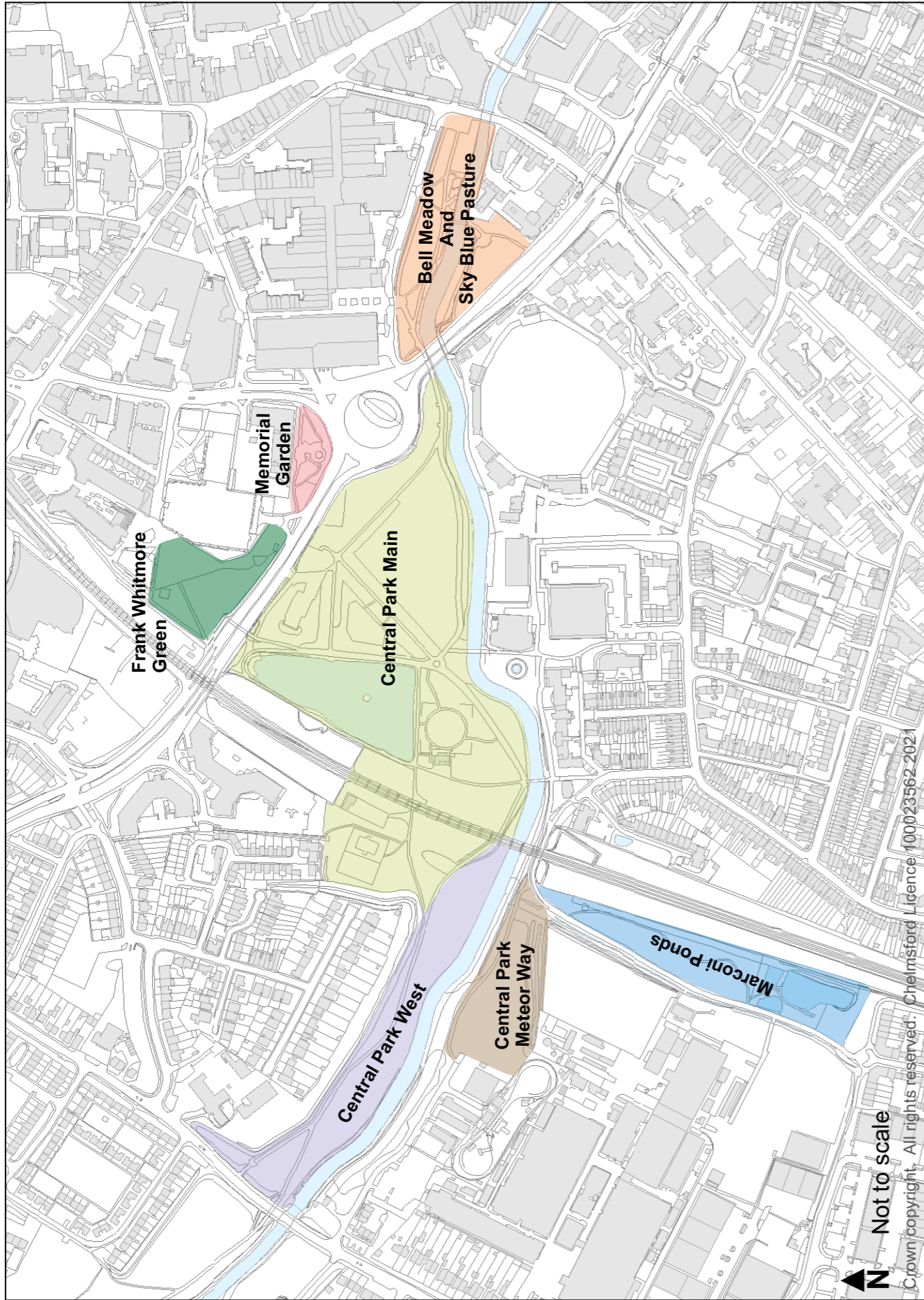


CENTRAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2026

Central Park Management and Maintenance Plan

Protect manage and enhance
green space assets





Foreword

One of the principal aims of the Local Authority is to improve quality of life for its residents. Parks and Green Spaces have a significant part to play in this. Parks support community health and wellbeing, and enhance environmental capacity by helping conserve natural systems, supporting quality of place and importantly, provide diverse opportunities for play, leisure, and recreation.

We also must recognise 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 beneficial legacy for those who come after us.

The 30 hectares of parkland that forms Greater Central Park (Central Park being 14.87 hectares) provides a green oasis in an urban location. It provides the city center's primary green lung as Chelmsford's principal City Centre park and is situated alongside the River Can, having strategic recreational importance and offering many walking and cycling routes. Much of the land remains as parkland and has been little changed in over 100 years. The Park is one of the oldest public parks in Chelmsford.



Guidance in reading the management plan

Management plans at 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 easy reference manual that can be understood by all interested parties. The crafting of plans engenders discussion, and amongst other things seeks to involve the following targeted groups, where appropriate.

- Parks and Sport user groups
- Internal & External partners
- Local Members

City Parks are 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 annual service plans. More details with regards to strategic documents can be found in the policy document entitled Strategic Framework for Parks and Green Spaces.

The complete document together with the appendices has been written primarily as a reference document for Park Management. Each of Chelmsford's main parks are to have such strategic management plans as a guide to managers. The documents are also recognised as having benefit to the following parties:

- The Public
- Parks and Sport user groups
- Internal & External partners
- Local Members
- Professional organisations & Institutions



In 1894 the land was known as Chelmsford Recreation Ground and was open to the public to use on 4th July 1894. It originally consisted of flood meadows and riverside walks. Over time the park has developed into something more than that and is now a well-used public space frequented by numerous visitors; the space has something to offer for every taste.

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 the sites more attractive, well respected, and safe for all.

The site management plan is informed and developed from corporate policy and strategy. For instance, policy areas, such as the access, play, sports pitch, regeneration, inclusion, and biodiversity strategy documents but, equally and seeks to align actions with the Authority's Asset Management plan and corporate delivery strategy.



Cllr Rose Moore
Cabinet Member for Parks
& Green Spaces

Structure of the Plan

The management plan for Central Park can be read as a whole or the reader can choose to follow only the sections of interest to them. To ensure context is not lost it is important to consider the section and how it relates to the whole.

In drafting the document, the Green Flag judging criteria were used as an audit tool with each component as part of the laid-out criteria being considered. This ensures that we are embracing the criteria necessary to deliver a facility that matches the national standard for parks and that we have embraced 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 (Implementation of the management plan).**

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.

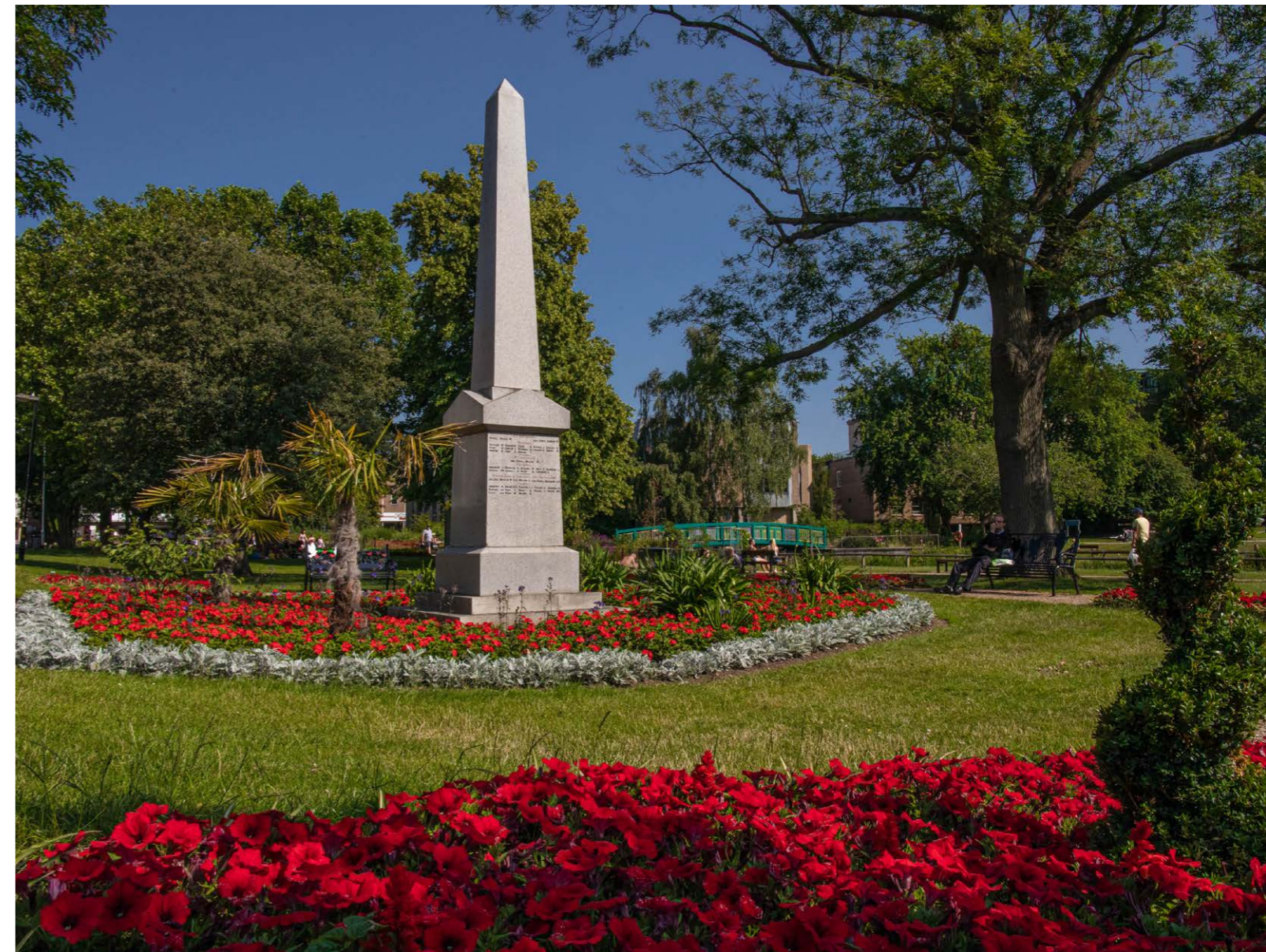


To determine the best way to deliver our corporate objectives, provide strategic direction and develop our business plan, we have considered the drivers and constraints which exist in both our internal and external environments. We have made the following key assumptions in the form of the SWOT analysis table.

Central Park Main Area

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Town Centre location River setting	Parkway has significant noise and visual impact. Railway traffic noise Open access potentially attracts undesirable night-time activity that promotes negative image/fear of crime. Dingy, ill-designed subway beneath Parkway Park is fragmented from the city centre to some extent by creation of Parkway in the 1950's	Destination Park Examine usage and facilities to develop people presence and promote positive feeling of personal safety, involving park users in process. Frank Whitmore Green created in 2020 has improved continuity with a cycle link from the main park, via the subway under Parkway connecting the park to the railway station and also improving connectivity to the city centre with better footways and lighting.	Flood zone with associated restrictions County Cricket Ground & ARU (Anglian Ruskin University) developments- impact and increase pressure of use on park
Excellent central event space. Good play area and skateboard facilities			Misuse at night
Accessible/nearby parking/public transport links. Good site signage and direction boards. Welcoming entrances.		Further develop and enhance unique gateway identities	Budget constraints and need for external funding to realise potential opportunities.
River frontage Good links between Bell Meadow and Skyblue Pasture due to 2020 footbridge	Limited use of river frontage. Existing facilities poor - low bridges restrict river access.	Strong use of river frontage/activities through CCAAP, possibility of opening upriver traffic to park users by promoting pleasure craft and water taxis.	Over intensive use

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic features of lake and traditional path layout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited range of horticulture but some improvements have been made during the previous plan were budgets have allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for excellent external vistas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial and/or residential development Lake of investment in soft landscaping.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good through routes. Café in the park in landscaped setting. Picnic area in landscaped setting.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Room for intimate spaces to make linear park more appealing to visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create more intimate garden spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events space potentially restricts what can be achieved.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the cycle path network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of crime and personal safety perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High end horticulture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network rail own the lake and area immediate north of viaduct, need for consents for works in this area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake/river strong distinct feature to be valued and enhanced. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Park café location to meet stated desire of park users. Boating/ water activities on lake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Ground development proposes restaurant facilities - accessible and affordable to park users or priced at high end diners?



