

Report of The Head of Parks and Countryside

Report to East Inner Area Committee

Date: 20th October 2011

Subject: Annual Report – for Parks and Countryside Service in 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): Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Gipton & Harehills Killingbeck & Seacroft		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. The report provides an area profile of key assets, information on park usage and a customer based perspective of the quality of the assets and services provided.
2. It highlights the current progress towards Leeds Quality Park (LQP) status for 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 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 Public Rights of Way 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 East Inner Area Committee:

Asset	Quantity
Community parks	6
Playing Pitches:	
Football	22
Rugby League	9
Bowling greens	6
Playgrounds	14
Multi-use games areas	7
Skate parks	2

Community Parks

- 3.2 Analysis from the 2009 residents survey was carried out relevant to the 10 community parks in the area which are;

Site Name	Annual Number of Visits	Total Annual Visits to East Inner Community Parks is 1.9m approx.
Banstead Park	69,060	
East End Park	837,040	
Fearnville Sports Centre	220,141	
Harehills Park	485,742	
Nowell Mount	40,043	
The Rein	275,467	

- 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 63% of visitors are adults with 37% children or young people.
- There are a wide range of reasons for visiting but nearly all visitors at some point go for relaxation, exercise or play.
- Nearly 80% of visitors travel to the park on foot of which 77% take less than 10 minutes to travel there which is high than most other area committee's.
- Of the 18% who visit by car 74% take less than 10 minutes to get there.
- 50% of visitors go to community parks either every day or on most days, whilst 71% 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	18

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 426 days of voluntary work in the east inner area over a 12 month period. The tables below give details of works undertaken in 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
East End Park	Reparation Team	Park Management
	Leeds Parks Volunteers	Planting up a flower bed Weeding
Killingbeck Fields	Leeds Ahead	Hedge planting Scrub bashing Litterpick

Corporate volunteer actions;

Organisation	Site	Task	Number of Volunteers
Leeds Ahead	Killingbeck Fields	Hedge planting	23
Leeds Ahead – O2	Killingbeck Fields	Balsam bashing	12

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

Group Name	Number of Volunteers	Estimated Volunteer Days
Friends of Becket Street Cemetery	5	10
Friends of East End Park	5	5
Friends of Wykebeck Woods	10	24
Wyke Beck Way Community Forum	30	0
Leeds Parks Volunteers	4	78
Leeds Voluntary Footpath Rangers	6	130
Leeds Wildlife Volunteers	12	216
Total	72	463

Existing in bloom groups within the east inner area;

In Bloom Group	Number of Volunteers	Estimated Volunteer Days
Cross Green	12	240
Harehills	3	80
Total	15	320

Events

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

Site Name	Month	Event	Total
East End Park	June	Band in the Park	1
		Funfair (Atha)	1
	July	Band in the Park	1
		Lark in the Park	1
August	Band in the Park	1	
Fearnville	April	Funfair (Pullen)11th -18th	1
		Regional BMX Event - Leeds BMX Club	1
	July	Gipton Gala	1
Halton Moor	August	Halton Moor Gala/ East Leeds Unity Day	1
Killingbeck Fields	September	19th - 26th Funfair (Waddington)	1
Seacroft Village Green	July	Dysarticulate 2	1
		Killingbeck & Seacroft Fun Day	1
	August	Children's & Young Person's Day	1
Torre Crescent	April	Opening of greenspace	1
Wyke Beck	July	Groundwork	1
Banstead Park	July	Harehills festival	1
		Kids Club	1
Total			17

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 East Inner Area Committee.

Site	Year Assessed	Welcoming Place	Healthy, Safe, Secure	Clean, Well Maintained	Sustainability	Conservation / Heritage	Community Involvement	Marketing	Meets Standard?
Banstead Park	2008								Yes
East End Park	2010								No
Fearnville Sports Centre	2010								No
Harehills Park	2008								No
Nowell Mount	2010								No
The Rein	2010								No

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

Key:

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

- 3.11 From this table, there is 1 park identified that meet the Leeds Quality Park Standard in the area, with 5 not reaching the standard. There is no change since the previous 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
Banstead Park	6.4	5.5	7.8	5.5	6.9	6.3	5.1	5.7	5.8
East End Park	6.9	7.2	8.2	5.6	7.8	7.2	6.4	5.8	7.1
Fearnville Sports Centre	7.4	6.0	7.1	4.0	7.1	6.4	6.0	6.0	6.6
Harehills Park	6.1	6.5	8.0	5.2	7.0	7.4	4.6	6.4	6.5
The Rein	4.7	4.7	6.7	3.0	6.0	5.0	3.7	6.0	4.0

Note – Nowell Mount 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 assessment set out in paragraph **Error! Reference source not found**.3.10. There are however issues identified with the range of facilities, facilities for families and sports facilities 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 (East Inner)	2006 (East Inner)
Fair to very good	65.9%	64.6%
Poor or very poor	34.1%	35.4%

The results shows little change in those rating the sports facilities as fair or higher from the 2006 survey. 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 (East Inner)	2006 (East Inner)
Fair to very good	59.8%	52.2%
Poor or very poor	40.2%	47.8%

Results show a sizeable increase in those who rated facilities as fair or above.

