

# Melbourne Park Maintenance and Management Plan

To be read in conjunction with Chelmsford's Green Spaces Strategic Framework Document  
which contains details of the city council's policy documents and recording systems.



PROMOTING CITY IMAGE – RAISING THE STANDARD



# Foreword

One of the principal aims of the Local Authority is to improve quality of life for its residents. Parks and Green Spaces are key to this, good quality green spaces generate enormous social, economic, environmental and ecological benefits as well as making areas more attractive.

We also must recognize that, important as the immediate benefits are to communities, the decisions we make about the places where we work and live today will long outlast us. Good, proactive management of our Parks today will leave a real legacy for those who come after us.

Our parks and green spaces are some of the most valuable community assets we have. They are the precious jewels of our landscape to be treasured and maintained for people of all ages and from all backgrounds. Their importance cannot be underestimated, nor their necessity overlooked.

First and foremost, Melbourne Park is a destination park for sports users and caters for the local community living in the St Andrews Ward serving a population of 8,619.

The park provides sports enthusiasts with top quality facilities at an affordable cost. In addition, it also boasts a remnant of ancient woodland, College Wood providing 4.5 Hectares of ecologically rich woodland to explore and enjoy.

Over the life of this plan it is our aim to provide parkland that caters for the needs of the visiting public. We will listen and will aim to make improvements year on year to make all our Parks and Green Spaces more attractive, well respected and safe for all.



**Cllr Jude Deakin**  
Cabinet member  
for Parks & Green Spaces



**Cllr Rose Moore**  
Deputy Cabinet member  
for Parks & Green Spaces



# Guidance in reading the management plan

The management plans for City Parks are all about review and improvement to both site facilities and management practices. The route to excellence is paved with continuous improvement, self-assessment, good management practices and the discipline of planning.

This management plan is designed to be used as an easy reference manual that can be understood by all interested parties. The plan deals specifically with matters arising at Melbourne Park and needs to be read in conjunction with Chelmsford's Green Spaces Strategic framework document. (The later document contains much of Council's corporate strategy and policy documents as they relate to parks).

The Parks Service is continually reviewing and updating strategic documents to ensure we are responding to changing needs, complying with the latest legislation and setting targets in accordance with the corporate plan and service plans. More details with regards to strategic documents can be found in the policy document entitled Strategic Framework for Parks and Green Spaces.



In drafting the document, the Green Flag judging criteria were used as an audit tool. This ensures that we are embracing the criteria necessary to deliver a facility that matches the national standard for parks and that we have sought to embrace the eight key Green Flag objectives.

- 1. A welcoming Place**
- 2. Healthy, safe and secure**
- 3. Well maintained and clean**
- 4. Environmental Management**
- 5. Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage**
- 6. Community involvement**
- 7. Marketing and Communication**
- 8. Management**

All the above will be elaborated upon further as we will consider all the facets required to ensure the park is safe functional and relevant to the user and community.

Use of the Green Flag criteria provides a standard for systematic and committed approach to maintaining and improving the quality of parks enjoyed by local communities. In addition, it is essential to develop a public based benchmark audited externally by a third party. Green Flag being the recognised National Standard for Parks and Green Spaces is an excellent measure of success.



In developing a specific site management plan to develop and manage the park the project brief included an assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses and external factors affecting the business and marketing environment (**'SWOT' analysis**) and to drive change where necessary.

### STRENGTHS

- A well-established park and Athletics Centre combined providing public open space in a residential area.
- Good relationship between Council and Community.
- Managed woodland.
- Significant investment in new sports facilities and access improvements.
- Good partnership working with the Athletics Centre (Leisure and Heritage Services).

### WEAKNESSES

- Lack of horticultural features
- Little investment in infrastructure over the years.
- Trees within the site are limited in value– lack of succession planting.
- Capital funding is not guaranteed, or likely for this site.
- Section 106 and CIL funding is unlikely in this area.
- External funding has been difficult to achieve.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- To further investigate external funding sources.
- To develop further understanding of the biodiversity of the site.
- To develop further understanding of the historical nature of the site.
- To reduce the effect of a small minority of dog walkers who are inconsiderate.
- To create a park valued by the community.

### THREATS

- Lack of capital investment may have a long-term effect.
- Lack of capital investment in essential infrastructure may result in a missed opportunity to improve service provision.

Following on from this we set about compiling the content required for the plan. To this end we choose to use the Green Flag model to ensure we examined all the key elements that contribute to making a good and vibrant public space that people want to use.

In addition, credence has been given to considering recent research concerning parks undertaken both locally and nationally. It is important to be aware of both social and market trends. Particularly pertinent it has been decided to consider new thinking derived from our own authority's corporate objectives and from research consultation.

In these times of austerity Parks are particularly important in delivering health initiatives. Investment in Parks is seen to be prudent as the returns can be enjoyed by both current and future generations.

Green spaces are relevant to several national indicators (Nis) below and highlight common health and wellbeing outcomes. This broader, public health approach integrates physical and mental health and the impact of wider social, economic and cultural determinants on mental health and well-being.

### **Strong Communities**

- NI 5: Overall/general satisfaction with local area DCLG DSO
- NI 2: Percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood (PSA 21)
- NI 3: Civic participation in a local area PSA 15
- NI 17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour PSA 23

### **Children and Young People**

- NI 50: Emotional health of children PSA 12
- NI 55: Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year DCSF DSO
- NI 56: Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 DCSF DSO
- NI 57: Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport DCSF DSO
- NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities PSA 14

### **Adult Health and Well-being**

- NI 119: Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing DH DSO
- NI 138: Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood PSA 17



## Environmental Sustainability

- NI 185: CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations PSA 27
  - NI 186 Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area PSA 27
  - NI 188: Adapting to climate change PSA 27
  - NI 189: Flood and coastal erosion risk management Defra DSO
  - NI 197: Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites PSA 28
  - NI 198: Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used DfT DSOated Public Service Agreements (PSA) and Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSO)
- 
- PSA 12 Improve the health and well-being of children and young people
  - PSA 18 Promote better health and well-being for all
  - PAS 21 Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities
  - PSA 23 Make communities safer
  - PSA 27 Lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change
  - PSA 28 Secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future
  - DCMS DSO Encourage more widespread enjoyment of culture and sport
  - DFRA DSO Climate change tackled internationally; and through domestic action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
  - DEFRA DSO: Economy and society resilient to environmental risk and adapted to the impacts of climate change
  - DEFRA DSO: Sustainable patterns of consumption and production
  - DEFRA DSO A healthy, resilient, productive and diverse natural environment
  - DH DSO Ensure better health and well-being for all
  - HO DSO Help people feel secure in their homes and local communities.

It is hoped that through reading the plan the reader will glimpse how the staff team must balance the priorities, policies and pressures that apply and will see the rationale for establishing time scales for putting objectives into practice. The production of such a document allows the contribution that the site makes to the local community to be measured and progress against key objectives can be monitored by the management team and by visitors alike.

