

Report for: Cabinet 17 July 2018

Title: Cabinet response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review on Parks

Report authorised by: Stephen McDonnell, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

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Ward(s) affected: All wards

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 The report sets out the proposed Cabinet response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review of Parks (attached as Appendix 1 to this report), which was carried out over the Autumn / Winter of 2017/18.

2. Cabinet Member introduction

2.1 The Council welcomes the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as a positive contribution to improving the management and protection of Parks in the Borough.

2.2 Haringey parks are well used. Millions of visits are made to our parks and open spaces each year and it is clear that parks are enjoyed and valued across the council, partners and residents.

2.3 It is therefore encouraging to note that evidence received by the Committee reflects this and the recommendations will help to support and protect our parks in the long term.

2.4 This is an important and timely review that will help us shape the forthcoming Parks Strategy to be developed collaboratively over the next twelve months. We recognise that there are always improvements to be made to enhance parks users' experience and the recommendations will support the Council and partners to raise standards in a sustainable way.

2.5 This has been a useful piece of work in ensuring that our parks are of a high standard. I am particularly pleased that the Friend' of the Parks groups have been involved in this review. It is important that users groups are involved in the use and development of their parks.

2.6 Parks play an important part in promoting health and well-being.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked:

(a) To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Report on Parks (attached as Appendix 1).

(b) To agree the responses to the Overview and Scrutiny report recommendations (attached as Appendix 2).

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 Haringey parks are safe places, enjoyed by many.

4.2 Over the autumn / winter of 2017/18 partners and stakeholders were invited by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to present their evidence and opinions on the borough's parks.

4.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has now made a number of recommendations focused on how the Council and its partners can improve the visitor experience when using the borough's parks and how parks can be protected and enhanced over time.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee explored a number of views and opinions from a range of partners and stakeholders to enable the collation of the report and subsequent recommendations.

5.2 The recommendations have been carefully considered. Responses to these have been drawn up to help the Council and its partners to improve the borough's parks.

6. Background information

6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee review into Parks was established in response to community concerns regarding the cumulative effects of budget cuts on parks and open spaces within the borough and the possibility that these may lead to long term decline.

6.2 The terms of reference for the review were as follows:

“To consider and make recommendations to the Council’s Cabinet on the development of a strategy for the borough’s parks and open spaces and, in particular;

- Maintenance of standards and support;
- The wider benefits and contributions to Corporate Plan priorities that parks make;
- Potential sources of funding; and
- Effective protection from inappropriate development or commercialisation.”

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

7.1 The recommendations and the responses made will contribute to policy and practice primarily in relation to Priority 3 of the Corporate Plan: ‘A clean, well maintained and safe borough where people are proud to live and work.’

7.2 Objective 2 of Priority 3 is: ‘To make our streets, parks and estates clean, well maintained and safe.’

8. Statutory Officers comments - Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities

8.1 Finance and Procurement

The responses outlined in Appendix 2 do not give rise to any direct changes to existing agreed budgets. Where actions have been outlined such as the consideration of putting 10 unprotected sites into a Fields in Trust Covenant they will be undertaken within existing resources.

Any financial considerations as a result of the development of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy will be considered at the time of the proposed strategy and separate to this report.

8.2 Legal

The Assistant Director, Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and makes the following comments.

As regards item 16 of Appendix 2, confirmation can be given of the need to ensure that any monies generated from events held in parks and open spaces held by the Council on trust for the public pursuant to the Open Spaces Act 1906, has to be invested back into that particular park or open space.

8.3 Equality

8.3.1 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex

(formerly gender) and sexual orientation;

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

8.3.2 Parks are community assets used by all groups throughout the year. We know that children, women with children and people with disabilities are the most likely protected groups to be impacted by changes to the parks service. In taking forward the recommendations, the Council's parks service will have a positive impact on these protected groups and all park users in Haringey.

9. Use of appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Report into Parks
Appendix 2 - Responses to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee report recommendations

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- a. Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Scrutiny Review of Parks
<http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s100653/12.1%20Scrut%20Parks%20OSC%20Covering%20Report%202.pdf>