

Our vision is to provide the best parks and green spaces in the UK

Priority 6: Working with communities

Having a positive, open, helpful and collaborative approach to delivering the Parks and Countryside Service.

Goals	Actions	Timescale	Measuring success	Progress update, Jan 2024
To provide good customer service	To provide customer care training for staff who have public facing elements to their role (includes café, shops, rangers, gardeners, technical, bereavement, admin etc - nearly everyone!)	Medium	Training complete	We are working with the Council's Business Support Centre to develop and roll out Customer Excellence training for all Green Spaces staff and, going forward, the in-house training team will ensure it is delivered to all new starters.
	To provide clear and accessible information about the Parks and Countryside Service and any changes that might affect service users.	Short		Ongoing - we consult on all changes and use a range of communications (social media, direct mailing, press releases) to inform park users of proposed changes to service provision.
To achieve gold in the Charter for the Bereaved annual assessment for both cremations and burial-related services	Use the Charter as a best practice guide for the delivery of bereavement services.	Long	Gold award	Bereavement services currently have a gold award for cremations and a silver award for burials. Although it will be challenging to achieve a gold for burials, it is something we continue to work towards.
To provide parks and green spaces that are valued by Leeds residents and visitors to the city.	To develop and implement a 'best-practice' approach to undertaking public consultations when changes to green spaces are proposed.	Ongoing	Consultations undertaken	The 'best practice approach' was developed as part of the Plan on a Page process in 2023 and has been well-received although there is not one definitive way to undertake a consultation and charities <i>Love Leeds Parks</i> and <i>Women's Lives Leeds</i> have both adopted slightly different but very effective approaches to consultation about green space in 2023. The process for undertaking public consultations will regularly reviewed, adapted depending on the situation and continually improved over time as appropriate.
	Continue to consult Community Committee Environment Sub-groups with regards proposed changes to public green spaces in their areas.	Ongoing		Ongoing. Ward members are also consulted about how S106 will be spent in their wards.
To continue to work in partnership with <i>Friends of</i>, <i>In Bloom</i> groups and other relevant community organisations.	Continue to work with the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum as a key service partner (representing Friends, In Bloom groups and similar)	Ongoing		Ongoing secretarial support for the Forum is provided for the Parks and Green Spaces Forum, which currently has 102 members, by the Green Space's Outreach Manager. Training opportunities have also been identified and provided for Forum members, so 8 members attended a fruit tree training course and 7 attended First Aid training funded by Love Leeds Parks charity.
	Ensure all Friends, In Bloom, outdoor sports clubs, allotment associations and similar community groups with an interest in our green spaces have a contact in the Parks & Countryside Service who can support them to achieve shared goals	Ongoing	Number of volunteer groups affiliated with the Parks and Countryside Service	The Technical team, Operational teams, Rangers (including a new, In Bloom-focussed ranger, who was recruited in 2023) and Allotment officer provide this service. There are over 100 Friends and other green space community groups, over 30 active In Bloom Groups, over 600 Sports clubs and 58 self-managed allotment sites currently affiliated with the service.
	Set out a clear approach to how we will support <i>Friends of</i> , <i>In Bloom</i> and other similar community groups.	Short		A Green Spaces Volunteer Policy is in place. An 'In Bloom' ranger was recruited to support the 40 active <i>In Bloom</i> groups in the city in 2023 and this role will involve setting out a clear approach to how the service will support those groups going forward.
To increase volunteer engagement with the Parks and Countryside Service and provide volunteer opportunities for everyone who is interested.	Continue to promote and facilitate a wide range of volunteering opportunities.	Ongoing	Number of corporate volunteer days held per year	160 ranger-led corporate volunteer team days took place in 2023, engaging 1,537 individuals who have contributed a total of 7,183 work-hours between them on jobs such as tree planting, seed sowing and woodland maintenance work.
	Continue to organise and run the following city-wide volunteer groups: Leeds Wildlife Volunteers, Leeds Cemetery Volunteers, Volunteer Rangers and Leeds Voluntary Footpath Rangers	Ongoing	Number of volunteer days held per year	Roaming ranger-led volunteer groups including Leeds Wildlife Volunteers, Volunteer Rangers, Meanwood Valley Volunteer Rangers and Woodland Wednesday Groups carried out 2,085 hours work over 81 tasks, with 458 attendances (mostly by repeat attendees so this is not the total number of volunteers). Rangers also led site-based groups on 107 tasks with a total of 493 attendances (again likely often by repeat volunteers), amounting to 1,710 hrs of voluntary work carried out so far this year. Leeds Cemetery Volunteers have been disbanded because it has proved more effective for the team to focus on site-specific groups instead. A new system whereby individual volunteers can book on ranger-led volunteer days through Eventbrite has been set up so it's easier for volunteers to arrange to a drop-in volunteer session. Approximately 375 volunteer hours were given to improving our path networks by the Leeds Footpath Volunteers with the Public Rights of Way team.

	To provide training for relevant staff in working with volunteers and communities	Short	Record of training provided	A Green Space's Service Training Plan is in development. This will provide an overview of all training requirements including <i>Working with Volunteers</i> . Once in place it will identify who needs training in working with volunteers and delivery will commence.
	Seek external funding opportunities for community engagement projects, particularly at sites where communities are currently less involved.	Medium		Community engagement projects in the Meanwood Valley, Wyke Beck Valley, Lower Aire Valley and Armley and Gotts park are part or wholly externally funded (with the funding for the Gotts & Armley park ranger having recently been extended by Wades to 2025). With the support of the Green Space's Service, partners <i>Love Leeds Parks</i> secured funding that has allowed them to engage communities (through workshops, conversations and public events) at Harehills and Burley parks in 2023.
To work in partnerships where they can help us deliver the aims of the strategy more effectively than we can do alone.	Regularly review current partnerships with external organisations and give due consideration to any new partnership opportunities that arise.	Ongoing		Grants for TCV, Groundwork Yorkshire, Meanwood Valley Farm and Middleton Park Equestrian Centre are reviewed annually. Partnerships with the RSPB and YWT are continually monitored - both are currently doing excellent work for people and wildlife on a number of our green spaces in the Lower Aire, Wyke Beck and Kirkstall Valleys.
	Continue to work with other council departments such as Regeneration, Active Leeds, Corporate Property Management, Museums and Galleries and Public Health to deliver the aims of strategy.	Ongoing		Work is ongoing with a range of other council departments e.g. joint Lotherton & Temple Newsam management boards with Museums and Galleries, Playzone and tennis court funding bids with Active Leeds and park improvement projects with the City Development in Morley.
To learn from other organisations	Keep up to date with national research and developments in the public green space sector and attend core cities, APSE and other network events as appropriate to ensure we are applying a best-practice approach to managing green space.	Ongoing		Officers keep up to date with national research and best practice through attending the national Core Cities Parks Group and conferences and workshops as appropriate, such as the conference on research by the University of Leeds and partners into Women and Girls' perceptions of public parks in May.

Timescales: Short = 1-3 years, Medium = 4-6 years, Long = 7-10 years.