

Haringey Council

Agenda item:

[No.1]

Cabinet 18th November 2008

Report Title: Haringey Parks Service Asset Management Plan	
Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): [add reference]	
Report of: Director of Adult, Culture and Community Services	
Wards(s) affected: All	Report for: Key Decision
1. Purpose (That is, the decision required) 1.1 The purpose of this report is to establish a more effective planned approach to the maintenance of parks and open spaces infrastructure in Haringey; and to thereby achieve and sustain 'Green Flag' standards of provision.	
2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary) 2.1 The provision of good quality, accessible and well used open space is clearly a feature of our Greenest Borough and Wellbeing priorities and ambitions. 2.2 We have a Manifesto commitment to achieve Green Flag standards in all our significant parks. 2.3 The Council, and partners, have made and continue to make significant investment in the physical infrastructure. We must now build upon this investment and sustain these improvements by ensuring that we have an effective infrastructure maintenance plan for our parks and open spaces.	
3. Recommendations 3.1 That the Parks Service Asset Management Plan is approved.	
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4. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 4.1 If this asset management plan is agreed in principle, consideration must also be given to the associated funding requirement.
- 4.2 A one-off reinstatement cost of circa £1m is required to bring 45 sites up to Green Flag standard.
- 4.3 Ongoing maintenance costs of £500k per annum would maintain the assets to this standard on a 5 year cyclical basis (i.e. £2.5m over 5 years).
- 4.4 A capital investment bid has been included in the Pre-Business Plan Review (PBPR) process for £500k per annum for 3 years from 2009/10 (total £1.5m). If this bid is successful it would contribute in part to the asset management plan requirement. The allocation would, however, be insufficient to improve all assets whilst maintaining others to a high standard. Maintenance and improvements of the assets must be prioritised to ensure that expenditure is contained within existing resources. It is, however, likely that a further capital bid of up to £2m will be made in future years to support this programme.

5. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 5.1 The Head of Legal Services comments that since the 1st October 2006 all public bodies have a legal duty to conserve biodiversity. Pursuant to Section 40(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The Council's adopted Open Space Strategy earlier in 2006 included the promotion of biodiversity and the conservation. Protection and enrichment of species and habitats as a strategic objective for the Open Space Strategy. Formal Guidance on the duty was published by DEFRA on 22 May 2007 to assist public authorities in implementing the duty. If the asset management plan is agreed regard should be had to the biodiversity duty.
- 5.2 The Head of Legal Services also draws attention to the recently adopted Open Space and Recreational Standards which will in time provide some additional resources to areas of the Borough deficient in open space amenities

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 6.1 [List background documents]
- 6.2 [Also list reasons for exemption or confidentiality (if applicable)]

7. Strategic Implications

- 7.1 Protecting and Improving the Natural Environment is an integral part of Haringey's Greenest Borough Strategy, which is also reflected in the Local Area Agreement priorities and targets. Establishing more effective open space infrastructural maintenance and improvement is a key component to realising these aspirations.
- 7.2 Similarly, the use of our parks through the provision of good quality, accessible and well supervised facilities and activities will make a significant contribution to our Wellbeing and Quality of Life priorities, and in particular increasing participation in sport and physical activity.

7.3 Well maintained parks and open spaces tend to be used more and attract greater community use, which in turn improves user perception of safety and well being, leading to a “virtuous circle” whereby better facilities are more used and provide proportionately greater value for money and increased customer satisfaction.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 To ensure the provision of good quality, accessible and well used open space the consolidation of both revenue and capital funding is required

8.2 Initial estimates indicate the total asset value is around £11.5m (excluding buildings).

8.3 We have raised the standard of about half of our major sites through the renewal programme funded by site specific funding allocations and we have aspirations for achieving Green Flag standard on the remaining sites during the next 5 years.

8.4 We are conscious of not increasing the ongoing repairs and maintenance need through the renewal programme but to retain the benefit of our investments it will be necessary to increase the revenue allocation from its current base.

8.5 The current estimated total maintenance value per annum is around £500,000, rising to around £1M per annum as we complete the renewal works mentioned above. This increase will be necessary as when the renewal programme is complete there will be no site specific allocations to renew infrastructure.

8.6 The current cost estimate for immediate works required in existing and potential Green Flag sites is £500,000 and we have submitted a capital bid this year to cover these costs to sustain and meet existing LAA targets.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 The provision of well maintained infrastructure within open spaces will make a significant contribution to the reduction of insurance claims and their associated costs.