Information of a more generic nature has mostly been drawn out of site-specific management plans and is now to be found in a companion guide entitled Strategic Framework for Parks and Green Spaces.

Chelmsford's corporate agenda seeks to deliver quality services and factors in the need to deliver the plan is succinct and focuses on the bullet points below. Alongside the key areas of focus listed the plan goes further in citing 'what we will do' and 'what success will look like'

- Promoting Growth
- Attractive Place
- Healthy, active and enjoyable lives
- Working together
- Investing in our people and their performance

The work of City Parks feeds strongly into realizing all the aspirations of the Corporate Plan and our stated aims published in the Parks and Green Space Strategy expand on those aspirations in practical and measurable outcomes.

Imbedded in what we do are the following activities all of which ensure we provide a relevant service to residents and business within the city and to the every day users of our Green Space and Park facilities.

- Promoting health & activity
- Supporting education & learning
- Encouraging diversity & inclusion
- Ensuring safety & security
- Greater community involvement
- Promoting fun & enjoyment
- Making sites accessible & safe
- Achieving quality by design
- Valuing local character & heritage
- Realising economic value
- Minimising climate change
- Sustaining quality in our environment
- Managing for nature & biodiversity
- Making connections for people & wildlife

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# 1 Introduction & Brief History of the site

Broadly speaking the key management objectives for Melbourne Park take account of the principal 6 Objectives:

## PARK OBJECTIVES

- To understand and respond to the needs of our audiences, reflecting diversity of needs and use; enriching lives and enhancing access to culture and sport.
- To protect and enhance the park environment for the enjoyment of families, children and visitors (alongside sports orientated users).
- To work with other organisations and volunteers to deliver clear education, health, sport and participation opportunities.
- To conserve and enhance the natural environment of the park.
- To deliver greater value for money through increased income generation.
- To demonstrate organisational excellence.

Whilst the primary reason for developing a management plan is to aid the efficient and effective management of the site more specific objectives include:

- Defining priorities for investment and future development.
- Specifying maintenance, security and access arrangements.
- Understanding the links between strategic and policy documents and what needs to happen to realise them on the ground.
- Ensuring resources are best used to help us achieve our agreed objectives.

Site Name	Melbourne Park, Chelmsford
Site Status	Designated as public open space 1941
Total Area of Site	21.13 Hectares, 53.7 Acres College Wood 4.5 Hectares of ancient woodland which supports local biodiversity listed as a county wildlife site.
Component areas	Football Pitches, 3G Artificial grass football pitch & Athletics Throwing Area, Baseball Diamond, Tennis Courts, Sports pavilions, Car park, Children's play areas, Formal Garden area, Woodland.
Surrounding land	Built up residential. Chelmsford Sport & Athletic Centre is situated within the park. Melbourne Park is also home to Chelmsford Athletics Club and Chelmsford City Football Club.
Natural Geology	
Significant features / Key issues noted in deed packet	Easements, Public right of way. Fields in Trust Deed
Tenure	Freehold
Location	Melbourne Avenue / Salerno Way
Nearest bus route	
Ward	St Andrews. Population 8,619
District	Chelmsford
County	Essex
Post Code	CM2 6WS
OS grid reference	
Asset register reference	
Asset Value	
Byelaws	None
Opening Hours	Park accessible 24/7
Use	Primarily a sports ground
Essex Police Support	Emergency 999 Non-emergency 101 Via text message 07624800101

Arial view of Melbourne Park



## Melbourne Park, Chelmsford

Prior to the creation of the public open space the land was farmland, used for grazing. Toward the north of Melbourne Park, the land is known to have had a number of ponds that stock used to drink from. The ponds have since been drained and filled in. College Wood is a remnant of Writtle Forest Henry VIII's managed woodland stocked with game to hunt.

Today's park is located on the northern edge of Chelmsford's urban area characterised by a mix of residential areas, schools and neighbourhood shopping centres and serves the need of residents in neighbouring wards as their local park.

### **Today's Park facilities at Melbourne provide top class facilities for the sports minded visitor.**

Melbourne Park is a popular park, specialising in sporting activities within North West Chelmsford and hosts Chelmsford Sport and Athletic Centre. The main entrance point is on Salerno Way, just off Melbourne Avenue. The park has a number of football pitches, a 3G pitch (3rd generation artificial pitch- surface with long pile yarns and a rubber infill), a baseball diamond, and two hard surface courts for tennis, netball and basketball.

For the younger visitor there are two well-equipped play areas and an established 4.5-hectare wood to explore. Today the wood has coppiced Hornbeam, Ash, and English Oak and is a popular spot for dog walkers and families. During the springtime the woodland floor is sprinkled with bright yellow aconites and primroses.

There is a large car park with blue badge bays that serves the park, Chelmsford Sport and Athletic Centre and Chelmsford City Football Club whose facilities border the park at Melbourne Stadium.





Today's Park facilities include:

- Car park (221 spaces including 14 disabled spaces)
- Sports pavilion & Toilets
- Indoor athletics facilities, outdoor track and sports hall
- Chelmsford City football stadium (The stadium has a 3,000 people capacity).
- Football pitches – senior, junior and 5-a-side.
- Tennis courts
- Basketball courts / 5-a-side-courts.
- Sports MUGA
- Woodland – College Wood 4.5 Ha
- Two well-equipped children's play areas
- Baseball diamond and mound
- 3G Artificial Grass Pitch facilities & athletics practice throwing area.
- Hammer throwing cage

## Heritage Value & Significance

### Buildings and Hard Landscape Fabric

#### Buildings and Structures

The park has several buildings and structures that Parks and Green Spaces are required to maintain along with the majority of the infrastructure on site.

Leisure & Heritage Services are responsible for the Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre facilities at Melbourne Park. The Club House for Chelmsford Athletics Club is the responsibility of the club itself, under a lease agreement.

- Sports Pavilions & Changing Rooms and associated toilets
- Parks maintenance buildings
- Car parking
- 3G Pitch artificial grass pitch facilities
- Hammer throwing cage

#### Boundary Treatments and Entrances

The main vehicular entrance to Melbourne Park is via Salerno Way.

There are several pedestrian access points along the site boundary abutting the housing development all with site welcome boards displaying site maps.

## Road and Path Network

Roadways and car parking are all hard-surfaced tarmac finishes. In addition, the site is serviced internally with surfaced tarmac paths.

## Sports in the Park

### Sports Clubs in residence

Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre is located in Melbourne Park which is home to Chelmsford Athletics Club and Chelmsford City Football Club.

### Chelmsford Athletic Club

<http://www.chelmsfordac.org.uk/>

Chelmsford Athletic Club has been an active athletic club since 1934. From having one of the first cinder tracks in the Country, they now have one of the best synthetic track facilities, plus a superb indoor 6 lane centre. The current track was completed in April 1999. Since then the Club has gone from strength to strength.

The Club competes in the following Summer Leagues....

