing information to allotment holders that inform changes in crop selection as well as seek ways of improving water management on these sites. Growing opportunities can also be enhanced via food growing in edible beds and orchard planting.
- 3.7.3 At Leeds Civic Hall, edible beds have been planted following a design competition with local school children. In community parks edible beds have replaced some traditional bedding plants. This is mainly for display purposes to see if vegetables can rival conventional bedding, and to help inspire people to start growing their own food locally. The plant nursery continues to grow edible plants and to provide support to community food growing which includes being an active part of Feed Leeds - a network of more than 50 individuals and organisations working in partnership to support local food growing. An example of an edible bed and interpretation is shown below:



### **3.8 Grassed Areas**

- 3.8.1 Areas of mown grass are a standard feature of public parks and gardens, frequently dominated by intensively managed areas which can be cut 14 or more times per year. Some of these areas are important for recreation but many areas do not need to be cut as intensively. Predicted climate changes will continue to increase the length of the growing season leading to more cuts each year with the associated cost. Longer spells of wet conditions may make grass cutting difficult, or impossible, for parts of the year which may reduce the usability of grassy areas for recreational purposes and lead to more frequent flooding. Drier summers will lead to grass becoming parched, cracked and eroded with the potential need for irrigation and remedial work.
- 3.8.2 An obvious intervention is to reduce mowing intensity and allow grassed areas to revert to more semi-natural conditions. This reduces energy requirements of grass cutting with fewer cuts along with greater benefits to biodiversity. Where relevant this approach can be supplemented by the creation of perennial meadows (allowing native wildflowers to flourish), but this approach does however involve higher costs of establishment and management compared to a relaxed mowing approach. Alternative habitats can be more appropriate such as woodland planting or establishing wetlands.
- 3.8.3 An example of relaxed mowing is at Carr Manor Fields, which for many years was subject to flooding which in turn impeded grass cutting operations. In consultation with members and the local community, an alternative approach has been adopted whereby paths are maintained through areas of longer grass that are cut once a year.



- 3.8.4 The land that formed Middleton Golf Course has also been transformed from intensive management to a semi-natural landscape as well as incorporating important recreational opportunities for cycling.

### **3.9 Lighting**

- 3.9.1 Some parks have lighting typically for footpaths or buildings/features. In some cases multi-use games areas in some parks are floodlit to allow use during evenings and/or to discourage anti-social behaviour during the hours of darkness.

Increased public use due to a warmer climate may lead to an increased demand for lighting of key areas in parks. At the same time, climate change action will demand a reduction in carbon emissions resulting from the energy used in lighting.

- 3.9.2 In Leeds, parks and green spaces are promoted for use from dawn to dusk and therefore lighting in parks is not considered a priority. A lit footpath across a park can provide a false perception of security and people may therefore choose a route at night through a park which may not be the safest one advisable. Furthermore lighting in parks can disturb wildlife and contribute to light pollution as well as the associated increase in energy costs.

### **3.10 Parking**

- 3.10.1 Parks often include parking areas for visitors and can have permanent parking areas which typically have tarmac surfaces. The predicted climate changes are likely to lead to increased flooding of permanent car parks and of adjacent areas due to the speed of water run-off from impermeable surfaces. There will also be impacts on grass areas used for parking and during wetter times parking opportunities will be limited due to waterlogging. Conversely, dry areas may experience greater erosion due to temporary parking and surface compaction will lead to increased run-off even from grassed areas.
- 3.10.2 Permanent car park areas can be redesigned to increase the permeability of their surfaces and integrated into the drainage system of the whole park. Linking parks to sustainable travel networks and encouraging people to walk to the park will reduce the need for parking. In hotter, drier summers, parking areas which are open to the sun will heat rapidly and it may therefore be best to locate parking in more shaded areas or to plant surrounding shelter and shade belts.
- 3.10.3 At Lotherton Hall an additional parking area has been established by using a reinforced grid system that prevents potential wear on grassed areas from vehicles yet allows grass to grow and thus retains aesthetic appeal. This also retains permeable properties that allows water to drain and prevents surface water run-off.