10. Equalities Implications

10.1 Increasing use of parks by all sectors of the community is a key outcome of the Asset Management Plan.

10.2 Increasing engagement with users and non users including black, ethnic minority groups is a key focus of the Asset Management Plan which we aim to do through continuous consultation in order to provide quality sites, which local communities will take pride in.

10.3 We will continue to work with the Metropolitan Police to design out and try to eliminate potential crime locations which will result in increased use by women and young people.

10.4 All equality implications will be considered throughout the course of the Asset Management Plan. Consideration of equalities issues will continue throughout the consultation process.

11. Consultation

- 11.1 Consultation is ongoing through the Haringey Parks Friends Forum and individual Friends group meetings.
- 11.2 The Neighbourhood Management and Area Based Working Structures also provide a key consultation route.
- 11.3 Individual Park Management Plans, which also outline the key infrastructure improvements planned for the site, are reviewed with relevant stakeholders on an annual basis.
- 11.4 The major renewal projects, such as Markfield Park, Lordship Recreation Ground and Muswell Hill Playing Fields include detailed consultation programmes, which include all key stakeholders.

12. Background

12.1 Introduction

- 12.1.1 Haringey is recognised regionally and nationally for its Green Flag and Green Pennant achievements (see map Appendix 2). For two years Haringey has led London borough standings on number of Green Flag Parks. This can be attributed to ongoing commitment of corporate resources and external capital investment, an advanced, committed community group network (Friends of Parks), well structured approach to Green Flag and Small Open Spaces Improvements via detailed Park Management and Asset Management Planning and finally a dedicated delivery team. Although provision of parks is not a statutory requirement Haringey can certainly be proud of what it has achieved in recent years in sustaining and improving its open space.
- 12.1.2 Across the Parks Service industry in Britain there is no tradition of asset valuation and a general lack of long term planning for parks. This has thus lead to a lack of coherent data and evidence about the level and value of local authority expenditure on parks and open spaces and a lack of understanding of the link between capital and revenue expenditure and the quality of green space.
- 12.1.3 Asset management in the Parks Service has been rising up the agenda over the last eight years. Acquisition of appropriate software (Confirm) in 2001 and the rise in importance of Green Flag as a tangible method of improving open space standards both served to highlight the need to understand open space infrastructure. A large exercise to review the amount, type, and condition, of infrastructure in our parks was carried out in 2003 and 2004. Although there have been several targeted and site specific exercises since then to collect data, no fully comprehensive asset management program has been developed to date.
- 12.1.4 The key elements of asset management can be summarised as:
 - Ensuring that operational assets used for service delivery are fit for purpose.
 - Improving stakeholder satisfaction with the provision of service and improve the corporate image and how the Council is viewed.
 - Ensuring affordability and value for money in the use and operation of assets.
 - Ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory codes, e.g. Disability Discrimination Act.

- Improving strategic management to demonstrate clear links between corporate and service objectives and management of assets critical to service delivery.
- Developing and implementing a programmed maintenance plan that will maintain the assets to a satisfactory standard and capable of delivering high quality services to the community and visitors.

12.1.5 To date the process of assessing assets in Haringey's parks has included; litter bins, benches, railings, fencing, pathways, tennis courts, sports hard areas and signs. It excludes; landscapes, playgrounds, play equipment, historical features (such as memorials / gate piers / walls), bowling greens, and buildings.

12.2 National Context

12.2.1 Central government (Cleaner Safer Green Communities) has produced guidance on 'How to Create Quality Parks and Open Spaces'. The guidance says the Government will collaborate with local and national partners to lead success and realise our vision of a renaissance for green spaces. A strategic approach needs to be backed up with a good understanding and use of the powers, tools and good practice available for their long-term care. Together, we can achieve these by focusing action in the following ten key areas:

1. Strong local leadership and partnerships.
2. A good understanding of local needs and opportunities.
3. Engaged and empowered communities.
4. Better use of resources – money, powers and skills for the job.
5. Accountability and performance monitoring.
6. Creating high quality spaces that are well designed, fit for purpose and sustainable.
7. Managing and maintaining spaces to higher standards, and encouraging innovation.
8. Encouraging and promoting innovative uses of parks and green spaces.
9. Combating anti-social behaviour in green spaces.
10. Using good practice – getting the best from guidance, powers, programmes and good practice.

