

Report of The Head of Parks and Countryside

Report to North East Inner Area Committee

Date: 17th October 2011

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

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Chapel Allerton Moortown Roundhay		
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 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 area delivery plan.

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 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 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 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 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 Inner Area Committee:

Asset	Quantity
Community parks	4
Playing Pitches:	
Cricket	5
Football	26
Rugby League	1
Bowling greens	6
Playgrounds	9
Multi-use games areas	3
Skate parks	3

Community Parks

- 3.2 Analysis from the 2009 residents survey was carried out relevant to the 9 community parks in the area which are;

Site Name	Annual Number of Visits	Total Annual Visits to North East Inner Community Parks is 2.6m approx.
Chapel Allerton Park	440,089	
Meanwood Park	1,617,690	
Norma Hutchinson Park	91,693	
Potternewton Park	408,751	

- 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 71% of visitors are adults with 29% children and young people.
 - There are a wide range of reasons for visiting but nearly all visitors at some point go for relaxation or exercise. Enjoying the surroundings and for using play facilities are also very popular.
 - Nearly 80% of visitors travel to the park on foot of which 55% take less than 10 minutes to travel there.
 - Of the 20% who visit by car 78% take less than 10 minutes to get there.
 - 32% of visitors go to community parks either every day or on most days, whilst 64% 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	16
Juniors	34

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 739 days of voluntary work in the north east inner area over a 12 month period. The tables below give details of works undertaken in north east inner since December 2010 and the active groups in the area committee;

Work undertaken by volunteers working with the Rangers;

Site	Group / Organisation	Task
Potternewton Park	Youth Offending Service	Scraping Footpath Weeding
Roundhay	Leeds Parks Volunteers	Weeding Chelsea garden

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

Group Name	Number of Volunteers	Estimated Volunteer Days
Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods	40	360
Friends of Potternewton Park	2	0
Friends of Roundhay Park	30	96
Meanwood Valley Action partnership	30	0
Leeds Parks Volunteers	4	78
Leeds Voluntary Footpath Rangers	6	130
Leeds Wildlife Volunteers	12	216
Total	124	880

Existing in bloom groups within the north east inner area;

In Bloom Group	Number of Volunteers	Estimated Volunteer Days
Moortown	12	240
Total	12	240

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 area committee so far in 2011;

Site Name	Month	Event	Total
Buslingthorpe Walk	February	BCTV	1
Chapel Allerton	August	Faceless arts company	1
Gledhow Valley Woods	May	Airienteers	2
	June	Friends of GVW funday	1
Kirkstall / Roundhay	September	Briggate Morris Dancers	1
Meanwood Park	April	BBC Filming	1
	May	Airienteers	2
		Meanwood Valley Trail Race	1
	July	BTCV Welly Wanging	1
Hope 11 - Churches Funday		1	
Potternewton	August	Leeds Carnival	1
		Leeds Reggae	1
Roundhay	February	Airienteers	1
	April	ADRA	1
		Filming - The Actors Centre	1
	May	Brass - Filming	1
		Fun fair (SP)	1
		Grass Track	3
		Martin House DBR	1
		Naming Ceremony	1
		Our Project - Fun Run	1
		Wedding blessing	1
		June	Airienteers
	Band in the Park		2
	BMF Sports Day		1
	DePuy UK team fun day		1
	Farmers Market REAP		1
	ITV Filming - Red or Black		1
	Leeds Montessori Sports Day		1
	Pants in the Park		1
	Rhay Sch Fun Run		1
	Walk 4 Skin		1
	Yorkshire Cancer Centre		1
	July	Band in the Park	3
		Getaway Girls Sports Day & Picnic	1
		Rachel Dean "Mathilde" (Dance)	1
		Red Bull	1
		Space Hopper	1
	August	Band in the Park	1
		British Cycling Holiday Programme	1
		FPWR walkathon	1
		Funfair (AE)	1
		LCC Sport Development sports day	1
		Mini Breeze Event	1
		The Big fun run	1

Site Name	Month	Event	Total
	September	Airienteers	2
		Leeds Childrens Hosp Appeal Sponsored Walk	1
		Mela	1
		Reunite Walk	1
		Take Heart	1
		Xtra Mile Triathlon	1
	October	Animal ArkAid - Sponsored Walk	1
Scott Hall Playing Fields	August	(9th - 11th) Breeze event	1
Wyke Beck	July	Groundwork	1
Total			63

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 3.24.*

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 North East Inner Area Committee;

Site	Year Assessed	Welcoming Place	Healthy, Safe, Secure	Clean, Well Maintained	Sustainability	Conservation / Heritage	Community Involvement	Marketing	Meets Standard?
Chapel Allerton Park	2010								Yes
Meanwood Park	2008								No
Norma Hutchinson Park	2009								Yes
Potternewton Park	2009								Yes

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 are 3 parks identified that meet the Leeds Quality Park Standard in the area, with 1 not reaching the standard. This is an increase of 2 passes 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
Chapel Allerton Park	7.9	7.8	8.4	6.4	8.0	7.0	6.7	7.4	7.8
Meanwood Park	8.0	7.6	8.7	6.0	7.8	7.7	6.4	6.1	7.9
Norma Hutchinson Park	6.3	6.3	7.7	6.0	7.1	6.6	6.6	6.3	6.3
Potternewton Park	7.3	6.6	8.3	5.1	7.8	7.4	5.9	5.4	6.9

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. In particular scores and visitor numbers are higher for the parks that meet the LQP standard. There are however issues identified with the range of facilities, facilities for families and the sports facilities.