- Southern Women's (Div 1).
- Southern Men's league (Div 1).
- Eastern Young Athlete's league (Div 1).
- Anglian league.
- Veterans - Eastern Veterans Track & Field League.
- and in these Winter Leagues and competitions....
- South of England Road Relays
- Essex League
- National YA Road Relays

### Chelmsford City Football Club

<http://www.chelmsfordcityfc.com/>

The original amateur club originated in the County Town in 1878 with a professional club being formed in 1938. The Club moved to its new home at Chelmsford Sport & Athletic Centre in January 2006 (2005/06 season).

Currently the club plays in the Skriff South league of the Football Conference.

## Chelmsford Sport and Athletic Centre

<http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/csac>

The facility was first badged Melbourne Sports & Athletics Centre and was opened by Sir Trevor Brooking CBE 17 April 1999 on completion of the new synthetic track. The indoor facilities were opened by Sally Gunnell OBE on 28th September 2002.

The now Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre, was officially opened by Sir Geoff Hurst MBE on Saturday 29 April 2006 under its new name following the introduction of a new stand and the arrival of Chelmsford City FC. (Geoff being a childhood resident to the local neighborhood).

### Small individual clubs operating at Melbourne Park

In addition to the more readily identifiable clubs using the park there is a host of other smaller clubs that use the facilities.

Two such clubs are Pope & Smith Sunday League Football & Chelmsford & District Sunday League Football.

## Leisure & Heritage Services – Sports Development

As stated in the section on land use and function mention is made of Indoor athletics facilities, track and sports hall. This aspect of the park is managed by Leisure & Cultural Heritage with the remainder of the site remaining with Parks & Green Spaces to manage.

In addition to managing Chelmsford Sport & Athletic Centre the Sports Development wing of Leisure & Heritage Services encourage sport across the spectrum; both indoor and field sport.

The Sports Development team work with Parks & Green Spaces to ensure people are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle and that the services and facilities at Melbourne Park are well publicised.

Sports Development have their own web site and amongst other things publicise such things as the following. Sporting events; sporting activities; finding a sports club; information for sports clubs; sports coaches & volunteer information and sport for schools.



# 2 Management practices at Melbourne Park

## General objectives

- Maintain the quality, appearance and facilities at both sites to provide a safe and attractive environment for visitors.
- Maintain structures in a safe, clean condition at all times.
- Maintain sports facilities in a sustainable manner.
- Monitor plant establishment and replace plantings as necessary to maintain amenity and ecological objectives.
- Build character and heritage value into the parks.
- Develop new facilities that will attract the non-sports users to identify with and make use of the park facilities.



## Specific objectives

### Water management

There is a water management plan for the park to ensure efficiency and has been drawn up with the help of Energy and Contracts Manager.

The grounds maintenance specification covers several water management issues in the City Parks. These include:

- Spraying equipment to be fitted with guards to prevent spray drift
- The method of application and disposal of surplus pesticides and/or fertilisers does not lead to the pollution of any water course or supply
- Water supply for irrigation etc.
- Use of mulches.
- Watering restricted to early morning, and late in the day within the areas outside of the range of the automatic watering system.

Sports pitches across the site have comprehensive drainage systems to ensure the pitches are free draining. There are main drains running through the sites serviced by sand banding across the pitches.

The Council actively monitors water use and seeks to introduce efficiencies where at all possible particularly in publicly accessible buildings such as sports changing rooms and toilets/washrooms.

Gas and Electric usage are monitored centrally as part of Chelmsford City Council's Energy and Water Management Policy set up to drive efficiencies across the council.

### Tree management

Melbourne Park accommodates woodland dating back to Tudor times Circa 1500's . The tree cover through the park is good and the tree stock is plotted on the Treewise database. There is a good structure planting with plans to plant further trees during the lifetime of this plan through the Greening Chelmsford.

Tree planting in both Parks is undertaken carefully selecting the correct species for the site.

### Grasslands

Different mowing regimes are employed within the sports ground at Melbourne Park taking account of the various playing surfaces. The margins of the site are maintained for the benefit of native flora and fauna with relaxed mowing regimes.

## The Park's Soft and hard landscapes

Landscape appraisals were carried out during the time of preparation of the previous management plan. They identified contemporary design issues and opportunities for further improvement. The key issues that emerged were:

- To ensure that the correct balance of landscape design, horticultural, leisure and development interests are addressed. It is accepted that primarily both parks are sporting venues, but this should not exclude other groups from enjoying the facilities.
- To ensure that developments accords with the strategic context of the Parks design and layout.
- To exploit opportunities afforded by the development of artificial playing surfaces.
- To preserve and enhance existing appropriate leisure facilities.
- To develop children's play facilities in appropriate locations within the site.
- To develop interpretation of Parks.
- To protect, enhance and develop horticulture within the park.
- To protect, enhance and interpret ecology and wildlife within the park.
- To provide quality playing surfaces.

Over the term of the proceeding management plan the following was achieved.

- Provide Welcome signage at main entrances to the park
- Undertake programmed tree planting and enhanced plantings near the 'Garden' area
- Receive Essex Playing Field Award for the high-quality grass pitches
- Provide interpretation boards to promote conservation and biodiversity
- Provide areas for families to picnic in pleasant surroundings
- Provision of 3G Artificial Grass Pitch Facilities
- Hammer throwing cage
- Baseball Diamond and mound





# 3 Sustainable management in the Parks

The management plan and grounds maintenance specifications reflect the Council's policies listed in the Green Spaces Strategic framework document, as they relate to sustainable land management. The specifications and strategies are important as they guide and empower decision making. Robust written policies in the public realm are a real aid when securing adequate budgets – ensuring council policy is implemented.

