

Appendix 4

Parks Consultation - Management Summary

Response to key improvements arising from public consultation:

Theme	Principle	Improvement	Response
Community Spaces	To ensure no-one is excluded from using parks and open spaces	Access measures: paths, ramps, gates, maintenance	The quality audit provides a scored assessment for access for every park and open space in the city. Improvements will be made on a project specific basis as revenue allows and these will be prioritised in accordance with audit scores.
		Ensure parks are welcoming and safe	<p>The Council will continue to offer supervised adventure playground sites at several of its spaces.</p> <p>Investment will be made to improved lighting schemes on a case by case basis, subject to financial viability. Lighting will be assessed in accordance with the issues set out in the strategy.</p> <p>Community wardens will continue to target key issues.</p> <p>External funded projects - e.g. Victoria Park - will continue to consider welcome and accessibility as part of their masterplan.</p>
		Providing supervision such as park keepers, CCTV, patrols	<p>Whilst it has not been possible for some years to resource park wardens, the Parks Service has a strong and growing volunteer base and some of our open space areas have volunteer warden networks.</p> <p>Considerations for CCTV are made on a case by case basis as revenue allows and decisions will be prioritised in accordance with audit scores.</p>

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Celebrating and protecting our environment	To protect biodiversity, tree coverage and Increase wildflower habitat	Plant trees & shrubs including outside of green spaces	<p>The Council's Countryside team includes an officer for inner city projects, who is able to advise and scope on small project opportunities.</p> <p>The Parks Service are also represented on a cross cutting working group to deliver the Greening Infrastructure Delivery Plan.</p>
		Plant and maintain more wildflowers	<p>At our Countryside sites our management plans include work to increase wildflower meadows, by adopting an annual cut regime. We have also reduced our Grounds Maintenance mowing regime for amenity spaces, to encourage wild havens and small mammals and invertebrates in turn.</p> <p>At many of our Parks we have left areas for rewilding.</p> <p>Rewilding of verges may take place where possible, provided it does not cause an obstruction to visibility for public safety.</p> <p>Our Inner City Countryside Officer has engaged with other departments to advise on wildflower friendly native planting.</p>
		Improve specific and trained staffing	<p>The Parks Service has taken on an additional two qualified Countryside Officers in the past year, who are dedicated to the management of our open spaces and other opportunities for biodiversity enhancement (see above).</p> <p>Each year, the Parks Service takes on additional grounds maintenance operatives for the high season. Staff are fully trained and there is opportunity to undertake Apprenticeship Level 2 in Horticulture/Landscape Operation.</p>

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Lifelong learning	To support Parks Friends, volunteering and opportunities for children	Engage closely with children and young people	<p>The Parks Service offers Forest School opportunities for children and work placements for young people, such as those studying at agricultural college.</p> <p>The service works collaboratively with colleagues in the Council's Library Service and Museum Service, to hold several 'pop up' engagement days, including <i>Love Our Pollinators</i> event and <i>Coastal Celebration</i> event both with Cumberland House Museum, a stall at the Summer Reading Challenge event with Libraries and a stall at Armed Forces Day in conjunction with the Events service.</p>
		Better advertising and communication about what is available	<p>Communication is offered via various channels.</p> <p>Biodiversity education events are often held in collaboration with our natural history team, Museums (see above). Such events are promoted via the Cumberland House website events page and on associated social channels.</p> <p>Events in conjunction with Libraries are promoted via the Portsmouth Libraries social channels.</p> <p>We have a new social media channel Nature of Portsmouth on Instagram, where our countryside and biodiversity work is promoted.</p> <p>Our flagship project for Victoria Park has its own dedicated website and social media channel.</p> <p>General parks information and contact details are also found on the city council website under 'Parks, gardens and open spaces'. We will redraft our webpage to make it easier to navigate opportunities.</p>
		More green community events and volunteering initiatives	The addition of two further Countryside Officers has enabled the service to expand its community and volunteering initiatives.