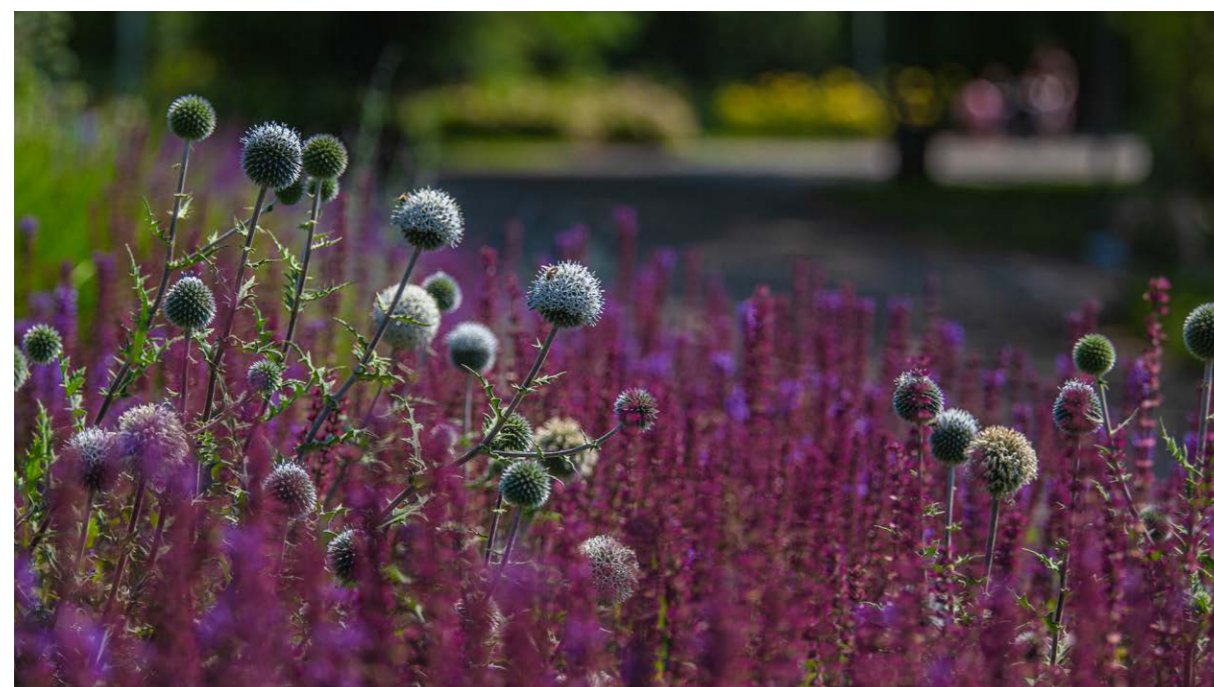
Central Park Memorial Garden

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Pocket Park with seating on a walking route into High Chelmer	Fear of crime and personal safety perceptions	Provide lighting.	Reducing budgets
Adjacent to Parkway / Victoria Road South	Road noise and traffic fumes	Create a green barrier between the park and road.	Reducing budgets



Bell Meadow and Sky-Blue Pasture

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Town Centre location	Severed by roads, noisy.	Create distinct park identity as part of City Centre Area Action Plan. High Chelmer redevelopment.	Over intensive use. Evening mis-use due to night-time economy in Town Centre. High Chelmer redevelopment.
River frontage	River frontage Poor use of river frontage	Bring river vistas/ use into park.	Flood zone.
Popular space for relaxing and taking a break.	24 hr access. Conflict with cyclists and pedestrians.	Create distinct gateways into the area. Improve boundaries to strengthen character of area.	Lack of budget to maintain.
Very accessible – good public transport pedestrian links/ disabled/parking close.		Rationalise landscape improve quality of horticultural features.	
Accessible picnic space	Vermin attracted by litter generated.		
Mature trees/shaded areas	No succession planting coming through. Old and very new only.	Plant new trees for future generations taking care to consider specie choice.	



Central Park – Viaduct to Waterhouse Lane

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Near Town Centre location	Non-distinct identity bland - no unique reasons to linger in area. Flood plain limits possibilities	Create a space that has a happening relates to eco-friendly nature of site.	Flood zone
Excellent through route for pedestrians/cyclists		Naturalistic transition space between Waterhouse Lane and main park	Misuse at night
Mature trees	Succession planting weak.	To improve treescape by considering location and species type for future plantings	Budget to maintain.
River frontage.	River frontage Lack of use of river/ no water activities/ access	Improve use river frontage/ water activities.	
	Through route but poor signage	Develop relevant signage.	
Adi Zone and tennis courts revamped through Olympic legacy funding.	Location not widely known.	Provide better signage. Develop coaching/ holiday activities using Adi zone facility.	





Meteor Way POS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Near Town Centre location	Non-distinct identity bland	Create a space that has a happening relates to eco-friendly nature of site.	Flood zone
Excellent through route and recently installed foot/cycleway link.	No unique feature	Improve signage.	Misuse at night
Mature trees	Through route	To improve treescape by considering location and species type for future plantings	Budget to maintain
River frontage.	Lack of use of river/ no water activities/ access	Improve use river frontage/ water activities.	
Car Park available	Flood plain	Develop small scale events/activities?	Site used as occasional overflow car park.
Local groups/ organisations located in adjacent buildings.	Signage as a route is poor.	Relocation and future use of leased buildings used by Scouts, Young Gen etc?	Relocation and future use of leased buildings used by Scouts, Young Gen etc?

Marconi Ponds

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Near Town Centre location Strong Friends Group involvement	Appears uninviting due to safety fencing.	Create a space that has a happening relates to eco-friendly nature of site.	Budget to maintain.
Excellent through route		Increase community use of site.	Misuse at night/ vandalism
Volunteer run project Excellent support	Limited capacity to expand further as already well supported.	Open days have potential to be expanded for regular educational visits.	
Pocket of nature conservation within town centre location Signage within Central Park now notes Marconi Ponds and is an improvement in making people aware of its presence.	Lesser-known area of park. Mainly used as commuter route to nearby industrial area and to railway station	Create opportunities to linger e. g. picnic space, expand limited fitness trail.	Not maintaining correct balance of visitors in relation to disturbing habitat and wildlife



Overall summary of parkland as a whole entity

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good spread of parkland near to the town centre. • Historical interest • Rich biodiversity • Riverside pathways provide an abundant source of pedestrian / cycle routes, helping to create pleasurable walking circuits free from the disturbance of traffic. • On site staff • Good relationship between Council and Community • High volumes of visitors (Increased visitor numbers due to recession) • Good range of events planned each year. • Green Flag Accredited Park • New Café attracting visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main park lacks city park quality, is severely disrupted by Parkway. The quality of the main entrances to the park have been improved in recent times. • Difficulties associated with establishing a succession of plantings to plan for existing trees nearing maturity. • Capital funding is not guaranteed, or likely for this site. • Section 106 funding will be limited. • Outside funding would be difficult to achieve without initial investment in infrastructure.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 create a network of enhanced extension and new public spaces. • Enhance the visibility of the green network and watercourses through the town centre emphasising the links with the countryside. • Maximise the potential of riverside green spaces as public parkland for recreation, tourism and routes for pedestrians and cyclists. • Improve Park edges to strengthen character. • Improve pedestrian links to West End, high street shopping, and across the entirety of the park. • New footbridge – to cricket ground and across Parkway. • Opportunities for enhancements through developments at adjoining Essex County Council (ECC) and Anglian Ruskin University (ARU) sites • Relocation of the play area • Redevelop skate park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of capital investment may have a long-term affect. • Lack of capital investment in essential infrastructure may result in a missed opportunity to improve service provision. • Pressure on space from existence of high-density development • Squeezing of space to accommodate features related to high density development. E.g., Bridges and 'entrance aprons. • Anti-social behaviour and vandalism • Increased level of customer expectations • Further significant Climate Change impact does not occur within the specified period of this plan (consistent with guidance) we are however mindful of the need to factor in necessary early mitigation plans to ensure long-term sustainability. • Public perception that services do not improve in line with Council Tax increases



Due to the complex nature of the land holding it is deemed imperative that future development of the parkland needs to be guided by the Development Plan and the Historical Survey and Restoration Strategy for Central Park and its immediate environs. (Separate document)

Desktop analysis:

This looked at the level, and quality of written documentation within the authority relating to the management of parks. This includes Corporate Strategy and Policy Documents along with directives from Central Government and elements of English Law as it effects statutory duties.

The plan aims are to consider all the aspects of management that contributes to a good user experience and will look at all the following subjects as objectives:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe, and secure
- Well maintained and clean
- Environmental management
- Biodiversity, landscape, and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing and communication
- Management (Implementation of the management plan).

Site analysis:

A performance monitoring checklist was completed to determine how conditions on the ground compared against the vision, aims and objectives set out in our Central Park

Development Plan and note least against the aspirations of the previous management and maintenance plan.

In addition to the checklist an analysis was carried out to look at the following components each having their own important contribution to make to effective service delivery. In summary these components are listed below.

- Staff – Staffing levels and training
- Machinery (Type and use)
- Improvements to existing facilities
- Analysis of future needs
- Analysis of customer feedback and market research relating specifically to the site.

Budgetary analysis:

Cost of service provision for the parkland to be monitored and reviewed. The 5-year site action plan is costed per item line and planned improvements are undertaken within budget constraints. Some items are being delivered from external sources such as grants and strategic and local contributions from developers using formulae developed with the City Planners.

Methodology for driving change and improvement:

Management plans are seen as the main statement of intent, but it is recognised that there is always room for continual improvement. One or all the following normally drives change:

Political will / legislation, public perceptions and best practice.

To ensure we achieve continuous improvement five basic questions relating to the Service we provide to customers are posed.

1. Assess where we are now.
2. Define our Service priorities within budget constraints.
3. Identify what needs improving.
4. Identify how to improve.
5. Set up a series of actions that will drive continuous improvement.

This plan has been written to span a 5-year period, after which time a full appraisal and review will be undertaken.

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Supporting documents informing the management arrangements of Parks and Green Spaces

- Central Park Development Plan
- Location Plan
- Maintenance Plan
- Biodiversity Management plan

- Community Safety Partnership strategic assessment document
- Green Sustainability Strategy
- Parks Services Child Protection Guidelines
- Inspection Forms
- Accident Forms
- Health & Safety Specification
- Grounds Maintenance Specification
- Parks and Green Spaces strategy
- Park Standards and Maintenance Quality Standard
- DDA Report
- Park Watch
- Access Statement
- Parks Services Internal and External Partners
- Children’s Play Space
- Equalities & Diversity Policy & Action Plan

Parks and Green Spaces are continually reviewing and updating their strategic documents to ensure they are responding to changing needs, complying with the latest legislation, and setting targets in accordance with the Councils priorities and objectives.

Overview of Section Contents

The structure of the Plan is as follows:

Section 1: Introduction & brief history of the site

This section covers the parks in their settings as an asset managed by Chelmsford City Council. The maps and drawings in this section help the reader to envisage the parks setting and location. Reference is also made to the history of the site and the bearing this has on how the site is managed and presented today.

Section 2: Management Context: Strategic & Policy Framework

This covers the corporate policy and strategic framework that guides park management practices and outlook within the Authority. It deals with the Authorities vision and planning



along with giving an overview to the 'why & how' behind the management practices in place.