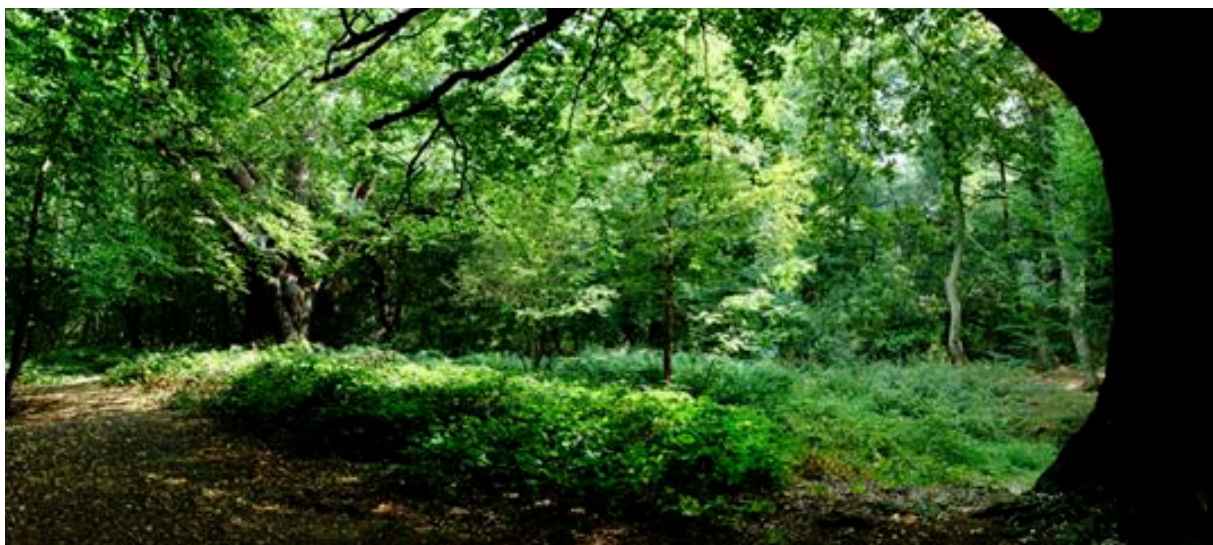
## Composting & green waste recycling

Within the Park there is a frequent production of green waste during the normal day-to-day work within the park. All green waste is disposed of into green waste skips. These are deposited at Sandford Mill where the material is shredded and composted for use as a soil improver or mulch material.

Occasionally proprietary brand compost with a known NPK ratio is used when ornamental shrub beds or other horticultural features are renewed or renovated.

## Recycled materials

A bottle bank and can recycling facility is located on site within the car park area at Melbourne Park. Cardboard packing materials are stored for periodic collection.





# 4 Open to all – The Park user

Primarily Melbourne Park is geared to active sports. To ensure visitors to parks feel safe and secure built into every park management plan are the 'secured by design' principles.

- Natural surveillance, transparency and views in and out of the park are maintained.
- Responsible dog ownership is enforced
- Hiding places and blind spots are minimised.
- Planting does not crowd footpaths.
- Shrubs and hedges are maintained below eye level where practical.
- Lighting is maintained to prevent dark spots.
- Responsible dog walkers are encouraged as they offer natural surveillance in early mornings and in the evenings.
- Fear of crime is reduced.
- Anti social behavior is eliminated.
- Contact with Essex Constabulary and Safer Neighbourhood Teams is maintained.



## Access Target Groups

Three main groups have been highlighted with regard to accessibility, over and above the sports user. The needs of these groups are under continual reassessment and are reflected in the action plan within this document.

### Older People

Older people are an important user group of the park. This group of people use Melbourne Park for informal exercise and relaxation. Organised 'Healthy Walks' from the park, are being considered as it is felt the venue could be included in the Heart & Sole walking programme. Heart & Sole is an initiative set up to address issues raised in the Community Strategy and aims to encourage residents to start taking more exercise. The project uses volunteers to lead the walks on a regular basis for short, pleasant walks for anyone interested in participating. Through the GP referral scheme patients can be referred by their doctor to the scheme.

### Parents and Toddlers

Many Park visitors are parents with young children. Children below a certain age are limited in their capabilities: they are citizens of tomorrow and they should be catered for. It is considered essential for the long-term benefit of the park to foster a sense of pride and affection for the site in the very young. For this reason, a large capital investment has been made to refurbish the play areas within the park using imaginative equipment. Picnicking facilities have also been provided (within a pocket park).

### People with Disabilities

The term 'disabled' covers a wide range of specific needs including ambulant disabled, wheelchair users, hearing impairment, visually impaired and people with learning difficulties. All people with specific needs should be able to enjoy the park to its full potential in a safe environment.

At Melbourne Park the athletics facilities and track host disability sport, and the Football Development Plan for the 3G artificial grass pitch seeks to develop disability soccer.

Melbourne Park has a large hard surfaced car park providing parking for up to 221 cars. As a sports venue the site attracts a lot of visitors and school parties the majority of whom arrive by car/coach.

# 5 Park safety and security

## Staff and our interface with the visiting public

**Parks Services have two members of staff dedicated to the day to day management at Melbourne Park and the nearby Andrews Park.**

The daily inspections of the two parks are undertaken by the parks staff who have responsibilities for the two sites. The inspections incorporate an element of general health and safety review. Damage and faults are recorded, and remedial work actioned. The health and safety of visitors is reviewed via the inspection regime in operation in the Park.

Parks staff can report anti-social behavior to the police and also take details of person's descriptions and car registration numbers.

All staff working within the park wear a uniform carrying the Parks Services logo.



Details of how to contact Parks Services in an emergency are displayed at all park entrances. (Park Watch and Park Services telephone numbers being displayed).

Park Watch, an initiative run by the City Council with Police support operates in all parks. The service operates 24 / 7. People can talk direct to the duty officer or send a text to the number. Each call is logged with the information / contact details remaining confidential.

Park Services operates a lost property procedure, including items found or lost in the park.

Currently the sites are not monitored by CCTV cameras, but this is under review along with other sites.

Strong links have been forged with the Community Police and Traffic police who visit the park frequently, both police officers and PCSO. This can be supplemented by the council's mobile CCTV patrol, as necessary.

## Accidents

Staff, both grounds men and Athletics Centre staff can aid members of the public and can summon emergency services as necessary. There is always an appointed person on site to manage first aid as appropriate whilst fixtures are being played. Standard Chelmsford City Council accident forms are completed wherever possible to record details of reported incidents.

The public can report faults to Park and Green Spaces team by contact numbers advertised in the Park.

## Safety checks of equipment and facilities

The two playgrounds situated in the park are located away from entrance points and access roads. Dogs are excluded from the two areas, being fenced with self-closing gates. An annual audit of the play equipment ensures that it remains compliant with the current British Standard (BS EN 1176) and that the surfaces beneath the equipment are adequate for their use. The main surface in the playgrounds comprise of rubber tiles and wet-pour rubber surfacing.

The playground is checked daily by the park staff during weekdays. This includes a visual check of the equipment and seating for wear, graffiti or damage as well as the cleanliness of the immediate area.

The playground is also subject to safety inspections monthly, by the playground inspectors.

Minor faults are rectified at the time of inspection. Any significant damage is reported to the Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager within two hours of the inspection and dealt with as an urgent item. Damaged and dangerous play equipment is made safe by the inspector

by means of hazard warning tape, flexible fencing and signage during the inspection. The response time for the inspector on a call-out is:

- Summer period (1 April -30 Sept) call before 2.30: Inspector to attend the same day.
- Winter period (1 Oct -31 March) call after 1 pm or summer period (1 April -30 Sept) call after 2.30: Inspector to attend the next day irrespective of whether weekday, weekend or public holiday.

The inspector is not allowed to carry out any work whilst children or members of the public are present.

Playground Inspectors and Maintenance Contractors are required to undertake training relevant to the guidelines laid out in the RoSPA publication 'Assessing Risks in Children's Playgrounds'. The Contractor is also required to hold appropriate and current 'Construction Industry Scheme' certification.

Park Buildings: Safe access checks are undertaken on a four-monthly cycle. Ramps are inspected for algae and other slippery surfaces and pathways for ruts or cracking and that they remain unobstructed by plant growth.