### **3.11 Park-wide and Non-site specific**

- 3.11.1 The predicted changes in climate will lead to increasing demands for ventilation and cooling in the summer months and thus increase the demand for outdoor lifestyles. A major contribution to carbon emissions is the use of private cars. The provision of

activities and services within walking/cycling distance assists in reducing car use and has an important mitigating effect on climate change.

- 3.11.2 Walking, cycling and the use of public transport are therefore important aspects of climate change mitigation. The promotion of active travel is a local and national priority and the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan aims to encourage more non-motorised travel, especially walking and cycling, thereby reducing trips by motor vehicles and encouraging healthy exercise.
- 3.11.3 Leeds Core Cycle Network Project aims to provide routes around Leeds specifically for cyclists each of which is named, with signage. They may form routes to schools, shops or to leisure opportunities but they are primarily aimed at helping cyclists get into work. Parks and green spaces play an important part in developing such routes as they are away from traffic and can often provide a short cut. The West Park to Leeds City Centre route goes through Woodhouse Moor where there is a designated cycle route. There is a link route between Nunroyd Park and Kirk Lane Park leading to the Aireborough Greenway. Middleton to Leeds City Centre goes through Middleton Woods and enables access to Middleton Park. The Wyke Beck Way cycling routes starts at Tropical World, and links Roundhay Park, Arthur's Rein, Killingbeck Fields to Temple Newsam Estate. The Armley to City Centre Route includes a link through Gott's Park from the Leeds Liverpool canal to the Leeds cycle superhighway and connects to the Transpennine trail.

### **3.12 Paths**

- 3.12.1 Parks invariably have paths within and often through them. These paths are often treated as 'internal' networks with little linkage or signage externally, but increasingly parks are being integrated into core path routes. Paths may have sealed surfaces or unsealed, compacted surfaces. Management is generally a combination of ongoing repairs and periodic resurfacing with some weed killing of edges.
- 3.12.2 The combination of wetter conditions in winter and drier conditions in summer will lead to greater erosion of unsealed surfaces which will dry out and crack in summer leaving them more prone to erosion. This will be particularly acute on paths with mixed use and there is also the risk of an increase in land slippage on slopes.
- 3.12.3 In Leeds, the public right of way network involves 1,300 recorded routes measuring 850km and is being developed to improve connectivity including routes to and through parks and green spaces. At a practical level an approach has been adopted using a material comprising of recycled car tyres mixed with chippings and bonded with a resin as an alternative to tarmac. This surface is ideally suited to bridleway improvements as it is robust and porous and provides adhesion for horses and cyclists in particular. There are 2 examples of where this has been carried out, first in Garforth improving links between Kippax and the A63, and second near South Leeds High School (which also enables links to Middleton Park) which is a section of bridleway well used by cyclists and had suffered from erosion. The illustration shows 'before' and 'after' images at Garforth.



### **3.13 Pitches**

- 3.13.1 Some parks include grass sports pitches often with associated changing rooms or pavilions. Management involves mowing, drainage, heating and lighting of buildings. Bowling greens in particular are maintained to a high standard which involves intensive management with regular close mowing. Grass pitches are likely to experience more flooding in future and this may lead to periods when maintenance is not possible. They are also likely to be damaged by use in wet conditions and to have longer recovery periods after use and may also dry out and suffer greater erosion in summer.
- 3.13.2 Design of pitches needs to take full account of the impacts of climate change. This is particularly important when deciding upon drainage solutions for new and existing pitches. A balance is required between maintaining playable conditions and the requirements of sustainable drainage. In some cases pitches can be designed to allow temporary flooding to prevent rainwater in extreme events from accessing housing and other buildings.
- 3.13.3 In the west Garforth area of Leeds a small bund has been constructed around the south west corner of Barley Hill Recreation Ground sports pitches as part of flood alleviation measures. This allows the pitch area to temporarily store flood water and then slowly release the water into the existing culverted watercourse downstream.