Chelmsford City Council are continually reviewing and updating their strategic documents to ensure they are responding to changing needs, complying with the latest legislation, and setting targets in accordance with the Performance Service Agreement

Section 3: Corporate responsibilities as they relate to Parks.

This describes the corporate responsibility relating to Health and Safety and other legislation that the Authority has to be mindful of when managing its land holdings.

Section 4: Conservation & heritage in both the natural and the built environment

This section covers the importance of green infrastructure as it relates to urban living and also to interesting, manufactured features and structures within the parks. With the latter some explanation is given to their significance now and also in bygone days.

Section 5: Sustainability and green housekeeping within land management practices

This section of the plan introduces Parks & Green Spaces Environmental Strategy and particularly considers the environmental issues relevant to the 'land manager' (includes issues of climate change, biodiversity, access and urban drainage systems or SUDS).

Section 6: Biodiversity in Chelmsford's Parks

This section sets out our statutory duty as it relates to biodiversity and how we are developing the sites to improve their value as habitats supporting broader ecological networks.

Section 7: The management team and its business partners

This section describes the management structure in place to deliver parks accessible to the whole community. The section also gives a brief overview to some of the Services' key business partners and their role in the successful delivery of the service.

Section 8: Clean and well maintained.

This section outlines both management objectives and operational arrangements set in place to ensure visitors experience a high-level satisfaction in Service and in the facilities provided.

Section 9: The Park Audit: Physical description and the use of the space

This covers the fabric of the park, explaining the 'what' behind the management practice and how this fabric can be, and is used by the visitor:

Section 10: The past, the current & the future. Our vision, aims & objectives.

This covers the elements within the park and includes details of the existing landscape structure. The section also sets out information regarding the future planned management in

terms of both the long-term development proposals and the shorter-term 5-year programme of landscape improvements.

Management issues, objectives and actions are described along with the methods used for monitoring and review purposes.

Section 11: Publicity, marketing & promotion.

This covers aspects on how we identify and engage with residents, workers and visitor who are all potential customers. How we consult with them and respond to their needs.

The section also includes details of how we market and promote Parks Services.



1 Introduction

Introduction & Brief History

The quality of parks and green spaces and the way we care for them, and the environment has a major influence on the image and the perceptions the public have with the Council. Research has shown that is services such as street cleaning, waste collection and the maintenance of parks and green spaces are well regarded then so too is the Council both in reputation and satisfaction levels.

Site information

Site Name	Central Park Chelmsford
Site Status	Designated as public open space.
Total Area of Site	14.87 Hectares (35.6 Acres)
Component areas	Football pitches, Tennis Courts, Café Children’s play areas, Skateboard Park, Chelmsford Model Railway Club, parkland, lake and river, and Marconi Ponds
Surrounding land	Built up residential.
Natural Geology	
Noteworthy features / Key issues	Easements, Public right of way.
Tenure	Majority Freehold. Lake and sections of land either side of the viaduct are leased.
Location	Central Chelmsford, river corridor
Ward	West Chelmsford
District	Chelmsford
County	Essex
Post Code	CM1 OSG
OS grid reference	570,258 206,641
Asset register reference	
Asset value	
Bylaws	Byelaws in force 1875
Opening Hours	The site is not wholly gated, public can access on foot or bicycle at any time.
Use	Urban Parkland providing areas for sports and recreation including areas managed to benefit wildlife.
Essex Police Support	Marconi Beat covers these parks. Emergency 999 Non-emergency 03003334444 Team mobile 07866542442 Via text message 07624800101

1.1 Heritage Value & Significance

The main area of Central Park comprises the area of open space to the north of the river Can running from Waterhouse Lane in the west to Bell Meadow and Chelmsford's retail centre in the east. The main block of Central Park was officially purchased in 1894 and was opened on 4th July in that year. At that time, the park was known by the title of Chelmsford Recreation Ground.

The Recreation Ground was opened as a result of the Public Health Act 1875, which was the driving force behind the creation of many 19th Century parks and gardens. They were developed as somewhere that the "working classes" could go to maintain a good standard of health.

The general landscape in the river corridor has changed little over the course of time. The Park originally consisted of flood meadows and riverside walks. The course of the river (Can) has altered during this time but the riverside walks and links into the town centre are still important today.

Much site information can be gained through studying old maps and post cards of the area. Research at the Essex Records Office has identified that the following items used to exist in the park; a Bandstand; a Nursery; an Oak plantation (some Oaks remain on land next to Anglian Ruskin University ARU); a bathing pond (the current lake); and very elaborate planting schemes.

In 1965 Parkway was constructed and bisected the Park a retrograde step we are seeking to mitigate with better entrance points, including footbridge links when opportunities arise

1.2 Land use & function

The 14.87 hectares (35.6 acres) of parkland comprising of Central Park provide a green oasis in the urban scene. Much of the land remains as parkland and has been little changed in 100 years. Its proximity to the town center and adjacent to the River Can makes it a valuable resource due to the location and connection to the broader open space system in and around Chelmsford.

The history of the land that now comprises Central Park can be traced back through key stages in the town's history, from Roman times. For more than 100 years Central Park (or Chelmsford Recreation Ground as it was formally known) has been a meeting place where people gather, meet, and socialise.

Facilities to be found within the parkland include:

- Public toilets
- Cafe by the Lake
- Football pitches (kick about)
- Tennis courts & multisport AdiZone
- Junior equipped play area (Central Park)

- Toddlers equipped play area. (Sky Blue Pastures)
- Grasslands managed for biodiversity.
- Ornamental Gardens
- Landscaped picnic facility
- River walks and pursuits including river fishing.
- Lit footpaths and cycle ways
- New, improved planting schemes
- Park Lake
- Skate-Park
- Half basketball court – Frank Whitmore Green
- Park furniture such as benches bins and picnic tables
- Marconi Ponds
- Sculpture (Sky Blue Pasture and Central Memorial Gardens)

The mix of facilities provides something for every interest. Where people stop, rest, people-watch, listen, play, be entertained.

1.3 Sport in the Park

AdiZone/Tennis

There is a tennis court in the park alongside a multi-sport Adi zone, both provided with London Olympic Legacy funding on the site of the old, run down tennis courts.

Café by The Lake

The site of the former bowling green had been a well-used feature within the park but nowadays emphasis has been put on other greens within the city, Tower Gardens, Chancellor Park and Lionmede Recreation Ground. The Central Park site fell out of favour when club members were no longer permitted to bring vehicles into the park, or park on adjoining wasteland that has since been developed for residential housing. The area of the old green has now been redeveloped and provides an attractive garden area adjacent to the riverside walk and is serviced by a café and toilet.

Football

Mini pitches are available for use on a turn up and play basis, along with kick about goals in the centre arena area that can be removed when the area has a booked event.

Angling

Angling is a popular activity and is permitted providing anglers behave in a responsible

manner and can produce a rod licence. (Fishing is restricted to the river only and NOT the lake).

1.4 Play in the Park.

The Park boasts a large self-contained formal play area with a good mix of facilities for younger children. In addition to this purposefully equipped play area there are numerous opportunities for play elsewhere through the parks.

1.5 Other activities taking place across the parks.

River pursuits

The River Can passes through Central Park to the town centre and provides a setting for riverside walks and fishing.

Fishing is permitted at points along the riverbank but not in Central Park Lake.

Chelmsford has an active Canoe Club and Sea Cadet Unit who fully use the sections of rivers through the parks.

Healthy living / Healthy walks

Heart & Sole is Chelmsford's FREE health walk programme set up by Chelmsford City Council and Chelmsford Primary Care Trust. It is especially ideal for those who do little exercise and are interested walking, or for those who have or are recovering from illness or surgery. The scheme currently provides eleven safe walking routes based around local parks led by trained volunteers. Each walk lasts approximately 30 minutes.

1.6 Rest and Relaxation in the Parks

The Park is safe and has accessible facilities and a pleasant landscape to enjoy and explore. There is ample seating and picnic facilities for those wishing to stay and while away some free time.

1.7 Events within the Parks

Organised Events: Schools

The Service organises events throughout the year to cater for the needs of schools in many of the parks in Chelmsford, over the life of the plan such events will be arranged in Central Park.

All school events and activities must be booked. All schools are sent a pre-visit guidance note that ensures adequate adult/child supervision ratio is, it explains staff responsibilities and clothing requirements.

Organised Events: Volunteers

There is an active Marconi Ponds Friends Group who work with the City Council to run and organise volunteer sessions and special events on the site.

Organised Events: General

Public events are held in all three parks during the year. Several major events have now become firm favourites with the public and operate routinely each year.



2 Management Context: Strategic & Policy Framework

2.0 Strategic & Policy Framework

2.0.1 Parks & Green Spaces are 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 other published Council plans and strategies.

2.0.2 For these strategies and policies to translate to how this group of parks are managed. The management objectives and outcomes take account of the principal Corporate Objectives:

Park Objectives

1. 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.
2. To work with other organisations and volunteers to deliver clear education, health, sport, and participation opportunities.
3. To protect and enhance the natural park environment for the enjoyment of families, children, and visitors (alongside sports orientated users).
4. To deliver greater value for money through increased income generation
5. To demonstrate organisational excellence

2.0.3 The Local Development Framework records the parks as being within its Green Wedges and therefore sensitive management for the future is assured as the LDF records the aim of ensuring their protection and enhancement for recreation, amenity, and biodiversity.

2.0.4 The Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan (CTCAAP) Adopted in August 2008 provides the statutory planning framework for the town centre covering transport, development, and public spaces.



2.0.5 Chelmsford's PPG17 Open Spaces Assessment (published January 2005) supports the CTCAAP in relation to green spaces. In conjunction with City Planners this document is currently being updated in the form of an Outdoor and Indoor Sports Facilities and Open Space assessment that will inform future planning policy and park management plans.

2.0.6 Our Chelmsford Our Plan 2019

2.0.7 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 on the ground.
- Ensuring resources are best used to help us achieve our agreed objectives.

2.0.8 The Management Plan has a life of five years and will be updated on a regular basis to reflect any changes to the maintenance standards and regimes currently in place.

2.0.9 An informal review will take place internally each year at which time the site action plan will be checked and updated, as necessary. An annual achievements report will be produced detailing site improvements and progress made in delivering agreed actions.

2.1 Strategic Framework – Our aspirations on the National stage

2.1.1 Vision statement: The City of Chelmsford will be at the leading edge for economic, social, and environmental excellence at the heart of Essex, where people choose to live, work, and visit because of the ever-improving quality of life available to all, now and for future generations.

2.1.2 'Our Vision' – Supporting the objectives of the Chelmsford Community Plan

- Maintaining a safe Community
- Improving our local environment
- Meeting local transport needs more efficiently.
- Providing the best opportunities for learning and personal development
- Promoting stable employment and improved prosperity
- Enhancing healthy living
- Promoting culture as a key to our future

2.1.3 Park Services reflect the general ethos of embracing the following core objectives through its management of all parks and green spaces.

- Maintaining a safe Community
- Improving Our Local Environment
- Providing the Best Opportunities for Learning and Personal Development
- Enhancing Healthy Living
- Promoting Culture as a Key to Our Future

2.1.4 All strategy discussions reflect the following key targets:

- To promote economic prosperity and tackle deprivation
- To ensure the quality of life expected of a prestige town.
- To be the cleanest and greenest borough in the country

2.1.5 Parks & Green Spaces Strategy

Service Vision: Parks and Green Spaces belong to local people. They should be safe, accessible, and cherished; managed for the future to achieve an ever-improving quality of life for local people and visitors.

Chelmsford City Council recognises that parks and green spaces make a valuable contribution towards its priorities of economic regeneration and prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental protection. In its urban location, the park provides ideal facilities for sport and play in an environment that is easily accessible and welcoming to all. It is an attractive area of public green space, which consistently maintains exacting standards of cleanliness and horticulture.