## Chelmsford City Council health and safety policy

Health and Safety Policy as it applies to Melbourne Park emanates from Chelmsford City Council's general policies. Site specific safety issues are covered by Health and Safety documentation and risk assessments as they relate to the site and to the works undertaken therein. The said documents are held electronically and are accessible to managers.

The Green Spaces Strategic framework document contains all the generic information relating to Health and Safety and should be read alongside site maintenance plans.

## Specific health and safety issues within Melbourne Park

The national trend of rising anti-social behaviour affects all parks and spaces of damage do occur on both sites. Any damage generally occurs during the evenings when the park is least used.

The current approach consists of:

- Regular liaison with local police, and Social Services
- Daily inspections seeking to stop damage through actual intervention, education, and as a visual deterrence.
- Banning individuals and groups from the Park for criminal damage
- All new park furniture is assessed for vandal-resistance before purchase
- Spares kept on site for a range of potentially vulnerable features, i.e. benches, locks, bins, signs, etc., for quick replacement

- Toilets are fitted with anti-vandal features
- Graffiti is removed as soon as possible. Site staff are supplied with graffiti wipes. Major problems are referred to a specialist company.
- Where sustained vandalism occurs, extra engineering solutions are used.
- The daily checklist ensures swift identification of damaged features which are dealt with on a rolling list of maintenance repairs

Vandalism and other criminal damage are noted daily through the inspection regime and by staff working on site. Reinstatement works are carried out under instruction. All incidents reported on the Park Watch telephone number are recorded by the duty officer on report forms which is forwarded to the police as and when the situation dictates.

Graffiti is reported immediately to the Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager by the parks staff and once an instruction for removal is issued it is dealt with immediately in accordance with the specification. In areas known to be graffiti hot spots a programme of removal and surface treatments are put in place to deter repetitions of damage.

### **Control of Dogs and Dog Fouling**

Dog fouling is not seen as a significant problem as dog owners who use the site generally do so responsibly recognising that the area is first and foremost dedicated to sports use.

Dog walkers are not permitted to take their dogs into the play areas at either of the parks. Dog-bins are provided at both sites.

### **Control of drug use**

There are incidents of drug abuse in the park and staff are vigilant in removing needles as soon as they are found or reported. Currently the Park staff responds to disposal of needles using equipment supplied by NEEDAS.

Park policy on drugs has evolved in accordance with the Council's Community Plan: crime and safety; the Council's objective being to achieve sustainable crime and disorder reduction by identifying and tackling the causes of crime within the City.



# 6 Community involvement and a venue for active sport

The current management of the Park encourages community involvement. Chelmsford Parks have an active Sports User Group that meet regularly throughout the year. Leisure Services staff engender increased use by the community through sports taster sessions and holiday club activities during school holidays.





# 7 Marketing information

Marketing of the park as a place for people is undertaken through managers liaising with the Corporate Communications Team to ensure that a joined-up marketing strategy is in place that is appropriate to 'place and space'. Marketing involves all our internal partners and includes Arts, Special Events, Sports and Museum Services.

Melbourne Park is perceived by many as a sports park, but it is more than that as it offers important provision of public open space to the resident community.

Communication regarding events and activities at Melbourne Park tends to be on site, for example banners and posters in the notice boards. Marketing to sport organisations is usually direct via the Grounds Operations Team who manage sports pitch bookings and maintenance of the parks. Information is then disseminated through the clubs.

Melbourne Park is well documented on the Council's website with details on pitch bookings and links to the club's websites that operate from the park. People using [www.visitchelmsford.co.uk](http://www.visitchelmsford.co.uk) can also find information relating to the city's parks.





# 8 Management Structures and Maintenance Regimes

## Parks Management structure

The two divisions of City Parks & Green Spaces - Parks Strategy and Development, and Grounds Management, both have an input into the management of the park, with administration support from the business support team.

The Parks Strategy Team provides a design service, management direction, a tree management service, community engagement & involvement along with Service promotion and marketing.

Grounds Management oversees the maintenance activities undertaken at the parks. The parks are staffed through the working day by two full time members of staff who undertake a broad range of maintenance operations. Their work is complemented by mobile gangs who undertake tractor grass cutting and playground inspections. Private tree contractors undertake tree works as directed by the Arboricultural & Conservation officer.

The core objectives of Parks Services can be described in broad terms as helping to make Chelmsford City an attractive and enjoyable place in which to live, work and visit, by;

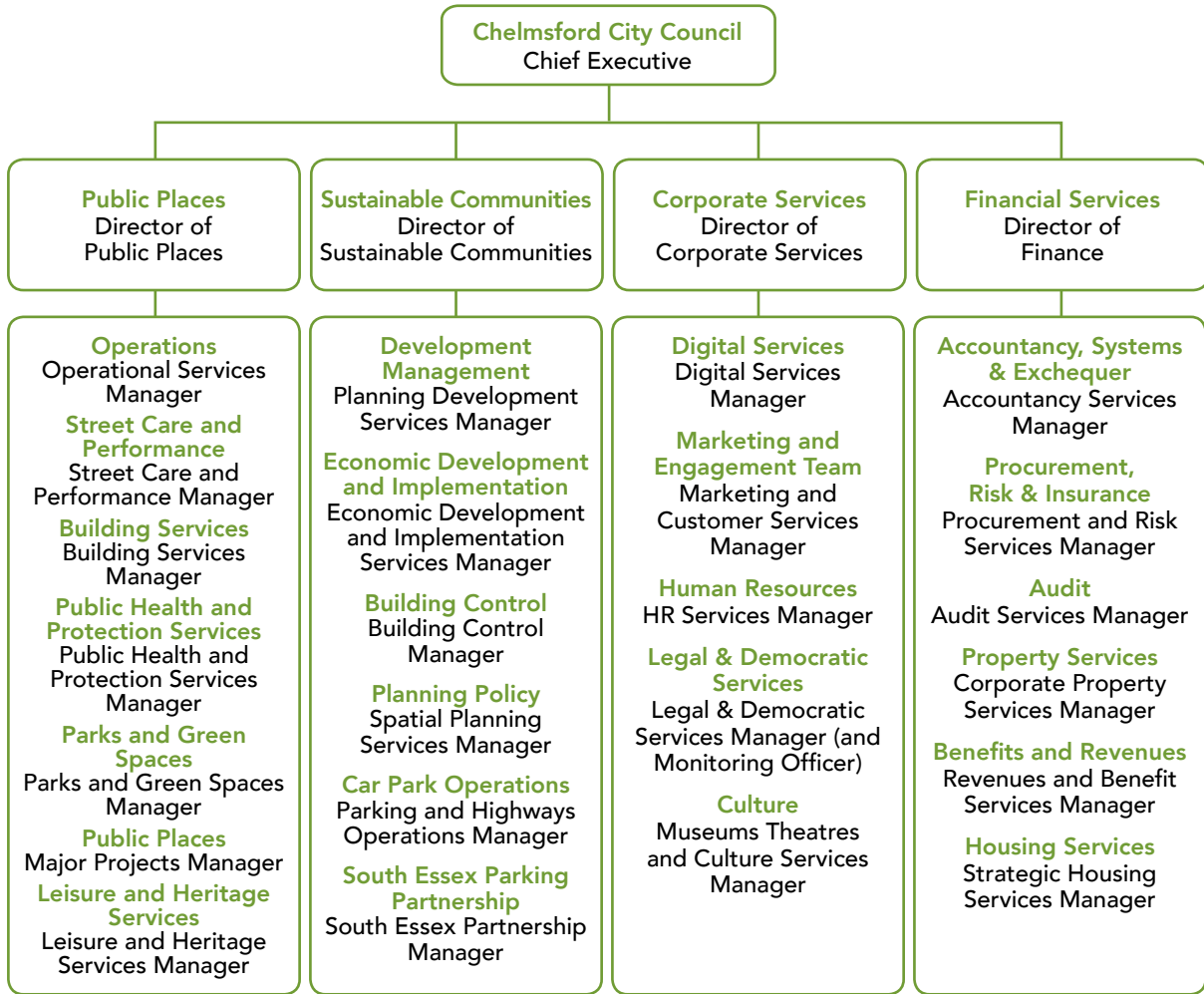
- Developing, supporting and enabling a wide range of sporting, recreational, cultural, social, educational and tourism opportunities which enhance the quality of life, promote healthy, active lifestyles for people in the City and, by stimulating attraction for visitors and by helping to create a positive business environment, bring jobs and investment to the local economy.
- Managing Chelmsford's rich and diverse landscapes, parks and green spaces and promoting polices and activities that enhance and protect Chelmsford's built and natural features plus the surrounding countryside and unique heritage.