### **3.14 Planted Beds**

- 3.14.1 Many traditional parks have formal flower beds that typically feature seasonal planting or shrubs. Key management activities involve cyclical replacement of bedding plants, weeding and pruning where relevant. Climate change impacts on planted beds include drying out, waterlogging, demand for alternative uses and changes in species selection.
- 3.14.2 In Leeds, the use of pesticides has been reduced considerably and the nursery is peat free during the growing and maturation process, with the new nursery using stored rainwater for irrigation. A big contributor to a reduction in pesticide use has been a programme of bed mulching in shrub beds (by recycling green waste) within housing estates which has enabled better water retention and weed suppression. Some roundabout planting at Rodley and near Yeadon Airport has involved replacing seasonal bedding with shrubs and herbaceous plants that require less management.

### 3.15 Play Areas

- 3.15.1 Most parks feature some play equipment and sealed play surfaces. Multi-use games areas (MUGAs) are increasingly common as a provision for informal sports. Management generally involves maintenance and repair of equipment and surfaces and periodic replacement. There is an increased likelihood that play facilities will be flooded more frequently in future and this will limit their use. Damage to play areas due to weather conditions is likely to increase with an associated increase in cost. Warmer, drier, summer conditions will increase the need for more shelter and shade around play. Potential actions to address these issues include changes in materials to improve drainage, play areas with more natural play features and locating play facilities in areas of shelter and shade.
- 3.15.2 At Queen's Park in Pudsey a play surface has been introduced at a multi-use games area that is porous and therefore reduces water run-off and puddling which can occur on traditional surfaces. Bark mulch has also been used as a safety surface at East Ardsley Recreation Ground and Holt Park. There is also an example of more naturalistic play which has been introduced at Alexandra Park by arranging sandstone boulders to enable children to climb and explore. Finally, one of the playgrounds at Temple Newsam uses natural materials and has been integrated into the landscape as a key feature of the design.



### 3.16 Ponds and Wetlands

- 3.16.1 Some public parks and other green spaces have ponds or lakes within them. Some are relatively wild but many are more formal and typically have hard edges, a fairly regular shape and little marginal vegetation. Predicted changes in rainfall patterns will mean that ponds may dry out partially or wholly in hot, dry weather and may flood more frequently in wetter periods. There will be an increased need for new ponds to contribute to sustainable local drainage. There will also be an increased need to capture and retain winter rainfall for use at other times of year and retention ponds may be an option for this. As climate change puts increasing pressure on biodiversity there will be a greater need for ponds and associated wetlands to contribute to biodiversity and local habitat networks.
- 3.16.2 At a strategic level, the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has signalled intent to allocate around £1.7m for natural flood management works in the uplands catchments of the Leeds City Region subject to an approved business

case. The LEP has asked the Yorkshire West Local Nature Partnership (which from May 2017 will be chaired by the Director of City Development) to approve a business case and governance structure to take this project forward which will be led by the Environment Agency.

- 3.16.3 A practical example is Water Haigh Woodland Park which forms 98ha of naturalised 'country park' adjacent to the River Aire and Leeds & Liverpool Canal in Woodlesford. The Maltings housing development was identified as vulnerable to a flooding as part of the assessments for the Leeds flood alleviation scheme. A naturalised flood alleviation pond was therefore created in the park centred on a large attenuation pond, containing 2.3ha of new wet woodland/meadow. Surrounding this is a further 1.7 ha of mixed woodland/scrub habitat, with the rest taken up by newly created grassland, hedgerows and footpaths. On Boxing Day 2015, the River Aire burst its banks and flooded across the canal and instead of flooding the Maltings, this water was successfully redirected and discharged into the naturalised attenuation pond. The following image from Boxing Day 2015 shows the River Aire to the left and water collecting in the attenuation pond at Water Haigh Woodland Park and being redirected past the Maltings housing development which is shown in the foreground.