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			<p>Subsequent to this, new volunteering groups have arisen, a group for conservation volunteers at Baffins Pond, one for Milton Common, one for Great Salterns and a core city wide volunteer group. Volunteering opportunities remain open.</p> <p>Regarding community events, it is intended that these continue on a co-production model with the other services referenced above.</p>
Health and wellbeing	To provide opportunities for outdoor fitness and the enjoyment of flora and fauna	More free / affordable outdoor fitness and leisure equipment	<p>The Parks Service maintain several outdoor fitness equipment stations in several parks across the city. Consideration for additional equipment stations will be subject to capital funding / CIL allocation and will be prioritised in accordance with the audit scores for parks. In recent years new and improved installations have included Cosham Park, Canoe Lake, Southsea, Drayton Park, Baffins Pond, and Alexandra Park.</p> <p>There are several sport and exercise providers who use our parks and open spaces to conduct personal training, outdoor fitness and group exercise. The Council welcome applications from new providers; applications are subject to a licensing agreement to use the land to ensure high standards of conduct, health and safety and service quality.</p>
		Improve trees, flowers and planting	See above response under Celebrating and protecting our environment.
		Encourage and enable walking through marked trails, guided walks, information boards, spotter sheets	<p>The Council offer Wellbeing Walks in conjunction with The Ramblers Association and Portsmouth walks can be found on their website.</p> <p>Other organisations offering walks in the city include Portsmouth Ramblers, Portsmouth Friends of the Earth, Hampshire and Isle of</p>

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			<p>Wight Wildlife Trust and the Council's own Hilsea Lines and Portsdown Hill Countryside team.</p> <p>Tree trails are downloadable for Victoria Park and Milton Park and there are several links to self-guided walks on the Council website.</p> <p>The Parks Service have installed new and/or replaced several information boards across the parks estate. Most recently at Canoe Lake a new interpretation board has been installed which focuses on the swan diet and includes a self-led children's trail - this project was undertaken in co-production with Craneswater School, the local café, Cumberland House and the Mobile Library.</p> <p>Spotter sheets are available from the Countryside Team and flora to spot is also promoted via the Nature of Portsmouth Instagram site.</p> <p>The Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2023-2033 also references several promoted routes in the city.</p> <p>Information regarding the above walk trails has been referenced in the strategy.</p>
<p>Accessible and well-designed parks</p>	<p>To provide welcoming entrances for all users</p>	<p>Signage in different languages</p>	<p>It is no longer industry practice to provide signage in different languages. With any new signage, it is usual to include QR codes, this can include language options or users can utilise translation through popular search engines.</p> <p>From an accessibility perspective, the Parks Service has recently installed an autism board at Southsea and as funding allows this may be extended to other parks in the city.</p> <p>Some services within Culture and Leisure have developed EnableAbility videos, which could be a future option for the Parks Service.</p>

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			<p>With any of our existing walking route leaflets, the Council does offer translation on request. Portsmouth Visitor Guides are available in several languages.</p>
		<p>Make more accessible for users re pathways etc.</p>	<p>With any new projects, accessibility forms part of the design proposals, to meet relevant standards and where applicable consultation feedback from stakeholders. At Victoria Park, the improvements include a new hub building and wider entrance at Bishop Crispian Way.</p> <p>Accessibility is subject to the natural topography of the open space in question. For example, Portsdown Hill may preclude unrestricted open access for all, however there are several viewpoints where individuals with mobility requirements can access clear views within the constraints of the site.</p> <p>At Hilsea Lines, recent improvements have included a radar key activated gate with bidirectional movement. Paths have also been widened and surfaced.</p>
		<p>Keep well maintained, free of litter, broken glass and dog waste</p>	<p>Litter is a challenge which has risen proportionately with the increase in parks usage. Considerable capital funding has been directed towards litter management, including litter bins, recycling bins and grounds operatives. The installation of wire mesh bins has proved more successful than traditional bins at some sites.</p> <p>The Parks Service is grateful to its volunteer and friend groups many of whom help with litter picking, being provided with long armed litter pickers by the Council.</p>