12.2.2 The Parks Asset Management Plan (PAMP) is an important aspect of achieving the outcomes in these ten key areas within Haringey's parks and open spaces.

12.2.3 The PAMP will feed data to and inform the Open Spaces Improvement Programme, which takes a collective approach to raising the standards of parks and open space infrastructure throughout the borough to meet publicly acceptable levels measured, reviewed through existing annual audits and surveys and utilisation of infrastructure audits, with the ultimate objective of taking the service from good to excellent and achieving "Beacon" status, Green Flag and other related awards e.g. London In Bloom, design awards and recognition within the Parks and Open Spaces sector, whilst making a significant contribution to improving the public realm.

12.3 Local Context

12.3.1 The Asset Management Plan has strong links with the delivery of both Council and partner priorities:

- Council Plan:
 - Greenest Borough
 - Cleaner, Greener, Safer
 - Delivering Excellent Services
 - Lifetime Wellbeing
- Community Strategy:
 - Environmentally sustainable future
 - Healthier people with a better quality of life
 - People and Customer Focused
- Local Area Agreement Priority and Targets:
 - Increasing Green Flags (12) / Pennants (7) by 2010
 - User satisfaction (from 72% to 77% - MORI) by 2010
 - Physical activity participation (4% improvement from 22.9% to 26.9%) by 2010
 - Community Safety (reduce PSA1 crimes borough-wide by 12.6%) by 2009/10.

12.4 Sustaining Investment

12.4.1 Good quality parks require quality management and investment. In the past 5 years, Parks have been the recipient of much needed funding which has helped energise a renaissance in green spaces, in Haringey this investment has been over £13 million. It is essential that this investment is sustained, and this Asset Management Plan has been developed in order to quantify this need.

13. Report

13.1 Proposed Objectives of the Parks Asset Management Plan

- 13.1.1 To identify existing monetary value of Parks infrastructure
- 13.1.2 To identify the replacement, reinstatement and annual maintenance costs (life cycle costs) of infrastructure, as a whole and per feature / site.
- 13.1.3 To be able to use this costing on an annual basis to make accurate capital funding bids evidenced by effective monitoring and management of infrastructure.
- 13.1.4 To use the information gleaned for capital funding bids to carry out the Parks Improvement Program.
- 13.1.5 To help to build up a picture of infrastructure works done in Park and Open Space sites year on year.

13.2 Proposed Asset Management Plan Outcomes

13.2.1 Achievement of the above objectives will allow us to;

- improve the ability to secure funding
- provide value for money
- arrest asset deterioration through long term forward planning
- identify future investment strategies
- identify value of assets and calculate depreciation where necessary
- provide evidence for the basis for 2009/10 Capital Funding Bid and beyond in the form of a ten year plan.

13.2.2 Scope

To quantify and qualify all non-horticultural physical assets in Haringey Council managed parks and open spaces over half a hectare in size. This does not include allotments or conservation sites, which are subject to separate review process for assessment of assets, condition and biodiversity value.