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 Inner)	2006 (North East Inner)
Fair to very good	79.9%	77.2%
Poor or very poor	20.1%	22.8%

The results show a slight increase in those rating facilities of 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 Inner)	2006 (North East Inner)
Fair to very good	83.2%	85.5%
Poor or very poor	16.8%	14.5%

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

- 3.15 Improvements to community parks during 2011 are as follows;

- Potternewton Park – Landscaping works.
- Meanwood Park – Improve access works completed.

- 3.16 The following play areas have been refurbished during 2011;

- Reginald Terrace – New playground and ball wall.

- 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)
Meanwood Park	£10,000	
Total to achieve LQP	£10,000	
Average annual reinvestment		£13,219
Total reinvestment to 2020		£118,971
Overall Total Investment to 2020		£128,971

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 parks for the next 12 months are;

- Meanwood Park – It is anticipated that funding will be secured for refurbishment of the tennis courts, infrastructure works and drainage.
- Prince Philip Centre – As part of a larger investment it is expected that the MUGA will be resurfaced during the course of 2012.

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 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	9	1,080,000	108,000
Multi Use games Areas	3	270,000	27,000
Skate Parks	3	270,000	27,000
Totals		1,620,000	162,000

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.

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.

3.22 The following table summarises actions identified in the Area Delivery Plan (2008 – 2011) and a commentary from a service perspective;

Ref.	Action	Comments
A5	Support Parks and Countryside to develop Meanwood Park to its full potential	It is anticipated that planned improvements can go ahead with the securing of funding in 2012.
E3	Support the provision of allotments	
H1	Encourage 'in bloom' activities to increase in communities.	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 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 The following table gives details of background documents;

Report Title	Date
Area Committee Roles for 2008/09	Executive Board, July 2008
Parks and Greenspace Strategy	Executive Board, February 2009
Fixed Play Strategy	Executive Board, September 2002
Local Area Agreement	Full Council, July 2008
Playing Pitch Strategy	Executive Board, October 2003

Appendix 1: Detailed Residents Survey Information

1.1 Total Number of Annual Visits

	Community Parks	Other P&C Sites	Total
North East Inner	2,558,223	8,367,686	10,925,909

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

Reason	Chapel Allerton Park %	Norma Hutchinson Park %	Meanwood Park %	Potternewton Park %	North East Inner Total %
Exercise	76	100	98	88	94
Play	59	43	45	78	53
Dog walking	17	0	23	19	20
Enjoy the surroundings	59	0	70	44	60
Family outings	28	29	39	53	39
Relaxation	100	71	100	100	100
See Wildlife	17	0	37	25	30
Sport related	28	29	21	25	23
Other	10	14	3	6	5
Events	14	0	2	50	13

1.3 Age Profile of Visitors

Site	Age 20 – 39	Age 40 – 59	Age 60+
Chapel Allerton Park	31%	52%	17%
Norma Hutchinson Park	33%	33%	34%
Meanwood Park	50%	34%	16%
Potternewton Park	46%	33%	21%
North East Inner Total	45%	37%	18%

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
Chapel Allerton Park	85.7%	71%	29%	~	~
Norma Hutchinson Park	100%	86%	14%	~	~
Meanwood Park	73.5%	59%	27%	13%	1%
Potternewton Park	83.9%	73%	19%	4%	4%
North East Inner Total	78.7%	65%	25%	8%	2%

1.5 Visitors by Car - Journey Time

Site	% of visitors by car	Less than 10 mins	10–20 mins	20-30 mins
Chapel Allerton Park	14.3%	100%	~	~
Norma Hutchinson Park	0%	~	~	~
Meanwood Park	23.5%	77%	23%	~
Potternewton Park	16.1%	60%	40%	~
North East Inner Total	19.5%	78%	23%	~

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

Time	Summer Stay		Winter Stay	
	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday
Less than 30 Minutes	9%	16%	19%	31%
30 minutes to 1 hour	30%	46%	47%	46%
1 to 2 hours	40%	28%	29%	4%
2 to 4 hours	19%	3%	0%	0%
4 or more hours	2%	1%	2%	2%
Do not visit	0%	6%	3%	17%

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

	Summer	Winter
Every Day	11%	6%
Most Days	21%	11%
Once or Twice a week	31%	22%
Once every two weeks	22%	20%
Once a month	16%	27%
Seldom or never	0%	14%

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
Chapel Allerton Park	<p>Good tennis courts.</p> <p>Generally other good comments on a wide range of items.</p> <p>Path between top of park and childrens play area requested.</p> <p>Some graffiti issues on play area.</p>	<p>Café Facilities.</p> <p>Better childrens playground.</p> <p>Requests for additional seating and picnic areas.</p>	<p>Comment on dog fouling and removal of dog bins.</p> <p>Lower end of park could be put to better use.</p>
Norma Hutchinson Park	<p>Some flower beds requested.</p>	<p>Flood lighting for play and ball park areas</p>	~
Meanwood Park	<p>Lack of satisfaction with playground (New playground installed since survey).</p> <p>Concern over levels of dog mess.</p> <p>A number of visitors appreciate the non formal areas of the park.</p>	<p>Numerous request for café facilities.</p> <p>Toilets open during day.</p> <p>More benches and shelter.</p> <p>New playground (Completed since the survey).</p>	~
Potternewton Park	<p>Dog fouling is a consistent issue.</p>	<p>Better control of dogs.</p> <p>Catering facilities/ice</p>	~

Site	General satisfaction comments	What would make you stay longer or encourage more use	Any other comments
	Better path infrastructure.	cream van.	