## Parks Services staff

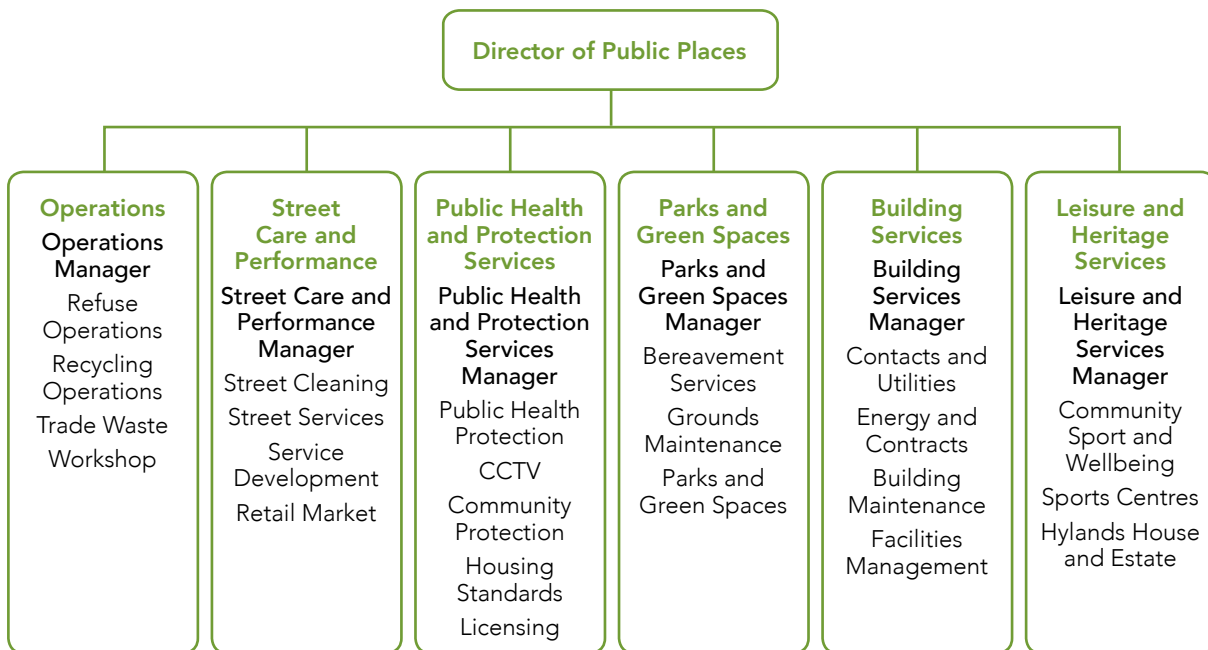
Melbourne Park is managed by Chelmsford City Council (CCC) Parks & Green Spaces Team. Specifically, site maintenance is the responsibility of the Grounds Operations Services Manager, who is supported by two trained operatives who look after the say to day maintenance of both parks.

The Parks & Green Spaces section of the Public Services Directorate deal with all aspects of customer services within the park, to visitor information and welfare, public relations, marketing, promotion, special event planning.

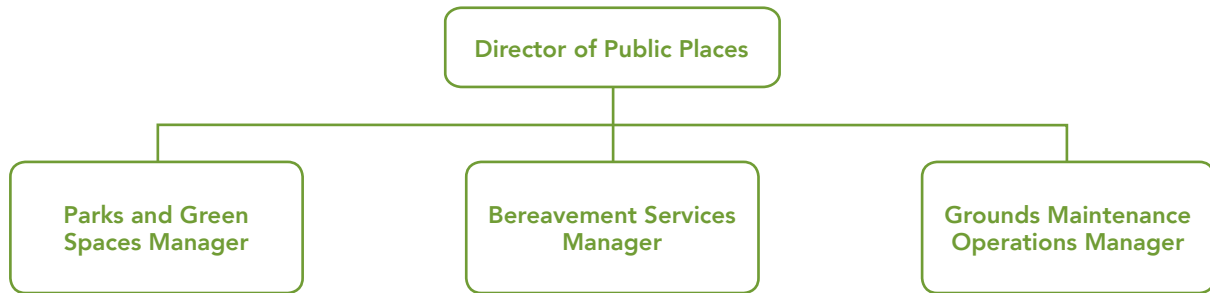
# Chelmsford City Council Corporate Structure