- **Social Benefits** – parks have something to offer everyone, from children and teens to the elderly: their presence can also be a cohesive force in a neighbourhood.
- **Economic Benefits** – It is documented that parks have a positive impact on local businesses, raising property values and more.
- **Environmental Benefits** – parks and other types of urban open space can significantly improve air, water, wildlife and more.

2.1.6 Situated within the town envelope the parks are a prominent example of the priority placed on green spaces and green links within the city.

2.1.7 The diverse interest of this green space is also reflected in the varied provision of activities within the parkland and its use as a sporting and community venue aside from being an important transit route for wildlife in a thriving ecosystem of the river corridor. The various groups who use the space and the events staged whether large and small, help achieve better social cohesion, promote equality of access and use, while also adding to the overall appeal of Chelmsford and District.

2.1.8 Central Park provides a good example of the importance given to parks, it has long been recognised that parks help provide publicly assessable open space that goes to make the borough, an attractive and enjoyable place for those who live, work and visit Chelmsford.

2.1.9 The commitment to achieving the Green Flag Award, the national standard for parks also emphasises Chelmsford's aim to be Essex's Capital town and a renowned prestige City, with parks and countryside being considered principal factors in that goal.

2.1.10 It is a documented fact that parks aid physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. For this reason, they are promoted as 'places for people' and figure highly in achieving targets set in the Corporate Plan.

3 Corporate responsibilities and statutory duties as they relate to Parks

3.0 Corporate Health and Safety Policy; Health, Safety and Welfare

3.0.1 The core objectives and responsibilities for health, safety and welfare management are set out in the Council's overall 'Health, Safety and Welfare Policy Statement.'

Health and Safety Policy as it applies to Central Park emanates from Chelmsford City Council's general policies. Site specific safety issues are covered by Health and Safety documentation compiled by Grounds Management Services, the operational side of the Service. The Service has in place up to date health, safety, and welfare arrangements relevant to their area of work, [including safe working practices, method statements, risk assessments, permits to work, accident procedures and the like], to ensure that the health, safety, and welfare of employees is protected and maintained.

3.0.2 Chelmsford City Council Corporate Health and Safety Policy commit the Council to ensuring that it carries out its undertakings in such a way that it is not harmful to the health and safety of its employees, contractors, or the members of the public.

3.0.3 The Corporate policy gives an umbrella framework for identification and assessment of health and safety issues and procedures to minimise risk. This policy and the accompanying health and safety plan are subject to regular review.

3.0.4 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for all core health, safety and welfare policies and procedures. All Heads of Service are responsible for producing policy regarding the Health, Safety and Welfare In their Groups, along with the implementation of a 'Code of Safe Working Practices', i.e., arrangements for the provision of safe systems of work, safe places of work, environmental control, hazard reporting, risk assessment, first aid and emergency procedures. Workplace hazards are identified, and risks assessed in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992; risk assessments and safe working procedures are reviewed annually.

3.0.5 Emphasis is placed on individual responsibility for personal safety and the safety of others affected by what they do or fail to do. Employees also have a statutory duty to report hazards. The responsibilities of individuals, supervisory staff and managers are clearly set out and effectively communicated so that people understand and



are accountable for their own contribution to working in a safe manner and for achieving good standards of welfare.

3.0.6 All contractors and suppliers of goods and services are to comply with current statutory and corporate health and safety standards and requirements.

3.0.7 The Corporate Health and Safety Plan sets out performance standards, targets, and goals (including those for training) and responsibilities. Its purpose is defined as:

- To set out the standard of health and safety management
- To identify the health and safety training needs of its workforce
- To control the risks to the Council's assets.
- To ensure the control of contractors
- To safeguard the health and safety of the public

3.0.8 Parks Services Group policy: Health, Safety and Welfare. This is a specific document held in a suit of Policies relating to specific Directorates.

The Group policy includes information on the following topics.

- Parks Services Child Protection Guidelines
- Manual Staff Health and Safety Guidance and instruction
- Health and Safety statements incorporated into the ground's maintenance

operations.

- Grounds Management Services Health and Safety Handbook
- Health and Safety Training
- Health and Safety File
- The Risk Assessment File
- Accidents
- Contractors working in parks premises for events.
- Contracted cleaning services – Toilets
- Safety of play equipment and sports facilities

Adequate resources are allocated to ensure that health; safety and welfare issues can be effectively managed and balanced.

Appropriate training, instruction and development is provided to ensure an acceptable level of competency to undertake the necessary duties and tasks expected.

Regular reviews and monitoring take place, including the periodic checking and audit of management systems and procedures, the review of any accidents and dangerous occurrences and the production of any necessary performance reports so that learning opportunities are identified and appropriate adjustments to systems and practices can take place to further improve standards of health, safety, and welfare.

A health and safety plan is produced annually that highlights particular actions or targets to be achieved during a given period to improve the management and implementation of health, safety, and welfare at work.

3.1 Biodiversity Duty

3.1.1 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st October 2006. Section 40 of the Act requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

3.1.2 This duty extends to all public bodies the biodiversity duty of section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), which placed a duty on Government and Ministers.

3.1.3 The aim of the biodiversity duty is to raise the profile of biodiversity in England and Wales, so that the conservation of biodiversity becomes properly embedded in all relevant policies and decisions made by public authorities.

3.2 Equalities & Diversity

Equality & Diversity – Parks for All

The Council is delivering its equality agenda by following a national framework called the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The Improvement and Development Agency has put in place an Equality Framework for Local Government designed to help councils meet their equality and diversity duties and obligations. This incorporates the three core strands previously associated with the 'equality standard,' [Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Race Equality Scheme]. The framework adopts the wider definition of equality set out in the 'Equalities Review,' embracing the idea of 'equal life chances,' with ten so-called 'dimensions of equality' identified.

The framework identifies five areas of performance as follows:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping – being able to identify how communities are changing – equality outcomes are reviewed and regularly evaluated – beyond monitoring, effectively using information.
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment – a coherent vision of equality is shared and owned by the Council, its partners and local community.
- Community engagement and satisfaction – all sections of the community are satisfied that the Council and its partners have taken their views into account.
- Responsive services and customer care – being able to show improving satisfaction with services from all sections of the community.
- A modern and diverse workforce – services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who can meet the diverse needs of local communities.

By following the Equality Standard, Chelmsford City Council delivers its services within current equalities legislation. The Council draws on information supplied by the Equal Opportunities Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission.

Particular emphasis is placed on applying the requirements of:

- **The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000** which imposes a statutory duty on the Council to promote race equality by eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and promoting good relations between people from different ethnic groups.
- **The Equality Act 2010** makes it unlawful for there to be barriers to a disabled person being able to access a service. Placing a legal duty on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to the physical environment to ensure that people with disabilities can access their facilities.

Equality issues are high on the agenda, and it is our intent that Parks should be for everyone.

A report was commissioned in 2008, entitled Equalities & Diversity – minority groups. The purpose of the report was to determine what barriers peoples in such groupings faced in accessing and using the town’s parks. Reassuringly the report showed that there were no real barriers.

All sports clubs that make bookings for use of pitches are required to sign and adhere to the borough’s Anti-Racism in Sport Charter. The Service encourages events that celebrate ethnic diversity and racial harmony.

Equality Impact Assessment Chelmsford City Council has committed its services to assessing whether there is any evidence or reason to believe that some groups, based on their gender, marital status, age, religion, ethnic origin, race, sexuality, sexual orientation, disability, or any other factor upon which discrimination could be based could be affected differently by any service or policy. Services have Equality & Diversity Champions whose job it is to vet all new policies and procedures to access if they are compliant with the spirit of the legislation.

3.3 Race Relations Act 2000

It is unlawful for a public authority in carrying out any functions of the authority to do any act which constitutes discrimination. Chelmsford’s Parks are managed in such a way that no part of the community is disadvantaged and that every law-abiding citizen is welcome .

3.4 Weeds Act 1959

Under the Weeds Act 1959 the Secretary of State may serve an enforcement notice on the occupier of land on which injurious weeds are growing, requiring the occupier to take action to prevent the spread of injurious weeds. The Weeds Act specifies five injurious weeds: Common Ragwort, Spear Thistle, Creeping of Field Thistle, Broad Leaved Dock and Curled Dock.

3.5 Duty of care to adjacent land holders

As land managers we do have a duty of care to park users and to residents living near our parks.

- Amongst other things we have various work teams responsible for such things as.
- Noise abatement – this aspect of management falls within the remit of Safer Communities; Environmental Services
- Trees – trees in parks are dealt with by Public Places, Parks & Green Spaces
- Litter – Litter in parks is dealt with by Public Places, Parks & Green Spaces
- Vermin inc wasps etc in parks are dealt with through Safer Communities, Environmental Services.

- Stray dogs and dogs related issues are dealt with through Safer Communities, Environmental Services.
- Removal of fly tipping and graffiti this area of service rests with Public Places Street Care.

3.6 Tree Inspections

Under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 (1997) The Council has a duty of care to ensure wherever reasonable the trees under its management do not cause a threat to people or property. The Council fulfils this duty through regular inspection of the tree stock.

The Council only employs suitably qualified and experienced staff. to inspect and carry out management of trees under it care.

3.7 The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM)

Everyone controlling site work has health and safety responsibilities. Checking that working conditions are healthy and safe before work begins, and ensuring that the proposed work is not going to put others at risk, requires planning and organisation. This applies whatever the size of the site.

3.8 All Data Protection

All organisations that handle personal information must conform to the eight principles of the **Data Protection Act**.

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless –
 - (a) at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met, and
 - (b) in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is also met.
2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer

than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.

6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

3.9 Human Rights and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

Management needs to be mindful of the act in setting up any surveillance equipment recording images or speech. Advice should be obtained from the Public Protection Manager.

3.10 UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights. The UK signed the Convention on 19 April 1990, ratified it on 16 December 1991 and it came into force in the UK on 15 January 1992.

The Convention gives children and young people over 40 substantive rights. These include the right to:

- special protection measures and assistance
- access to services such as education and health care
- develop their personalities, abilities, and talents to the fullest potential.
- grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding.
- be informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner.

All the rights in the Convention apply to all children and young people without discrimination.

Criminal Records Bureau CRB checks are undertaken on staff and volunteers working with children in the town's parks.

3.11 International (European) Standards for the design, installation, and maintenance of children's fixed play equipment

All new outdoor play equipment must be designed, constructed, installed, and maintained in accordance with European standards BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177.

These European standards are not retrospective or a legal requirement but represent good practice in the event of an accident claim. Play equipment which was considered safe under BS 5696 will still be safe under the new standards.

3.12 Local Government Acts 1972, 1999 and 2000

The Acts gives local authorities powers to take any steps which they consider are likely to promote the well-being of their area or their inhabitants. It also places authorities under a duty to develop community strategies, together with other local bodies, for this purpose. These provisions are intended to give local authorities increased opportunities to improve the quality of life of their local communities.

3.13 Local Government and Rating Act 1997

An Act to make further provision about non-domestic rating; to make further provision about parishes and parish councils; to confer additional powers on parish councils and community councils; and for connected purposes.

The Local Government and Rating Act 1997 allows a community at the village, neighborhoods, town or similar level beneath a district or borough council to demand its own elected parish or town council. This right only applies to communities within England and outside of Greater London.

3.14 Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 / Clean Neighborhoods and Environment Act 2005

The **Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996** is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The purpose of the Act was to create a criminal offence if a dog defecates at any time on designated land and a person who is in charge of the dog at that time fails to remove the faeces from the land forthwith.

It was repealed by Clean Neighborhoods and Environment Act 2005 section 65, and replaced by similar legislation in the same act. The Act applied only in England and Wales.

3.15 Environmental Protection Act 1990

The **Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA)** is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that as of 2008 defines, within England and Wales and Scotland, the fundamental structure and authority for waste management and control of emissions into the environment.