3.15 Improvements to community parks during 2011 are as follows;

- East End Park – New item of play equipment installed. Resurfacing of some paths completed. New picnic bench installed.

3.16 The following sports pitch improvements have taken place in 2011;

- Snake Lane – New rugby league pitch with dugouts and spectator rails.

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)
East End Park	£289,200	
Fearnville Sports Centre	£30,000	
Harehills Park	£15,000	
Nowell Mount	£36,850	
The Rein	£150,000	
Total to achieve LQP	£521,050	
Average annual reinvestment		£22,868
Total reinvestment to 2020		£205,809
Overall Total Investment to 2020		£726,859

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 for the next 12 months are;

- Banstead Park – Area of bulb planting to be undertaken.
- Harehills Park – Development of the lower area of the park planned and an introduction of more signage.
- East End Park – Planting of a large quantity of trees as a part of the trees for cities scheme.
- The Rein – Installation of the new play area.
- Seacroft Village Green – New play area and Multi use games area (MUGA).

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	14	1,680,000	168,000
Multi Use games Areas	7	630,000	63,000
Skate Parks	2	180,000	18,000
Totals		2,490,000	249,000

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. 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
D1	Support initiatives to promote cycling networks in inner east. a) Wykebeck Valley project	A number of improvement works along the identified route have progressed. For example, a stretch at Fearnville has been resurfaced.
D3	Scope a possibility of development	Officers from Parks and

Ref.	Action	Comments
	of walking routes from inner east estates into city centre. a) from Richmond Hill	Countryside and Highways continue to work to promote a number of options to develop and improve routes
F8	Support improvements to sports facilities and green spaces/parks across inner East a) support to Friends of Parks; EEP, Harehills - groups	See improvements outlined in the main content of this report.

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	<i>n/a</i>	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 East Area Committee, 4th July 2011
- 7.2 Annual Report for Parks and Countryside Service in East Inner Area Committee, Inner East Area Committee, 2nd December 2010
- 7.3 Parks and Greenspace Strategy, Executive Board, February 2009
- 7.4 Fixed Play Strategy, Executive Board, September 2002

Appendix 1: Detailed Residents Survey Information

1.1 Total Number of Annual Visits

	Community Parks	Other P&C Sites	Total
East Inner	1,927,493	382,442	2,309,935

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

Reason	Banstead Park %	East End Park %	Fearnville Sports %	Harehills Park %	The Rein %	East Inner Total %
Exercise	73	82	100	95	100	89
Play	100	53	71	76	33	64
Dog walking	0	16	29	29	50	21
Enjoy the surroundings	18	39	57	33	0	33
Family outings	36	32	57	48	17	36
Relaxation	100	100	43	95	100	99
See Wildlife	0	11	43	14	0	12
Sport related	36	39	71	24	33	36
Other	9	16	14	0	50	14
Events	0	24	29	5	0	14

1.3 Age Profile of Visitors

Site	Age 20 – 39	Age 40 – 59	Age 60+
Banstead Park	58%	33%	9%
East End Park	38%	38%	23%
Fearnville Sports Centre	33%	33%	34%
Harehills Park	41%	45%	14%
The Rein	43%	57%	0%
East Inner Total	41%	42%	17%

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
Banstead Park	90.9%	80%	20%	0%	0%
East End Park	81.1%	77%	23%	0%	0%
Fearnville Sports Centre	57.1%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Harehills Park	73.7%	72%	28%	0%	0%
The Rein	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
East Inner Total	79.3%	77%	23%	0%	0%

1.5 Visitors by Car - Journey Time

Site	% of visitors by car	Less than 10 mins	10–20 mins	20-30 mins
Banstead Park	9.1%	100%	0%	0%
East End Park	18.9%	57%	43%	0%
Fearnville Sports Centre	28.6%	100%	0%	0%
Harehills Park	21.1%	75%	25%	0%
The Rein	0%	~	~	~
East Inner Total	18.3%	74%	20%	6%

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	10%	22%	34%	38%
30 minutes to 1 hour	38%	42%	34%	32%
1 to 2 hours	38%	22%	17%	9%
2 to 4 hours	10%	10%	6%	4%
4 or more hours	2%	2%	0%	0%
Do not visit	2%	3%	9%	18%

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

	Summer	Winter
Every Day	20%	15%
Most Days	30%	17%
Once or Twice a week	21%	23%
Once every two weeks	15%	9%
Once a month	14%	21%
Seldom or never	0%	15%

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
Banstead Park	Major concerns over dog fouling, damage to the childrens play area.	Improving the safety of the park by reducing anti-social behaviour and other activities which occur. Maybe community policing would help.	~
East End Park	Majority of the park is clean and tidy. There are some issues with dog fouling. Path network needs resurfacing.	Some access to refreshments. Increased number of picnic benches.	People like the breeze events.
Fearnville Sports Centre	Improved pitch maintenance and drainage needed.	Seating. Childrens play area.	~
Harehills Park	Few comments on general maintenance and look of the park. Main concern is anti-social and perceived criminal behaviour.	Improved childrens play area (this has been completed since survey).	Local PCSO's to patrol in the park.
The Rein	~	Some play facilities. Some extra features.	Some events or knowing what was going on would maybe improve the park.