- 3.16.4 St Aidan's is a new 400 ha nature park has been created at a former mining site on the banks of the River Aire which officially opened to the public on 10<sup>th</sup> April. It includes grassland, reed beds, woodland, open water and islands which in addition to benefits for flood attenuation will also have over 12km of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths interconnecting through the site enabling visitors to enjoy the recreation benefits of the outdoors as well as being able to view wildlife. During the Boxing Day 2015 floods around 6 million cubic metres of water was diverted from the River Aire into the St Aidan's park and this lowered the river level downstream by an estimated 400mm. The new park will be managed and run by the RSPB in partnership with the council and an aerial photograph of the site is shown below.

### 3.17 Trees and Woodlands



- 3.17.1 Trees and woodlands within parks come in a variety of forms, including single specimen trees, avenues of trees, shelterbelts and wooded 'corners'. This is in addition to small areas of woodland in a park through to significant areas of woodland that are a dominant feature. Climate change predictions suggest that trees and woodland will be affected in a number of ways including increased stress, increased likelihood of storm damage, pest and disease problems and changes in species suitability. Trees and woodlands also make an important contribution to climate change by capturing carbon, providing shade and shelter, cooling and improving air quality in addition to slowing the rate at which rainfall reaches the ground and wider links within the green infrastructure network.
- 3.17.2 It is important that existing trees are retained where possible and replaced when felling occurs. More important is identifying opportunities for new woodland planting and where appropriate to change land from more intensive use. In parks where there are mature trees, mowing is generally avoided under the tree canopy to avoid soil compaction and which can also be supplemented with bulb planting.

3.17.3 Tree planting and woodland establishment continues in Leeds with around 3 hectares of woodland established and 15,000 trees planted each year. This includes 6.5ha woodland creation on the western boundary of Temple Newsam. The Sharp Lane plantation in Leeds New Forest Village also involves the creation of 10ha of mixed natural habitats, including 5.5 ha of mixed deciduous woodland, together with attenuation ponds and swales, as part of a sustainable urban drainage scheme to prevent storm water runoff from the newly created residential estate.



This is illustrated above.

### **3.18 Watercourses and Associated Wetlands**

- 3.18.1 Some public parks and green spaces have rivers, streams or other water courses running through them. Traditionally, these have been managed to reduce the risk of them bursting their banks and flooding the park. These watercourses typically have little marginal vegetation. Management is chiefly a process of clearing vegetation and debris from watercourses to maintain flow rates.
- 3.18.2 Climate change will have a number of impacts on watercourses both directly, in terms of flow rates and flooding, and indirectly through the need for watercourses to provide more functions to support climate change adaptation. The increased level of rainfall in winter and any increase in the intensity of rain events will put additional flood pressure on river catchments. The potential exists for watercourses in parks to be better integrated with habitat networks and, therefore, to deliver biodiversity benefits.
- 3.18.3 Plans are being developed at Arthur's Rein local nature reserve to remove a 2 metre deep culvert and create a naturalised open water channel, that will 'slow the flow' of storm water and help boost local biodiversity. This scheme is supported by an adjacent scheme immediately upstream in Wykebeck Woods and Asket Hill local nature reserve, including naturalised swales to store water run-off and changes to grassland management and woven willow planting to strengthen bank sides and help improve water purity as illustrated below.



3.18.4 This is also illustrative of the important role that volunteers play in carrying out river stewardship activities which help reduce flood risk as well as benefit the river from an aesthetic perspective.