3.16 Litter Act 1983

The Act to consolidate the Litter Acts 1958 and 1971, together with section 51 of the Public Health Act 1961, section 4 of the Local Government (Development and Finance)(Scotland) Act 1964 and section 24 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and related provisions of those Acts.

The Act allows remedies to the littering of public land.

3.17 Public Health Acts 1848 – 1875

The Public Health Acts passed by Parliament in 1848, 1872, and 1875 to deal with Squalor and disease and to establish a code of sanitary law.

The first act set up a Central Board of Health, which in turn imposed local boards of health in districts where the death rate was above the national average; other local boards of health could be established by petition. The local boards oversaw street cleaning, refuse collection, water supplies, and sewerage. Street paving and slum clearance began during the same period. Under the 1872 act every local authority had to appoint a medical officer of health. The 1875 act consolidated previous acts and provided a comprehensive code for public health.

3.18 Open Spaces Act 1906

Section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875 and section 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 enable local authorities to make byelaws for the regulation of public walks and pleasure grounds and of open spaces and burial grounds respectively.

Maintenance of open spaces and burial grounds by local authority.

A local authority who have acquired any estate or interest in or control over any open space or burial ground under this Act shall, subject to any conditions under which the estate, interest, or control was so acquired s—

(a) hold and administer the open space or burial ground in trust to allow, and with a view to, the enjoyment thereof by the public as an open space within the meaning of this Act and under proper control and regulation and for no other purpose: and

(b) maintain and keep the open space or burial ground in a good and decent state and may enclose it or keep it enclosed with proper railings and gates, and may drain, level, lay out, turf, plant, ornament, light, provide with seats, and otherwise improve it, and do all such works and things and employ such officers and servants as may be requisite for the purposes aforesaid or any of them.

3.19 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (c.37) is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The act was published on 2 December 1997 and received Royal Assent in July 1998. Its key areas were the introduction of Anti-Social Behavior Orders, Sex Offender Orders, Parenting

Orders, granting local authorities more responsibilities with regards to strategies for reducing crime and disorder, and the introduction law specific to 'racially aggravated' offences. The Act also abolished the rebuttable presumption that a child is doli incapax (the presumption that a person between ten and fourteen years of age is incapable of committing an offence) and formally abolished the death penalty for treason and piracy.

Designated Public Place Order(s) section 13 (2) criminal Justice and Police Act 2001

The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (CJPA) gave local authorities the power to designate public areas through the introduction of a DPPO where it is an offence to drink alcohol after being required by a police officer not to do so. The police have the power to require individuals to surrender the alcohol and any opened or sealed containers, and if they fail to comply with the request, they can be arrested. The powers – which replaced the old drinking byelaws - were introduced to help the police deal with the problems of anti-social drinking in the public space. DPPOs make it easier for local authorities to designate places where restrictions on public drinking will apply and can be used in areas that have experienced alcohol-related disorder or nuisance.

4 Conservation in both the natural & built environment

4.0 Green Infrastructure - Conservation of nature features, wild flora & fauna, and heritage of the natural environment

4.0.1 Most people recognise the value of open space, but what about the services which wildlife, trees and water courses deliver?

Here in Chelmsford, we believe in the proper investment in green infrastructure. It is heartening to see that this idea is moving to the forefront of strategies and planning across regional and local government.



The following sites contribute in the ways indicated.

Marconi Ponds – Local Nature Reserve with active Friends Group.

Central Park Main – Sensitive management of trees hedges and water bodies.

Frank Whitmore Green – Sensitive management of trees and grassland.

Memorial Garden – Sensitive management of trees and under planting.

Bell Meadow & Sky Blue Pasture – Sensitive management of trees and river margins.

4.0.2 Green infrastructure is the strategic integration of functional natural systems within and around urban areas. It enhances the quality of life of those who live and work there. It is critical to sustainable economic prosperity, and to create a positive sense of place and provide environmental protection for local communities.

For economic regeneration – to produce more attractive business locations; cut environmental risks such as flood damage; generate new commercial activity.

For planning – to help deliver on sustainable development and housing targets and maximize return on investment in public space.

For public health – to create better environments and healthier communities with less mental and physical illness such as respiratory problems, heart disease and obesity.

For development – to reduce infrastructure costs, and to generate increased rental incomes and stronger marketability.

For community cohesion – to increase social interaction and reduce aggressive behaviors.

For sustainable ecosystem services – the sites have value as part of the flood defenses for the town.

4.03 Within parks management plans it is necessary that appropriate management is achieved by considering topography, climate, and existing and proposed land uses. Wherever possible we look to enhance the wildlife value by adopting the best management regimes. The site can be promoted as a resource to the visiting public and to school groups who are encouraged to use parks as green classrooms.

4.0.4 The land composition of Central Park comprises of some 14.87 hectares (35.6 acres) of parkland located in an urban setting.

Past management – from information contained in the historical survey the land mass has remained by and large as grassland and water meadow with little development for something in excess of 100 years.

The importance of conserving the water meadow / grassland is fully realised and

indeed over the course of the life of this plan designated areas of the park will be registered as Local Nature Reserve.

For most of the past few of years areas of grassland within the eastern part of Central Park have been managed using an annual 'hay' cut (cut and clear). This is beginning to have a positive effect on the range of flowering plants that are occurring in the areas.

4.1 Evaluation of Nature Conservation

Flora, mammals, birds, reptiles & amphibians, and invertebrates

Most of the parkland has been managed as amenity grassland since the 1950's and therefore it is important to realise that any positive improvements will take time to be achieved. Certainly, it will take time to re-establish species that would have been familiar to the Victorians.

Within the Park matrix it is important to consider the component parts that make up the whole.

Taking the parkland as a whole the actions of this plan intend to further establish wildlife corridors to help nature adapt and thrive in the face of climate change. Over the life of the plan

- Sanctuaries
- Conservation grassland areas
- Wildlife corridors & grassland refuge areas

Nature Conservation activities/issues to be considered and developed will include the following.

- Planting and coppicing of trees and shrubs
- Breeding seasons
- The retention of decaying wood habitat (lying and standing),
- Leaf clearance
- Grass cutting regimes.
- Bat monitoring
- Water body management
- Tree management

Marconi Ponds 'A rural retreat in Central Chelmsford' <https://www.marconiponds.co.uk>

The nature reserve has been known as The Marconi Ponds ever since Marconi Radar left the site in 1994.

The Early History of the Site

To appreciate the early history of the site it is necessary to imagine it without the massive railway embankment that now dominates its eastern flank and without The Village housing estate or the E2V works on its other borders, between Writtle Road and Waterhouse Lane. On the Chapman and Andre map of 1777 (Our earliest map of the site that shows any useful detail), it is just an area of farmland and orchards.

The site remained undeveloped until the railway came to Chelmsford at the beginning of the 19th Century. Until then the whole area, of pasture and orchards, was owned by the Mildmay Estate. Then, in 1838, the Mildmay family sold a strip of it to the Eastern Railway Company. The Chelmsford Tithe Map of 1843 shows the area known as Further Field and Gold (or Golden) Field bisected by the railway strip but, as pastureland, let out by Lady Mildmay to one George Simpson.

The Industrialisation of the Site.

Clay Pits and Brickfields. It was not until after the coming of the railway and the building of the embankment to carry it across the River Can and into Chelmsford, during the second half of the 19th. Century that land on either side of the railway was developed industrially.

It is sometimes thought that the pits that became the ponds were created when spoil was moved to make the railway embankment. Although this was the case for the lake in Central Park, on the north side of the River Can, the spoil for the embankment alongside the Marconi Ponds site came from the cutting running into Widford and from the Galleywood Common area.

Industrial development came in the mid Nineteenth Century when brick works were established on the east side of the railway embankment, in the Upper Bridge Road area. These were served by clay pits on what is now the wildlife site. It has been suggested that these brick works were developed to provide bricks for the railway viaducts that carry the rails through Chelmsford and over its rivers, but the clay workings and brick fields were not started until after the viaducts had been built.

The first reference to a brick field around the Upper Bridge Road area is in 1843, in the Tithe Record for that year. Records of various companies and individuals engaged in the brick business continue up to the end of the century and for a few years beyond. For example, the Anchor Brick Company from 1878 to 1886 and one James Brown from 1874 to 1902. However, the clay pits and brick kilns have left a distinctive mark on the history of Chelmsford. A vein of grey clay was discovered which produced the easily recognised light coloured bricks that are known as, Mildmay Bricks. They are evident in buildings all over the town. An advertisement in the local press, in 1855, mentions a royalty on white bricks and tiles produced in the Upper Bridge Road brickworks.

Modern Industry. What is now the wildlife site is only part of the land that had been occupied by the Crompton Arc Works. The works site was bounded by Writtle Road, Crompton Road, the railway embankment and the present E2V site. Apart from the ponds themselves, none of the industrial owners made any significant use of the strip of land that makes up the wildlife area.

Industrial building began on the site in 1896, when Crompton and Company purchased it and constructed the building that now stands along Writtle Road, between Crompton Street and the Parkinson Drive roundabout leading into the Village. The company was expanding from its Moulsham Street / Anchor Street location. Its founder, Colonel Crompton, was a self-sufficiency enthusiast and planned to make this new industrial complex independent for water and sewerage services. An artesian well was established near the new building in Writtle Road, providing potable water. The waste or surplus flowed into tanks and ponds that supplied cooling water for industrial plant and flushing water for lavatories. All the water finished piped to filter beds the two pieces of water that we now know as The Marconi Ponds. From there some of it was pumped back as required to top up the tanks on the industrial site. The ponds ceased being used as filter beds, by 1959 and, around 1969, the industrial site was connected to mains water.

The Site in War Time.

During the war the site was used as an allotment site feeding into the Dig for Victory output of the allotments that had been established in the Nineteen Twenties.

Establishment of the Wildlife Site.

After Marconi left the works site, in 1994, it was sold to Fairview Homes, plc. for development as a major new residential area, which we now know as The Village. Under Town and Country Planning legislation permission for such a development usually has conditions attached, including money for community benefit, which is known as a Section 106 Agreement. In the case of The Village, the Planning Agreement involved handing over to Chelmsford Borough Council the strip of land that makes up the wildlife site, plus £80,000 Section 106 money that was to be used to develop the site with community involvement. (Except for using the ponds as filter beds or sinks and installing a pumping facility, neither Crompton's nor Marconi had used the site beyond what is now the fenced area). It was left largely as wilderness, right down to where the embankment becomes the viaduct. There had been an area of allotments on the south side of the ponds, but these were moved to the north side when Marconi Radar extended an adjacent building, known as E Block. It is also known that the ponds were regularly fished until the stocks were destroyed, when the ponds dried out during the summer drought of 2006.)

In 1994 the Borough Council Parks Service fenced the area immediately around the ponds for safety purposes. There was also a growing safety issue over pits that were being dug and left on the site by bottle collectors exploiting the parts that had been a 19th. Century rubbish dump. The difficulties were overcome by an original but effective approach by the Borough Council, they asked the Essex Bottle Diggers Society to clear the area officially, with help from a CBC mechanical digger. This put a stop to piecemeal activities that had left the dangerous pits. It also satisfied the bottle collecting enthusiasts.

The Partnership appointed a Project Manager and continued to employ the consultant who had produced the development plan for the Borough Council. Within a noticeably short time, in 2007, a Friends Group had been set up, with management and administrative

support provided by the Partnership; the professional support that is vital for such community involvement to succeed.

Central Park Meteor Way

Active management has begun also within the willow wood and around the backwater pond

Meteor Way Public Open Space has been used for weekday overflow cricket match parking. Essex County Cricket Club has a licence with the Council permitting them to use the site for Club members parking on weekday match days on 28 days throughout the year. (£5,700 income to CCC from the agreement).

The gates which are on the A414 entrance to Hylands Park are the original entrance gates from Central Park.