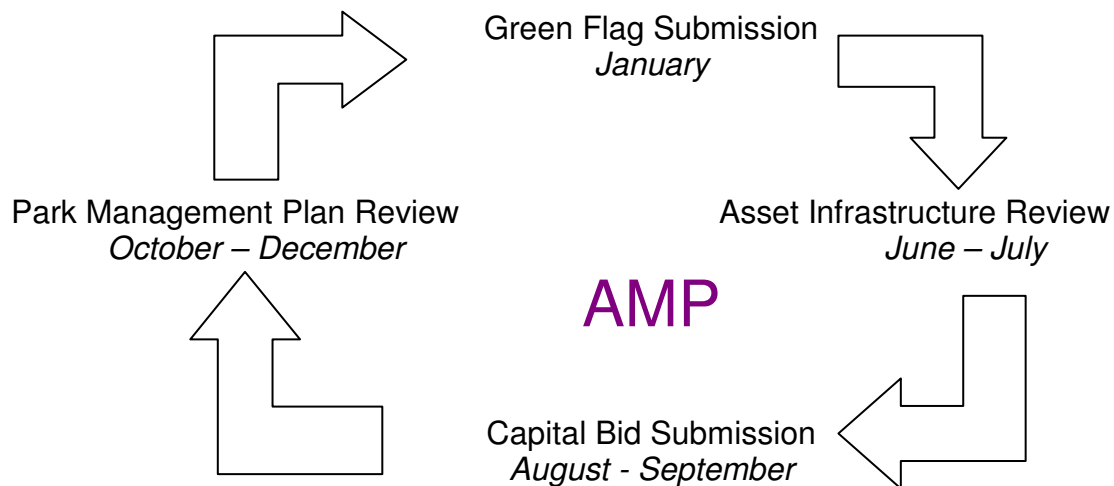
13.2.3 High level process

- a. assess quantity and condition of all non-horticultural assets within areas defined in the scope of this project
- b. assess replacement timeframe of each asset
- c. quantify replacement costs for each asset and thereby quantify annual funding required
- d. carry out gap analysis for assets and identify priority levels

13.3 Maintenance of asset data

13.3.1 Data of infrastructure assets will be collated and reviewed on an annual basis.

13.3.2 The following diagram outlines how the review of asset infrastructure will fit into the process of reaching Green Flag standard for open spaces.



13.3.3 The PAMP provides the means to estimate the life cycle and replacement regime for major asset types, e.g.;

- Path surfaces – 15 years
- Play equipment – 15 years
- Shrub beds – 5 years
- Park benches – 5 years
- Litter bins – 5 years
- Signs – 8 years
- Fencing – 10 years
- Multi Use Sports pitches – 20 years

13.4 Maintenance Regime

13.4.1 To achieve and retain Green Flag status a park or open space is judged under the following criteria;

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Well maintained and clean
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Management

13.4.2 Routine maintenance of soft (vegetative) and hard (asset) features is undertaken by the Parks Service in accordance with a Quality Management System accredited and externally assessed to EN: ISO 9001.

13.4.3 Quality standards are set by means of a specification based on photographic records, depicting acceptable standards of the finished work.

13.5 Renewal Programme

13.5.1 Recreation Services manages its capital improvement programme across parks and open spaces via two categories; major and minor renewal (sustaining and increasing Green Flags and small open space improvements).

13.5.2 The major renewal programme has been very successful in seeking external funding for a number of sites the most worthy of mention is Finsbury and Markfield Parks. Although there are good levels of match funding that is applicable to infrastructure replacement, funding agencies generally are not willing to solely fund open space improvements.

13.5.3 Corporate Resource funding has enabled Recreation Services to achieve external resources to enhance the programme and extend beyond the assessments. Experience shows for every £1 we have been allocated through Capital Resources we have been able to seek 50p to £2 external funding. Successful funding avenues to date are:

- Sport England – Active England fund
- Heritage Lottery Fund – various
- London Marathon Trust – Play
- Big Lottery Fund - Play
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)
- Safer & Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF)
- New Deal for Communities, Seven Sisters Area

13.6 Whole Life Costing

13.6.1 Detail on renewal costs has been established through 23 Asset Surveys covering more than 50% of Haringey's 45 parks. These surveys have determined the level of spend required to bring small to large open spaces up to a good to excellent standard. The Asset Surveys for the 23 sites have concluded the total amounts of investment required under the following headings:

Category	Comment (23 sites only)	Value
Total renewal cost	This is the total value of replacing the asset identified in the survey.	£5,373,977
5 Year cyclical	This is the cost to maintain the assets on a 5 year cyclical basis	£253,178

mtce cost	from new i.e. once the backlog of maintenance is clear this is what the annual capital budget should be for 23 sites.	
Reinstatement cost	This is the cost to bring the identified assets up to good to excellent quality.	£487,293

13.6.2 The Parks Service has developed the above approach to estimate the capital vale, life-cycle and maintenance costs of all the 45 parks, resulting in the cost estimates seen at s.8 Financial Implications above. Please see Appendix 1 for details.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1.1 The implementation of a solid Asset Management Plan for the Parks Service will help to ensure a targeted, forward planned maintenance regime through which appropriate funding is planned for in advance.
- 14.1.2 It will help to highlight the actual costs of maintenance for new and proposed assets.
- 14.1.3 It will provide an improved ability to recognise trends (consistent damage and failure of rubbish bins that would lead to their replacement with a more robust standard model).
- 14.1.4 It will help the Council to meet its objectives for a cleaner, greener and safer borough.

15. Use of Appendices

- 15.1 Appendix 1 Parks Service Asset Management Framework (.doc)
- 15.2 Appendix 2 Map of current Green Flag & Pennant sites (.pdf)