### **3.19 General**

3.19.1 Some of the measures outlined above can be implemented relatively easily and achieved in the short term. However, many of these measures are concerned with the long term vision for how parks and green spaces needs to develop in order to mitigate the effects of climate change as well as adapt to the consequences. In achieving this it is crucial that parks and green spaces retain the core benefits for people as important meeting places, for events and social gatherings, for recreation and sport as well as the related benefits to health and the local economy. These issues and the impact of climate change will form an important part of the renewed Parks and Green Space strategy for which preparatory work will commence over the next year.

## **3. Corporate considerations**

### **3.1 Consultation and engagement**

3.1.1 In terms of visitor profile, the latest reference point is the survey conducted in 2009 which concluded the following in comparison to a similar survey in 2004:

- 96% of residents visit a park each year compared to 82%
- 32% on most days and 36% once or twice a week
- Nearly 61% walk to their park compared to 52%
- Number of resident visits are 68.9 million, an increase of 12.5%
- An increase of nearly 16% in visits to community parks
- Satisfaction levels have increased by nearly 24% in community parks

3.1.2 A resident survey was conducted in 2016 by Leeds University as part of research project to members of the citizen's panel, over 20,000 households via post as well as inviting online submissions. In total there have been nearly 6,500 responses with over 2,500 online and the remainder from the postal element. The results and analysis of this survey is anticipated in the near future and will be shared in due course with community committee environment sub groups.

## **3.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 3.2.1 An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening has been completed and records that no further action is required.

## **3.3 Council policies and best council plan**

- 3.3.1 The proposals in this report support the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 and in particular the aspiration that 'there are high quality buildings, places and green spaces, which are clean, looked after, and respect the city's heritage, including buildings, parks and the history of our communities' as part of the overall aim that 'all Leeds' communities will be successful'. The proposals contribute to the Best Council Plan outcomes to 'enjoy happy, healthy, active lives', and 'enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts' and also priority 20 'enhancing the quality of our public realm and green spaces'.

## **3.4 Resources and value for money**

- 3.4.1 There are no financial implications identified with decisions recommended in this report, and assessments will continue to be conducted by Parks and Countryside staff with assistance from volunteer judges.

## **3.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 3.5.1 There are no legal issues identified with this report or with access to information. The report is subject to call in under the Council's constitution, rules and procedures.

## **3.6 Risk management**

- 3.6.1 There are no significant risks identified with the recommendations contained in this report.

## **4. Conclusions**

- 4.1 Considerable progress has been made in delivering improvements against the Leeds Quality Park standard which is an important measure of the quality of park and green spaces. It is important that this standard adapts to reflect changing management practices including the future impact of climate change, which as outlined in the body of the report is relevant to all aspects of parks and green space management.

## **5. Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that Executive Board approves the following:

- The adoption of the revised Green Flag Award<sup>®</sup> guidance manual and field based scoring methodology for future assessments against the Leeds Quality Parks standard.
- That Parks and Countryside work with community committees, 'friends' and volunteer groups to physically adapt sites in meeting the challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

5.2 To note that the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside is responsible for implementing this recommendation for assessments that take place from summer in 2017.