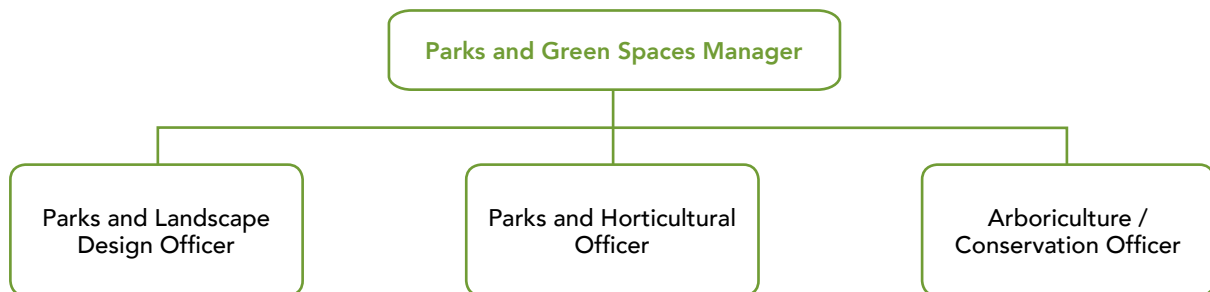
## Public Places Management Structure



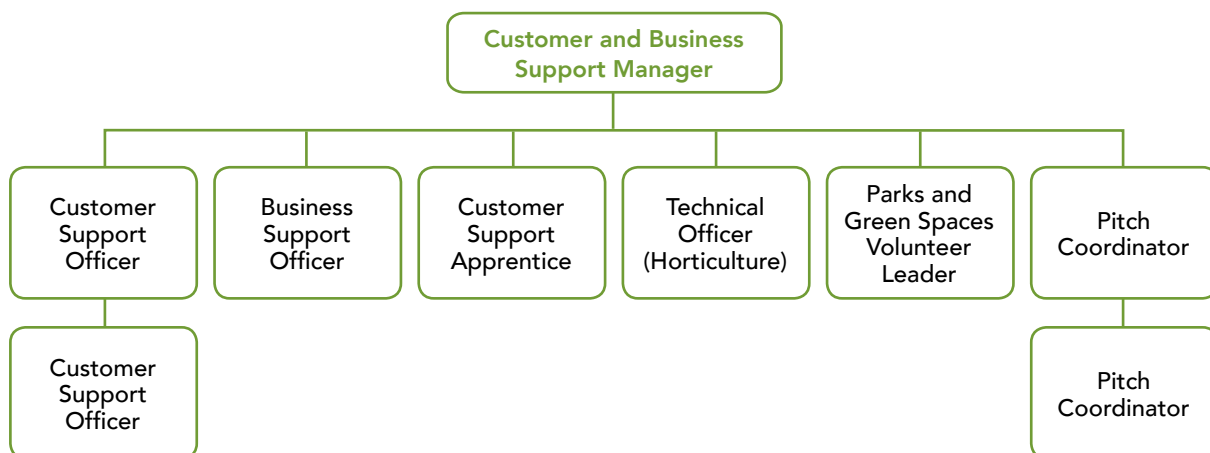
## Public Places Parks and Green Spaces Management Structure



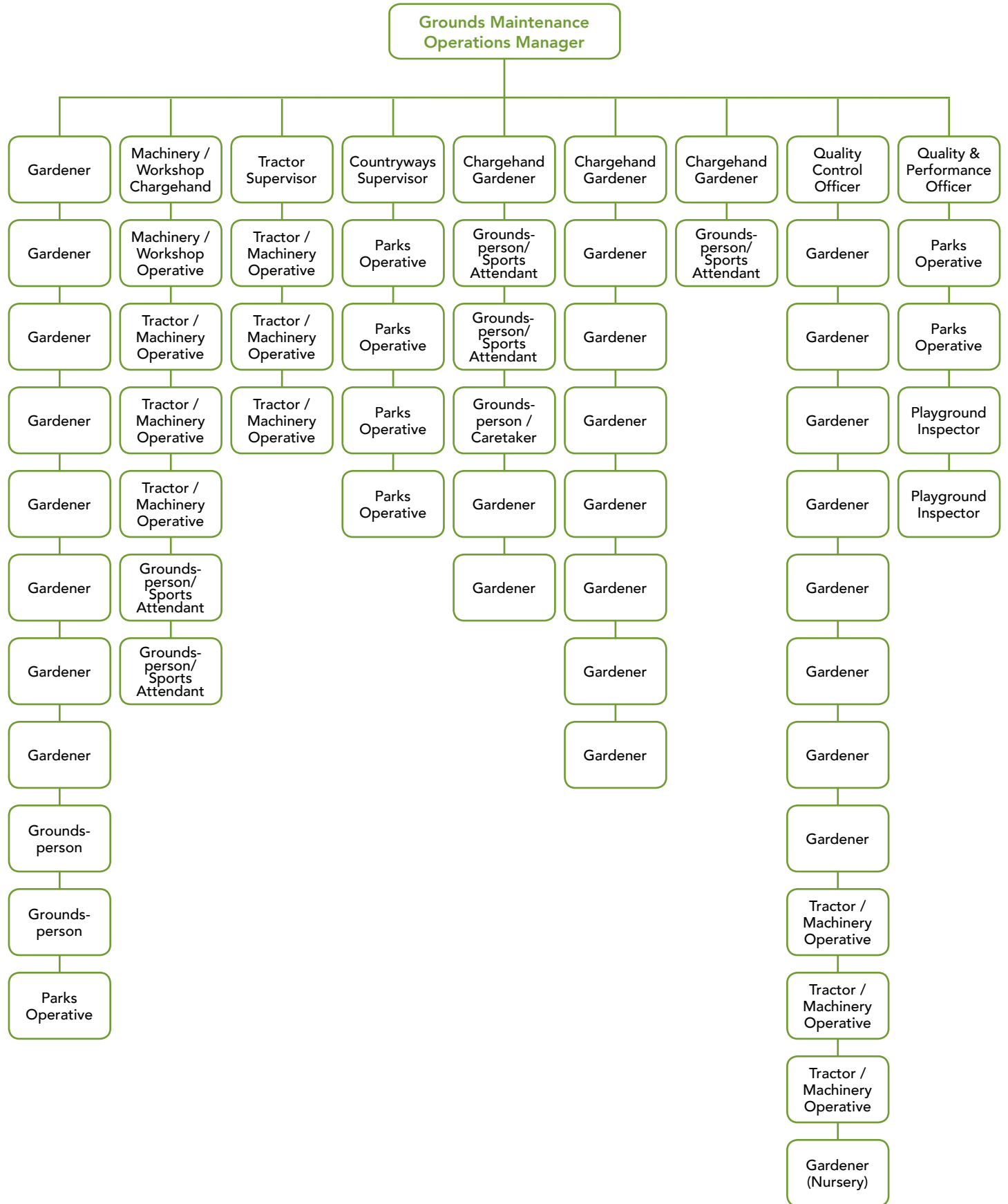
## Parks and Green Spaces Structure



## Parks and Green Spaces Customer Services



# Grounds Maintenance





The Grounds Operations Service undertakes the grounds maintenance work that is required on site. The works specification is based on performance level requirements. It is wide ranging and embraces the comprehensive and continuous routine maintenance of all soft landscape areas (grass, shrub beds, trees, hedges), grass sports pitches, tennis courts and hard landscape including furniture, litter collection and cleaning duties, and locking/ unlocking duties.

### Grounds Maintenance operation

The sports pavilions at both Parks are subject to annual safety audit reports undertaken by Facilities Management. As well as assessing risk, key issues are identified and scores given within the following categories: security, general safety, fire safety, access, and legionella. A list of regular inspection and preventative maintenance is also provided. Any actions necessary are prioritised and acted on accordingly.