Frank Whitmore Green

The land was leased to the former Corporation of Chelmsford on 25th October 1893, to be used as a recreation ground. The term commenced on the 29th of September 1893, for 21 years. The Corporation then acquired the freehold in 1901 (for £2700), for the purpose of public walks and pleasure grounds. The land was part of a larger site (7 acres) extending southwards to the river. The north area of the land was formally orchard/plantation of oak trees. (Records show the oak plantation being in existence in 1874 – a number of these are still in existence, whilst the remainder prior to coming into public ownership was described as pastureland). It was then formally known as Wallingers.

To this day the land is held as public open space (public walks and pleasure grounds under the Public Health Act 1875). However, it is currently under partial redevelopment with new housing and retail units under construction on the adjoining former university campus site. This will result in new pedestrian and cycle access routes right through to the railway station and Ann Knight building (former Quaker meeting house).

Memorial Garden adjacent to Parkway/Victoria Road South

The current Memorial Garden was laid out in the 1960's and received a major refurbishment in 1997, being officially opened on 11 September 1998 by Councillor William Lane Mayor of Chelmsford to mark the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth 11 and the Duke of Edinburgh.

The refurbishment was funded by Frogmore Estates Limited, developers of Parkview House. Nowadays the garden forms a pocket park with seating on a walking route into High Chelmer.

Central Park Main

The main Central Park is tightly defined by the river Can, railway viaduct and Parkway – all influencing its access points and links with the surrounding town. The riverside provides a natural environment, key to the park character. The Park is an important flood plain area that naturally floods every few years. The value of flood storage in the park is well understood and the Environment Agency value the open parkland and its potential for mitigating the

potential of the river flooding private and commercial businesses nearby. Character is defined by tree lined paths and the lake by the viaduct.

Bell Meadow & Sky Blue Pasture

Bell Meadow was situated behind the Bell Hotel, which stood on the west side of Market Place, until it was demolished in 1948. The original, or Old Bell Meadow, was renamed Kings Head Meadow and on this land the Meadows shopping centre was built and opened in 1993. Although bisected by Parkway, Bell Meadow and Central Park were parts of Chelmsford's recreation ground which was laid out beside the River Can in 1894 to provide the public with open space for the growing town.

Sky Blue Pasture was acquired by the Council in 1912.

Bell Meadow and Sky Blue Pasture is an intensely used part of Central Park, mainly for relaxing but also some active recreation and occasional public events. Bell Meadow contains key walking and cycling routes and is directly related to the shopping centre, bus stops, a market and market Square and provides the town centre's primary green lung. The green spaces are situated either side of the river Can and are now reconnected with a new bridge, installed in 2019. From Sky Blue Pasture there are good views to the Cathedral and across the park and town.

4.2 Conservation of landscape features, buildings & structures, and management of the built environment

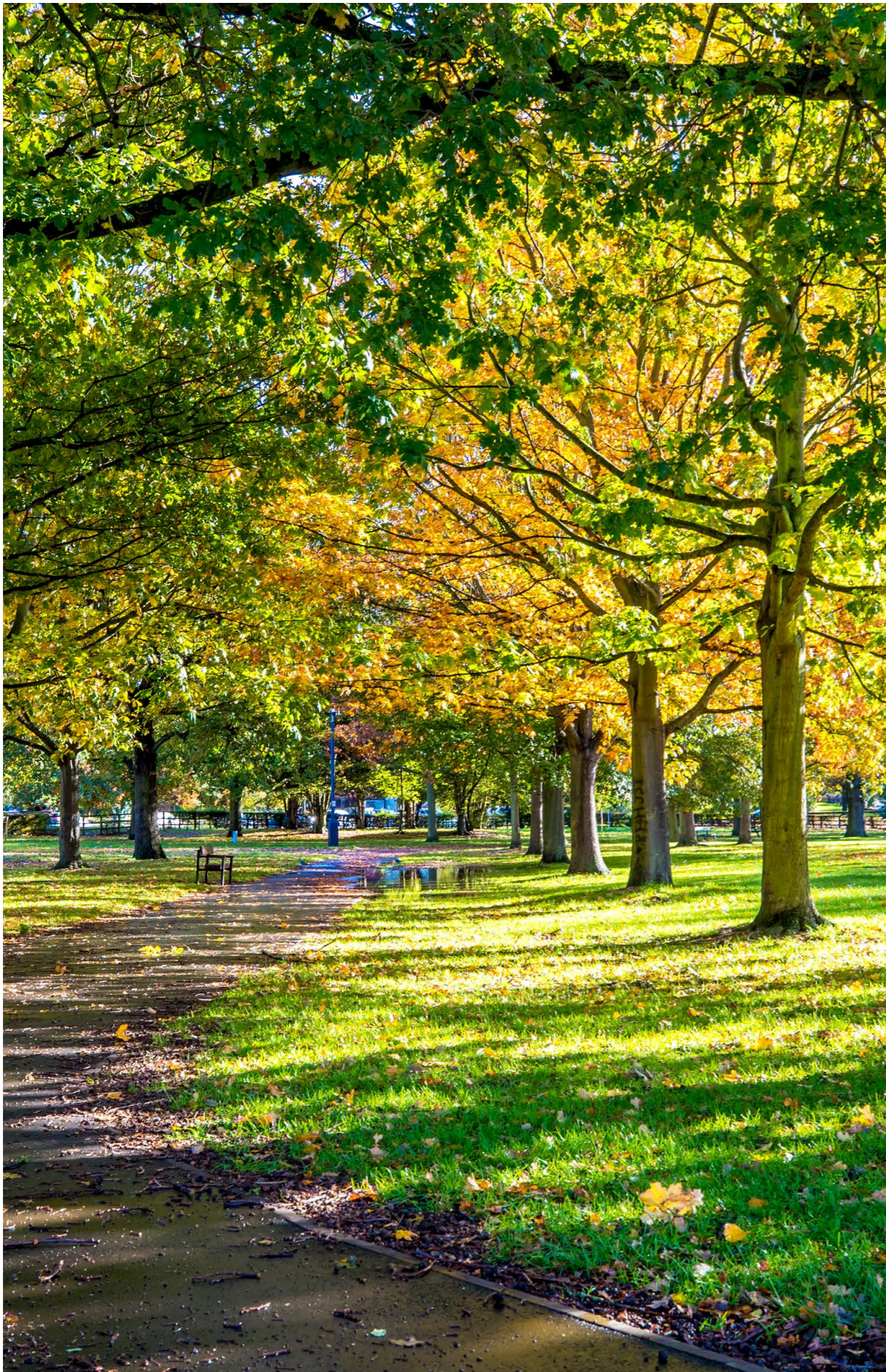
4.2.1 With reference to the Community Plan's section on land use management, the Council's objectives cover.

- The protection and enhancement of important cultural and historical resources.
- The protection of the character, environment and setting of Chelmsford Town conservation area and the town generally.
- To protect and restore as far as is practicable the nature and habit of field boundary plantings: Trees & Hedges.
- To ensure that design improvements to the Parks consider the means to visually and physically link features to enhance visitor appreciation.
- To improve the presentation and interpretation of the landscape design of the Parks.
- To ensure that footpaths and design improvements to the Parks consider the means to visually and physically link features to enhance visitor appreciation and understanding.
- To protect and manage important habitats associated with the site.
- To improve the presentation, setting and interpretation of important visible features.

4.2.2 There are a number of known historical artefacts in Central Park.

- Iron Bridge in New London Road Grade 11 constructed in 1839 at a cost of £5000 to a company of shareholders.
- The bridge at Seymour Street which is also Grade 11 listed. (This bridge is a concrete replication of the Stone Bridge in the High Street designed by John Johnstone in 1787).
- The 18 –arch Victorian railway viaduct that spans the River Can in Central Park. One of three railway viaducts in the town that carry the Great Eastern Main Line. The Viaduct was constructed during 1842 by the Eastern Counties Railway Company and opened for passenger traffic on 29 March 1843.

5 Sustainability within land management practices



This section of the plan introduces Parks & Green Spaces Environmental Strategy and particularly considers the environmental issues relevant to the 'land manager' and looks at practices including the following:

- Environmental awareness
- Climate change mitigation
- Sustainable procurement
- Resource conservation
- Environmental sustainability
- Arboriculture & Woodland Management
- Pesticides & other chemicals
- Peat use
- Waste minimisation
- Carbon reduction
- Energy & recycling
- Recycling
- Sustainable procurement policy

5.0 Promoting Sustainable Management and Awareness

Parks & Green Spaces will strive for the highest standards of environmentally sustainable management throughout parks & green spaces and will support wider sustainability objectives and agendas, including maintaining urban quality of life. The main sustainability issues the Service is focusing on will revolve around the subjects of Climate Change, Biodiversity, Access, and Urban Drainage Systems/Surface Water Drainage Systems.

This management plan and the grounds maintenance specifications referred to herein reflect the Council's policies listed in the section entitled Strategic & Policy Framework. The policies, strategies and specifications listed are important as they empower decision making and are a real aid when securing adequate budgets – ensuring council policy is implemented.

5.0.1 Parks & Green Spaces Environmental Strategy

The policy underlines the guiding principles regarding the propagation of environmental sensitivity and responsibility by management and seeks to link a number of key strands together to ensure that Parks and Green Spaces reflect the Council's overarching policies set out in the Corporate Plan; the Council wide- green procurement strategy and other such documents.

The strategy and the targets published therein seek to raise awareness and understanding on an individual level, getting people to think global and act local.

5.0.2 Environmental awareness education

The key to success in this area rests with increasing awareness of environmental responsibilities among staff and facility users. Chelmsford City Council aims to reduce its costs wherever possible including related costs of energy, water, other natural resources, and waste.

Any initiative in this sphere has both political and corporate support. Monitoring energy use and carbon dioxide emissions is actively encouraged. Indeed, the organisation is bound by targets set in the Local Area Agreement.

Energy management is a key priority for Chelmsford City Council.

Energy is a major source of CO2 emissions. It is therefore one of the major causes of climate change. The Climate Change document already explains the causes and solutions for Climate Change.

There have been numerous changes in legislation and additional performance monitoring that make reducing energy a 'must do'.

Climate Change Strategy and Energy Management Framework

Public space and green infrastructure can play a key role in combating the impacts of climate change, for example by:

- providing cooling and shading and reducing the urban 'heat island' effect
- reducing flood risk
- helping wildlife to adapt to climate change.

A draft revised Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS 1) supplement on climate change was issued for consultation in March 2010. Under the section entitled 'Local planning approach for adapting to climate change' it notes that:

"In their local development framework, local planning authorities should: (iv) plan green infrastructure so as to optimize its many benefits, and as part of wider green infrastructure networks, in order to support local biodiversity and healthy, living environments, including through providing urban cooling, local flood risk management, and local access to shady outdoor space."

The Climate Change strategy was approved in April 2009 to outline the Council's response to climate change in Chelmsford. The project is being led by the Director of Public Places and a number of items have been given to Facilities Management to undertake, mainly in relation to the energy use within Council owned premises.

The Energy Management Framework has been created June 2009 directly in response to a number of requirements on Local Authorities to reduce their energy consumption.

April 2010 Council started participating in the (Mandatory) UK's Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme. Facilities Management will be collecting data on electricity and gas consumption.

Data Recording and Reporting (Corporate)

Facilities Management record all invoices received from our energy suppliers (Gas & Electric currently) and record same on an Energy Management Database. From this Facilities Management will be able to provide reports to the Council. This will include those reports that will be required for the performance indicator framework.

Data Recording and Reporting (Service)

The Service compiles and analyses data available relating to the consumption of consumables.

Examples of sustainability indicators available to us are listed below with an example

of a typical unit of measure included in [brackets]

- Water consumption/footprint [cum]
- Fertiliser consumption [kg]
- Bulky top-dressing consumption [kg/tonne]
- Pesticide consumption [kg a.i.]
- Carbon footprint [kg/tonne CO2e]
- Fuel – petrol/diesel- consumption [gallons/litres]
- Gas consumption [KWh]
- Electric consumption [KWh]
- Waste generation [Kg/tonne of total waste]
- Recycled/reused waste [Kg/tonne of total waste]
- Machinery use [hours of use and/or miles/km]
- Machinery noise pollution complaints [reported occurrences]

5.1 Adaptation and mitigation to climate change

These following clauses seek to give the reader an insight into the complexity of the subject and show how Park Services seek to contribute to the desired outcomes.