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			<p>Grounds operatives and community wardens make their best efforts with regard to broken glass and if residents and visitors find instances of broken glass they are encouraged to contact the Council.</p> <p>The sites audit identified that there is good provision of dog bins and at the time of the audit, dog fouling was not found to be an issue in any of the spaces, although the audit is a snapshot in time. The provision of dog control orders at particular sites within a park and dedicated dog spaces, allow provision to be made for all types of parks users.</p>
Maximising safety and Facility provision	Safe parks facilities for all users	More staff, policing and park patrols on foot	<p>The Parks Service take on additional grounds maintenance operatives for the high season who are fully trained for their roles.</p> <p>Community Wardens will continue to work with the Parks Service to target key areas for patrol.</p> <p>Regarding policing, we would suggest that residents and visitors contact the Hampshire Police Commissioner to express their desire for increased policing in Portsmouth parks.</p>
		Ensure good lighting and visibility	<p>Lighting is considered on a case by case basis as there are many issues to consider, as set out in the strategy.</p> <p>Lighting can be used to create focal points, but it can also enable dark pockets within parks and therefore placement needs to be strategically considered for individual parks.</p> <p>Artificial Light At Night ("ALAN") has many impacts on our natural world, concerning species groups that are found in our open spaces. Depending on the park in question, it can be more appropriate to light the perimeter of the park, courtesy of existing street lights, which is also more energy efficient.</p>

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			<p>With the Victoria Park renewal project, the design plan includes provision for improved lighting.</p> <p>Within revenue spend, any lighting improvements will be prioritised in accordance with audit scores.</p> <p>Visibility may be enhanced in daylight by clear pathways, identifiable entrances and exits and non-obstructed sightlines which can be achieved by good design such as the Victoria Park project.</p> <p>Clear sightlines may also be achieved by well considered planting and grounds maintenance plans.</p>
		Crack down on anti-social behaviour	<p>The Council encourages residents and visitors to contact the Community Wardens to report all issues of anti-social behaviour. There is also an online 'Report It' form which is triaged through to the correct department.</p> <p>If requiring police attention, residents and visitors can call the non-emergency line on 101 or the emergency line on 999.</p>
Resourcing our parks	To financially resource our parks	Assess / maximise use of current budget / revenue from council tax	<p>The parks and open spaces of the city are managed on a high impact low cost model, with the Parks Service revenue budget dedicated towards grounds maintenance operations, arboriculture, play areas, sports and allotment provision, buildings utilities, materials and equipment for operations.</p> <p>The majority of the staffing cohort is dedicated towards the front line to deliver operations and grounds maintenance with a very small proportion of staffing allocated to two major projects.</p> <p>Aside from the revenue budget, project funding is sourced through a capital bid process.</p>

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			Regular meetings are held throughout the year with the finance team to review, assess and evaluate revenue forecast, spend and outturn.
		More funding / investments e.g. grants, lottery, crowdfunding	<p>There are various routes that the Council pursues to fund investments to parks and open spaces (in addition to capital bid process):</p> <p>Grants: some of our countryside open spaces are funded through an Environmental Stewardship grant with Natural England. The management decisions for those sites must not conflict with the objectives of the stewardship agreement.</p> <p>Sports grants: for example working with the Footfall Foundation to secure funding for the improved public facilities and pitches at King George V playing field.</p> <p>Lottery: the Council were successful in a bid for over £2 million to the National Lottery Heritage Fund which has been accompanied by capital funding to deliver the restoration and improvement of Victoria Park.</p> <p>Crowdfunding: this route has been successful in raising £50k towards Orchard Park basketball court development.</p> <p>In addition to capital funded schemes, the strategy also references funding opportunities offered via Community Infrastructure Levy, under planning legislation, which can be (and has been) used to fund parks enhancements.</p>
		Fundraising and incoming generating events	The parks service offer a range of free events such as those mentioned above under Lifelong Learning, together with the activity programme for Victoria Park.

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			<p>These events are offered free as the council is committed to providing activity at free or low cost, so that no-one is excluded from participation and opportunities are available for all.</p> <p>Where events are chargeable, the income is used to support land and event costs, such as cleansing and repairs.</p> <p>Whilst increasing ticketing for events may be considered, this could cause dissatisfaction from excluding public access to parks and open spaces.</p> <p>An opportunity for the service may be to consider an online giving page and/or mobile contactless donation devices in the future, these could be available at pop up stalls hosted by the Parks and Countryside team at the events mentioned above. This may allow an opportunity for fundraising without preventing access to public space for all.</p>