The Grounds Management Service Division of Parks and Green Spaces undertake the grounds maintenance at the Parks.

The landscape elements within the parks have been categorised as follows.

Landscape Type	Work Clause in Grounds Maintenance Specification	Minimum expected frequency of operations/year. (Guide only performance specification)
Grass <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amenity</li> <li>• Fine</li> <li>• Natural</li> </ul>	1.7	Min. 15 cuts Min. 25 cuts Min. 1 cuts
Sports turf		As per type
Shrub Beds	1.8	Min. 9 visits
Herbaceous Border	1.8	Min. 9 visits
Paving	11.4	Min 15 occasions
Miscellaneous Detail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedges</li> <li>• Trees</li> <li>• Native species plantation</li> <li>• Site furniture</li> </ul>	11.11 1.9 11.1	Min 2 Occasions Min 3 Occasions Min 9 visits Min 10 Occasions Min 2 Occasions
Landscape Features	11.1	April – Sept min 2 visits Oct – March min 1 visit

The specifics of each landscape type are further defined in the work schedules and related where relevant to computer generated work identification sheets that summarises specific operations, the full details of which are contained within the specification.

## Inspections and monitoring

All services carried out are subject to regular quality inspections by the Parks Quality Performance Officer.

### Grounds

The area supervisors inspect their sites on a weekly basis. The park staff inspect the grounds daily. Grounds Management Services are responsible for monitoring their own performance and keeping up to date records of their own monitoring and inspections, which includes work records relating to their maintenance and work programmes. Routine contract performance meetings are held on a weekly basis where issues relating to work programmes, quality, performance, health and safety, staffing levels and additional work are discussed.

### Play areas

Inspections by the playground inspectors are undertaken on each weekday (excluding Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Eve, New Years Day). The Park staff inspect the area daily. An external consultant, Zurich Insurance, undertakes an annual safety audit of the play equipment.

**The Landscape Management Strategy** for the park contains proposals for the future development work. Its purpose is to provide a guide to the management of the park, considering the objectives for which it exists, and key issues faced now and in the medium and longer term.

The strategy aims and objectives are to:

- Satisfy current and future user needs and guide the development, interpretation and management of the Park.
- Reflect the corporate policies of Chelmsford City Council.
- Preserve, enhance and interpret the historic character and value of the Park in its setting.
- Preserve, enhance and interpret the ecological value of the Park.
- Develop a range of facilities that will improve access for all park users and increase usage.
- Visually enhance the site.
- Conserve water consumption.
- Protect the wildlife interest and value of the site and interpret it where possible.
- Ensure the full and continued involvement of local community and stakeholder groups.
- Establish a programme of surveys and consultation.
- Provide opportunities for hands on volunteering through regular working parties.
- Maintain and foster continued partnership working.

# 9 Landscape improvements (2020-2024) 5-year Action Plan

The five-year Action Plan is set out in the tables in the following pages. The plan sets out a series of targets, which respond to the park issues and reflect the park vision and key objectives.

The action plan is subject to annual review and update by the Parks and Horticultural Officer to ensure a continued programme of park improvement.



## Action Plan for Melbourne Park:

### Long term objectives (within the life of the plan – 4-5 years)

No	Objective	Time frame	Cost implication
Objective 1	Promote the park as a venue for both community and sporting events.	1-5	Within existing budgets
Objective 2	To develop a wide range of partnerships and stakeholders in the park by identifying and bringing them together with a common aim.	1-5	Within existing budgets
Objective 3	To increase the perception of safety amongst park users by empowering park users to become involved.	1-5	Within existing budgets
Objective 4	To increase length of time spent in the park by park users through attractive additional facilities/features	1-5	£15,000
Objective 5	To make biodiversity one of key element of the park, carrying out regular monitoring and ensuring that the maintenance is supportive of bio diversity within sporting constraints.	1-5	£2,000
Objective 6	To work with key partner clubs in delivering objectives of the Football Development Plan	1-5	Within existing budgets and Essex FA support.

Notwithstanding the longer-term development proposals there are several minor improvements and maintenance related strategies (separate to the rolling maintenance programme) that are potentially achievable within current budgets and undertaken in the short to medium term, i.e. within the life of this Plan. The recommendations from a biodiversity enhancement assessment of the Park also form Part of the 5-year landscape improvement plan.

**Medium term objectives (2-3 years)**

No	Objective	Time frame	Cost implication
Objective 1	Provide people counters at key entry points	2	£4,000
Objective 2	To build a consensus on the direction that the park should take by building upon existing forums and through dialogue with stakeholders.	2-3	Within existing budgets
Objective 3	Provide additional seating in response to mystery shopping reports	1	£2,100

Ensure that fear of crime does not deter local community from using the park.

- Work with the sports clubs on site to establish a programme of events particularly targeting young people.
- Seek to ensure the best possible service by continuously reviewing policy and procedures.





# 10 Monitoring and Review

In order to check progress on and update action plans for the parks the following methods are used:

- **Publish achievements** – achievements will be publicised using press releases and the Chelmsford City Council website.
- **Performance indicators** – progress will be checked against recognised performance indicators.
- **Management Plan Review** – Annual reviews of the Management Plan will be undertaken
- **Customer feedback** – information gathered Surveys, records of complaints, advice from Sports User Group and other stakeholders will be analysed
- **Consultation** – results of consultations with stakeholders especially the ‘hard to reach’ will be analysed.
- **Audits and surveys** – Results of DDA audits and other surveys, the Equality Impact Assessment, stakeholder mapping exercises, independent inspections evidence, and independent inspections (e.g. play areas) weekly site inspection forms, will all be assessed.
- **Seek accreditation from independent bodies** – Feedback from judges visiting on behalf of Green Flag Award and the Fields in Trust will be assessed and acted upon.
- **Green Flag Judges Feedback** – The annual application to the Green Flag Award is in itself a quality monitoring tool, providing the motivation for the park to improve each year.
- **Field in Trust** – the outcomes of these awards will mark our standards of provision for outside sports and will help use to benchmark against other Authorities regionally, through the Essex Playing Fields Association.
- **Annual review** – It is emphasised that the management plan is a live tool which is subject to regular review and updating. The action plan is updated annually, with a full review of the management plan taking place at least every five years.
- **Stakeholder involvement** – Stakeholders will be consulted and involved in the management of the park during the life of the Plan, particularly in relation to proposed park improvements, and at the five-year review.

**The case is proven:** Parks and Green Spaces provide benefits across the spectrum; improving physical and mental health, supporting biodiversity, flood and water absorption, improving air quality, mitigating the urban heat island effect, boosting property prices, facilitating business staff retention, encouraging local identity and many other things that local and national governments are trying to achieve.

**Author: Mike Keen**

**Parks & Horticultural Officer: Parks & Green Spaces**







## Do you need an interpreting or translation service?


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