The 1992 Rio Earth Summit recognised that all sectors (public, private, household, and voluntary) will need to act to achieve sustainable development. While local administrations are only part of the picture, Agenda 21 (the statement signed by 140 states at Rio) argued that “because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives”. The current UK Sustainable Development Strategy – Securing the Future continues to place significant importance on local action.

Chelmsford City Council works alongside other agencies to deliver tangible improvements relating to the issues posed by sustainable development and climate change. Services engage actively with Essex County Council and Local Area Action Plan targets and development.

Locally Relevant Outcomes in the UK SD Strategy – The four shared priorities for UK action

1. Sustainable production and consumption – achieving more with less resources and fewer adverse environmental impacts. (Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change – Delivering on indicators 185 and 186 (CO2 emissions from Local Authority operations.)
2. Climate change and energy – reducing climate change emissions and preparing for climate change. (Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change Delivering on indicator 188 – Planning to adapt to climate change)
3. Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement.

4. Sustainable communities – communities that embody the principles of sustainable development at a local level.

Chelmsford City Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2007 and in 2009 published a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

The act of signing the declaration commits the Authority to work with central government to contribute, at a local level, to the delivery of the UK Climate Change Programme, the Kyoto Protocol, and the target for carbon dioxide reduction by 2010.

On 16 July 2019 Chelmsford City Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency with a commitment to take action to make the Council’s activities net-zero carbon by 2030. The Declaration also expressed an ambition to create a ‘Climate Change Partnership’ where everyone – residents, community organisations and businesses – are encouraged to take responsibility for, get involved in and to work together to shape and contribute to a more sustainable future for Chelmsford and surrounding areas.

On 28 January 2020 the Council agreed a Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan with an initial focus on fifteen key areas of activity, principally aimed at reducing carbon emissions, lowering energy consumption, reducing waste and pollution, improving air quality, greening Chelmsford, increasing biodiversity and encouraging more sustainable travel choices.

A local approach to an international problem.

Climate change is at the top of the political agenda. This is evident in the:

- Local Government White Paper (October 2006)
- Stern Review on economics of climate change (October 2006)
- Queen’s speech introducing the Climate Change Bill (November 2006)
- There have been significant UK policy developments to cut greenhouse gases and secure energy supplies. Part of the national strategy is to get local authorities to provide local solutions to this international problem. Tackling climate change is likely to be part of the performance assessment framework for local authorities from 2008.

Advice on Climate Change is readily available from the following organisations:

- I&DeA Improvement and Development Agency for local government www.idea.gov.uk/
- Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk/
- Local Government Association www.lga.gov.uk/
- I.C.L.E.I – International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives ‘Local Governments for Sustainability’ is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organizations that have made a commitment to sustainable development. www.iclei.org/

- Energy Saving Trust www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
- Carbon Trust www.carbontrust.co.uk/
- UK climate impacts programme www.ukcip.org.uk/

What Climate Change means to Chelmsford Parks & Green Spaces

Experts predict that our local climate will start to resemble the current climate of the Loire Valley within 25 years and southern France within 50 years. This means that outdoors spaces and their use will become important for people, so it is likely that the pressure on existing spaces will increase with numbers increasingly using the spaces. The duration and frequency of individual usage will also increase. This increased pressure can only be mitigated by making more space available and/or by changing/increasing maintenance regimes and the frequency of refurbishment. This is likely to put pressure on resources and will require longer term financial planning, whilst in the shorter-term consideration should be given to the design and make up of these spaces. To mitigate these effects, we will evaluate our green spaces to establish which are most likely to be affected and plan for any changes needed.

The rising temperatures usually coincide with a deterioration of air quality in the urban environment. Green spaces and especially urban trees have significant roles to play. Trees which are currently commonplace such as ornamental fruiting trees will not be able to survive in the longer term and need to be replaced with more suitable species. Additional tree stock will also be required. Due to the time lag for these trees to mature and to become effective pollution filters and providers of shade, 25-50 years of growing time is needed. This suggests that additional tree planting will be required in the shorter term. This is in contrast with the approach being taken by insurers where trees maturing on some of our smaller open spaces and highway verges are under pressure to be removed because of claims relating to subsidence. We will therefore suggest that there is a clear action to link parks and tree strategies to the climate strategy and to have actions relating to preserving existing tree stocks and replacing/expanding them where possible.

Green spaces are vital in the absorption and retention of precipitation and flood water and therefore the loss of such capacity to urban development seems incompatible. Retention of water which could be used to provide irrigation, for example to mitigate the issues raised in item 1 are worthy of consideration. Retro fitting such systems within existing facilities should be considered and linked to the intended use of facilities now and in the longer term. An evaluation of existing facilities to explore the feasibility could be a useful action.

Many of our existing buildings and structures could be affected by changes to the behaviour of the sub strata with incidents of heave and subsidence becoming more frequent. This is likely to have a significant effect on resources and the reliability of buildings and structures. Our strategy will be to highlight this in the strategy and its impact on financial planning.

As an organisation the Council is actively seeking to reduce emissions from Council assets and to make them more energy efficient.

5.2 Sustainable Procurement

The management plan and grounds maintenance specifications reflect the Council's policies listed in the section: Corporate Strategy and Policy / Management. The specifications and strategies listed in section 2 are important as they empower decision making and are a real aid when securing adequate budgets – ensuring council policy is implemented.

Use of materials

In accordance with the principles set out in the Community plan the park employs the following policy on materials.

- The avoidance of products containing peat and use of peat-free growing mediums where practicable.
- The use of in-house compost where practicable.
- The avoidance of using tropical hardwoods where possible; substitution with timber from sustainable forests (FSC certified). Park benches being manufactured from sustainable products.
- The avoidance of excessively packaged items, in particular where the packaging components cannot be re-used or recycled (e.g., plastics).
- The use of recycled products in preference to non-renewable sources.
- Preference is given to local suppliers and locally grown plant stock. Note: at present many bedding plants are supplied locally as plugs and grown on at the Council's own nurseries; shrubs and trees primarily come from East Anglian suppliers.

The Green Procurement Strategy adopted in 2004 further supports the aims of the Environmental Method Statement and together with the sustainable products list and builds onto the earlier work undertaken. (The said works are now drawn together in the new Environmental Strategy produced by Parks & Heritage Services).

5.3 Resource Conservation

Vision and strategic approach to sustainable energy use is high on the corporate agenda and covers all the Council Services. The approach to resource conservation includes the management of the Council's estate, its buildings and transport fleet, and its procurement of equipment and services.

Parks & Green Spaces will strive for the highest standards of environmentally sustainable management throughout the parkland and will support the wider sustainability objectives and agendas, including maintaining urban quality of life.

Utility Management: Energy efficiency

With reference to the Community Plan: Energy management, the Council's goal is to use less energy, promote use of more renewable energy sources and strive to achieve best energy

practices within its operation. A 'turn-off' strategy is in operation within Council buildings whereby lighting, heating and machinery is turned off when not in use. This applies to the buildings in the Parks. Low energy appliances are used where possible. Energy efficiency is considered in purchase of new machinery.

Utility Management: Water and drainage

The use of water for irrigation will be kept to the minimum possible within the constraints of maintaining high horticultural standards. Whenever possible, SUDS (sustainable urban drainage systems) will be considered in any new built development or hard surfacing.

The water environment shall be managed to ensure it meets appropriate standards of water clarity and pollution control and contributes to the character and biodiversity of the parkland landscape.

Chelmsford has a relatively dry climate with rainfall below the national average. (Met office statistics).

The primary water source for irrigation is mains water taken from standpipes when water is needed on the general sports areas and events areas.

Park and Green Spaces monitor water bills and water efficiency issues within the park. Leaks in toilet fixtures are monitored by parks staff on daily inspection and by the contract cleaners at time of visit. These are dealt with within a 24-hour period, where practicable.

Utility Management: Water management

The grounds maintenance specification covers a number of water management issues in the park. These include:

- Spraying equipment to be fitted with guards to prevent spray drift.
- Total control herbicide treatment applied through No-mix CDA Pesticide applications
- 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.

Landscape improvement aims over the 5 years are listed at Section 10.6.

The planting strategy in the parks is evolving to extend the use of drought-tolerant plants. In particular herbaceous perennials and bedding plants are selected where possible in relation to their tolerance of dry conditions. In addition, a trial in the use of polymer granules in some of the flowerbeds has been initiated as a water retention/irrigation reduction method. Areas of shrub and perennial plantings are mulched with bark chippings or with recycled green waste.

The watering of plants is kept to a minimum in the park. Only summer bedding displays, containers and new plantings get regular irrigation in dry weather conditions {Maintenance Specification clause 1.10.2}. Areas of the fine grass receive irrigation only as and when necessary {Maintenance Specification clauses 16}

Consideration has been given to the continued use of annual bedding in terms of sustainability and the use of resources. In terms of historical precedence display bedding was an original feature of the park design. The majority of the beds date from the 1900's. The Park User Survey and MORI poll returns indicate that there is a high level of appreciation of flowers and trees in the park, whilst the conclusions from past consultation exercises state that.

"Visitors come to be entertained; to relax, play, enjoy the horticultural features. The Victorian vision of the park that promoted horticultural excellence, and provided public entertainment is still very much appreciated today."

The flower displays are one of the most enjoyable aspects of Chelmsford Park's for many people, with the spring bulb and bedding displays being the subject of most comments of appreciation to staff. The Improvement and Development Plan also endorses the continuation of horticultural displays.

River Management

The prime responsibility for the river rests with the Environment Agency but as responsible landowners the City Council does monitor the river for litter and pollutant damage and advises the various agencies of any issues brought to its attention by its staff or by members of the public.

Grounds staff on occasion do arrange for material thrown into the river to be removed and disposed of. In addition, life buoys stations are maintained at various locations along the riverbanks as the river courses through the parks.

In a broader context of water management, a forum chaired by Chelmsford City Council; the River Users Group brings together interested parties to consider management and recreational issues in respect of the Towns rivers. Chelmsford Sea Cadets undertake fortnightly river picks along the river, subject to manageable structures only.

RiverCare

RiverCare is a project running in the Anglian Water region that aims to tackle local

environmental. Quality and related anti-social behaviour issues around our waterways. It is a partnership project. Between Anglian Water, Keep Britain Tidy and the Environment Agency and they will work closely with Chelmsford City Council to make real changes 'on the ground' and enable communities to continue the work. The project works with communities in over 30 locations around the region, from North Lincolnshire to the Essex estuaries. Currently, in Essex, there are also RiverCare groups in Halstead, Rochford, and Colchester.

The scheme gives local people an ideal opportunity to take part in an active, interesting, and worthwhile activity and is suitable for people of all ages (young families very welcome) and all abilities.

Utility Management: Transport 'The Green Fleet'

With reference to the Community Plan: Transport, the Council's goal is to promote energy transport options, reduce Council's impact on emission through vehicle fleet improvements, and promote the wider use of alternative fuels such as electric, LPG and hybrid technology vehicles. Grounds Maintenance Services' vehicles run on unleaded petrol or green diesel (low sulphur diesel) (85% vehicles run on green diesel). Fuel usage and mileage are monitored to check fuel efficiency. We have also introduced a number of greener measures in relation to tools, mowers and vehicles:

JOHN DEERE	X590	Mower
JOHN DEERE	1145	Mower
Stihl	FS400	Strimmer
Husqvarna	520iHE3	L/H Hedge Cutter
Husqvarna	536LiB	Blower
Husqvarna	536LIHD70X	S/H Hedge Cutter
Husqvarna	520iRX	Strimmer
Wolf Air	C-24/10BV.24L	Compressor
ETESIA	Duocut 46	Mower
Ferris	Hydrowalk	Mower
Suzuki Carry		Pickup Truck

All plant, machinery and vehicles are subject to regular preventative maintenance and servicing.