## **6. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

6.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

# Appendix 1



## Leeds Quality Park Scoring Element Revisions 2017

<b>Original</b>	<b>Revised</b>
<b>A Welcoming Place</b>	<b>A Welcoming Place</b>
1 Welcoming	1 Welcome
2 Good and Safe Access	2 Good and Safe Access
3 Signage	3 Signage
4 Equal Access for all	4 Equal Access for all
<b>Healthy, Safe and Secure</b>	<b>Healthy, Safe and Secure</b>
	5 Appropriate level of quality facilities and activities
5 Safe equipment and facilities	6 Safe equipment and facilities
6 Personal security in park	7 Personal security
7 Dog fouling	8 Control of Dogs / Dog fouling
8 Appropriate provision of facilities	
9 Quality of facilities	
<b>Clean and Well Maintained</b>	<b>Well Maintained and Clean</b>
10 Litter and waste management	9 Litter and waste management
11 Grounds maintenance and horticulture	10 Horticultural maintenance
	11 Arboricultural Maintenance
12 Building & infrastructure maintenance	12 Building & infrastructure maintenance
13 Equipment maintenance	13 Equipment maintenance
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Environmental Management</b>
14 Environmental sustainability- energy & natural resource conservation, pollution	14 Managing environmental impact
	15 Waste Minimisation
15 Pesticides	16 Chemical use
16 Peat use	17 Peat use
17 Waste Minimisation	
18 Arboriculture and woodland management	
	18 Climate change adaption strategies
<b>Conservation and Heritage</b>	<b>Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage</b>
19 Conservation of natural features, wild fauna and flora	19 Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora
20 Conservation of landscape features	20 Conservation of landscape features
21 Conservation of buildings & structures	21 Conservation of buildings & structures
<b>Community Involvement</b>	<b>Community Involvement</b>
22 Community involvement in management & development including outreach work	22 Community involvement in management & development
23 Appropriate provision for the community	23 Appropriate provision for the community
<b>Marketing</b>	<b>Marketing</b>
24 Marketing and promotion	24 Marketing and promotion
25 Provision of appropriate information	25 Appropriate information channels
26 Provision of appropriate education interpretation/provision	26 Appropriate educational and interpretational information

## Green Flag Award Manual

The manual can be accessed as per the following link:

<http://www.greenflagaward.org/media/1019/green-flag-award-guidelines.pdf>.

### Extract from the manual on 'Climate Change Adaption Strategies'

#### 18 Climate Change Adaption Strategies

All new landscape management, arboricultural and horticultural decisions should consider the future likely impacts of climate change. The rationale should be evaluated in the management plan and judges may question managers further about their approach. The impact of this particular criteria will vary widely. If you are managing a historic landscape, it may be very difficult to make many changes. Where possible, judges will want to see that sites are planning for the future. What is not expected is wholesale redevelopment of sites.

This element seeks to ensure that green spaces help to mitigate the likely future impacts of climate change. Horticultural and arboricultural practice should be dealt with under 10 Horticultural Maintenance and 11 Arboricultural Maintenance, and woodland structure, tree succession planning and the specific management of the unique features of the landscape is assessed under 19 Management of Natural Features, Wild Flora and Fauna.

#### Issues to consider:

- + Likely impacts of climate change and some of the mitigating factors
- + Torrential Rain: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), re-naturalising of modified water courses and flood plains and other flood reduction strategies, soil binding
- + Drought: adaptive vegetation, rain water harvesting and soil mulching
- + Wind: tree layout and design, and public safety
- + Heat: suitably tolerant vegetation, shade and waterbodies for cooling off
- + Opportunities to enhance ecological networks and habitats or populations of species so that they are better able to adapt to a changing climate through, for example, choices for planting or their positioning

#### Further Information

##### Climate Change Parks:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605090108/http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/11909565>; <http://greenspacescotland.org.uk/climate-change-parks.aspx>

##### Climate Change Adaption Manual:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5629923804839936>

# Appendix 2



# Before – a typical park

Click [here](#) to see how the park looks when it is managed to deliver climate change actions



Click on the links to find out about climate change actions for:

- buildings and built features
- community growing
- grassed areas
- lighting
- parking
- park-wide and non-site specific
- paths
- pitches
- planted beds
- play areas
- ponds and wetlands
- trees and woodland
- watercourses



# AFTER – *a typical park*

Click [here](#) to go back to the park before it was managed to deliver climate change actions



Click on the links to find out about the potential management and retrofit actions to create a climate change park:

- ◆ buildings and built features
- ◆ community growing
- ◆ grassed areas
- ◆ lighting
- ◆ parking
- ◆ park-wide and non-site specific
- ◆ paths
- ◆ pitches
- ◆ planted beds
- ◆ play areas
- ◆ ponds and wetlands
- ◆ trees and woodland
- ◆ watercourses