A regular usage audit of machines and vehicles is undertaken annually with consideration being given to new machines and equipment new to the market.

The fleet is managed to ensure that vehicles are serviced regularly, at which time emissions are also checked. Drivers are reminded of ways to reduce fuel consumption – for example, the information produced by the Energy Saving Trust on Ten Tips for safer, Greener, Stress-Free driving was communicated to all staff.

Energy source (gas, petrol, diesel and electric) is considered when purchasing any new item of motorised equipment.

Green Housekeeping

5.4 Environmental Sustainability

Waste management and recycling

With reference to the Corporate Plan: pollution and waste management, the Council's goals are to minimise waste generation at source, maximise resource recovery through effective reuse and recycling practices, and develop best practice procedures in disposal and handling hazardous substances. Strategies for handling and processing the town's green waste are considered high priority.

In accordance with both the Councils Waste Management Strategy and The Community Plan, green waste from grounds maintenance operations is treated in the following way:

- Organic matter (clippings, ex-bedding, and other green waste) is recycled via composting at a central re-cycling point, with the resultant compost being re-used in maintenance operations.
- Aluminium cans and bottles are sorted offsite and recycled.
- Residual waste goes to traditional landfill disposal. **Recycling green waste**

Last year the city recycled over 850 tonnes of green waste from their parks and green spaces. The introduction of a green waste recycling machine at Sandford Mill, has meant that we can shred bedding, leaves, grass cuttings and pruning's. Either an organic soil conditioner or mulch is created from the green waste, which takes eight months to a year to develop the soil conditioner and only three to four months to create the mulch. Both are used in Chelmsford's parks and open spaces in areas such as shrub beds, and this recycling initiative is diverting materials that would otherwise have to be sent to landfill.

Site staff at Central Park can compost waste generated in the park. Currently waste is transported to Sandford Mill composting centre for processing. Over the life of the plan, it is planned to install composting bays in the new compound area.

5.5 Tree & Woodland Management

The majority of the established trees date from the Victorian and Edwardian periods and therefore have a strong influence on the character of the park.

The parkland character is dependant largely on its trees. Maintaining tree cover & implementing good tree management is vital, as this character would change irreversibly if long term replacement were not addressed.

The treescape is managed by the Arboricultural & Conservation officer. Parks & Green Spaces have a Tree & Woodland Strategy document that sets out how the City's tree stock is to be managed.

Under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 (1997) the Council has a duty of care to ensure wherever reasonable the trees under its management do not cause a threat to people or property. The Council fulfils this duty through regular inspection of the tree stock.

Trees within the parks are managed responsibly to ensure that the Council meets its legal Duty of Care to visitors, contractors, and staff.

A number of the trees retained in the park are mature & there is a limit to how much longer they will continue to 'contribute' to the site. A tree replacement and management strategy has been developed so that trees can be pro-actively managed and the qualities they bring to the site are retained.

Specialist tree management software Tree Wise is used to map tree stock and record all works undertaken to trees in the park.

5.6 The use of Pesticides fuels and other chemicals

The Council uses the SYPOL database for all pesticides and other substances hazardous to health. At present the Service is writing new COSHH assessments and submitting them to SYPOL. There are currently 43 products registered for Public Places. SYPOL use a traffic light system with red being considered hazardous to health. Any that flag up red will be investigated and where possible we will introduce less harmful products. As a direct result of the SYPOL procedure we have started looking at natural products rather than chemical-based ones.

Management Guidelines: Use of chemicals

The use of chemicals – insecticides, molluscicides, herbicides, etc. will continue to be kept to the minimum necessary, in compliance with good horticultural standards and requirements for public health and safety.

Fuel, chemicals, and other substances are stored in designated areas under the 'Control of Substances Harmful to Health Regulations 1992'. Relevant information relating to COSHH is displayed in the designated work area.

The Council is proactive in its attitude towards the environmental and safety implications of the pesticides it uses, reducing reliance on chemical pest and weed control. Further studies are undertaken annually to keep this policy updated. The Pest Control review has enabled the chemical use within the park to be reduced without affecting the quality of the pest-control regime. Further studies are undertaken annually to keep this policy updated.

The current Service Policy on the Use of Pesticides is as follows:

- That any operation that requires the use of a pesticide be carried out only if no alternative method is reasonably practicable.
- That any pesticide, which has carcinogenic, mutagenic, or teratogenic properties, should not be applied unless no acceptable alternative substance is available for the task in question.
- That, where a choice of acceptable pesticides is available for a particular task, the least hazardous substance be selected in every case.
- That all users be advised of the Council's views on the matter and instructed to follow adopted guidelines.
- That any new substance be permitted to be used until evidence is obtained to indicate that it has unacceptable qualities.
- That the list of pesticides currently in use be submitted for re-consideration at intervals determined by the Grounds Maintenance Operational Manager.

In accordance with the principles set out in the Community Plan the use of herbicides and pesticides within Parks are limited to the absolute minimum. Football pitches and Cricket wickets still receive some chemical input in order to maintain the correct standard of playing surface.

Parks & Green Spaces follow the COSHH regulations when specifying pesticides. All specifies are experienced members of staff and liaison with contractors over chemical use are encouraged.

The Contractors only use those herbicides; pesticides or cleaning agents specified in the contract, and these are all subject to COSHH risk assessments.

Under the terms of the ground's maintenance specification, pest and disease control is not carried out as a routine operation. An instruction is required for any pesticide application and only when a pest or disease infestation exceeds the maximum acceptable percentage specified. The use, application, storage and disposal of pesticides and fertilisers are covered by the Grounds Maintenance specification. The 'Code of Practice' is reproduced at Appendices L Health and Safety Policy storage and disposal of chemicals is covered in the section Control of substances hazardous to health and individual substance COSHH assessments.

Parks & Green Spaces undertake training in the use of chemicals. In-house training is geared to the yearly assessment of the current needs and contract requirements and areas where training may be lacking. Grounds Services operate a dedicated team servicing all areas. Two people are fully trained in first aid. Team members are trained to PA1 / PA6 level.

5.7 Peat Reduction Policy

Parks and Green Spaces seek to avoid purchasing any products containing peat and have been successful in reducing dependency on its use. Peat is no longer used in the top dressings, mulching products or in soil improvers used by the City Council.

Small quantities of peat are used in bedding plant production, but peat free products are being trialled. It is accepted that container grown plants will invariably contain an amount of peat as the industry does not purport to be totally peat free. Where possible consideration is given to contract grow shrubs and to stipulate, they are grown in a peat free medium. Peat is not used in day-to-day operations in the Parks.

Reducing the use of peat is a long-term objective of Parks & Green Spaces.

The Service is currently trialing different peat free composts for bedding plant production with mixed results. Findings to date are disappointing in that the mixes require more water and nutrient feed than the conventional mixes normally used. To produce plants of the correct size it was noted that the growing season had to be extended along with additional heating to boost growth. Whilst decreasing peat usage, which is seen as beneficial, it was realised that the action had a number of negative factors to consider. Production in the peat free media used more water, in addition it was noted that more heat and nutrient additives were needed to produce a crop to a similar standard to that achieved by using conventional methods. Trials will continue and results will be reviewed annually.

Compost for soil enrichment is made in house from shredded compostable material. The operation is undertaken at Sandford Mill. The appendices to this document contain results of an independent analysis of the medium produced.

5.8 Waste Minimisation

The strategy forms the framework for all waste services provided by the City Council. Its principal aim is to indicate how the Council will achieve the recycling targets set in the best value improvement plan.

The Council have adopted an approach known as the 'High Diversion Strategy,' which seeks to divide the waste stream into:

- Material for recycling
- Biodegradable materials for composting
- Residual materials for landfill disposal

The Corporate Plan uses the Waste Management Hierarchy as a framework for minimising waste outputs, with the aim of avoiding all waste.



In accordance with both the Councils Waste Management Strategy and The Community Plan, waste from the Parks is treated in the following way:

- Organic matter (clippings, ex-bedding, and other green waste) is recycled via composting offsite, with the resultant compost being re-used in maintenance operations.
- Aluminium cans and bottles are sorted offsite and recycled.
- Residual waste to traditional landfill disposal.

The Council's waste strategy sets out the recycling targets and is set out in the contract specification.

There are two off-site recycling facilities currently operating within Park & Green Spaces. Essex County Council also operates a facility open to the public at Boreham, whilst the Council's Environmental Services operates a kerbside recycling service for glass / bottles and paper.

The Grounds Maintenance Specification working procedures comply with requirements of the Environmental Amendment Act 1990 and Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994.

Litter from the council's own litter bins are sorted on the SMURF processing centre at Freight House.

Waste management in parks is an issue taken seriously and is embedded in what we do as land managers. There are many ways of dealing with waste and staff are asked to consider simple waste reduction strategies.

Staff are encouraged to Minimise, Re-use, recycle leaving landfill as the last resort.

5.9 Energy and recycling

Onsite and off-site energy consumption and emissions will be minimised to the greatest extent possible through encouraging sustainable forms of transportation within the park and minimising the need for transport of goods and waste to/from the site, for example through on-site recycling.

With reference to the Corporate Plan: pollution and waste management, the Council's goals are to minimise waste generation at source, maximise resource recovery through effective reuse and recycling practices, and develop best practice procedures in disposal and handling of hazardous substances. Strategies for handling and processing the town's green waste are considered high priority.

Use of local mulch.

During the course of woodland management work throughout the Council's landholdings, large quantities of wood chippings are produced. Wherever possible this material is used in a park as surface mulch over shrub beds and young tree bases.

Composting & green waste recycling

There is frequent production of green waste during the normal day-to-day park management operations. 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 additional sources of compost are required when ornamental shrub beds or other horticultural features are renewed or renovated.

Recycled materials

Trade waste is collected from the sports clubs operating on the site and facilitates the collection of cardboard, glass, and general materials.

Litter bins are emptied by parks staff, with bottles and cans being separated out in the collection process.

5.10 Pollution reduction measures

With reference to the Community Plan: pollution and waste management, the Council's goal is to limit hazards to the community and the environment from pollution sources by identification, assessment and management in an ecologically sustainable manner pollution sources and minimisation of pollution generation.

Storage and pollution minimisation measures for fuels and chemicals within the park are covered by the Grounds Maintenance Specification and within the park & Green Spaces Health and Safety Policy: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health and relevant task risk assessment sheets.

There is a minimal amount of fuel-stored onsite and this is kept in a metal lock-up. Containers are checked for leaks on a regular basis and refuelling machinery is undertaken in accordance with the relevant Park & Green Spaces risk assessment summaries and safe working practice sheets. There are no chemicals stored on site.

Bonfires are not permitted within the park.

Regulations and specification regarding maintenance of equipment and noise control are

covered by the Grounds Maintenance specification and within the Park Service Health and Safety Policy at the section covering noise. All machinery used within the park is relatively new and has noise reduction measures such as mufflers fitted as standard.

Rock salt-free zones to all plants are specified for snow clearance operations. This consists of 300mm clearance to all grass and plantings, and 500mm to trees.



6 Biodiversity in Chelmsford's Parks

“Biological diversity” Is the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.



6.0 Biodiversity Duty

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 40 of the Act requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

This duty extends to all public bodies the biodiversity duty of section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), which placed a duty on Government and Ministers.

The aim of the biodiversity duty is to raise the profile of biodiversity in England and Wales, so that the conservation of biodiversity becomes properly embedded in all relevant policies and decisions made by public authorities.

With reference to Chelmsford City Council's Community Plan

With reference to the Community Plan: land use management, the Council's objectives cover

- The protection and enhancement of important natural resources.
- The protection and enhancement of important green links within the town and green wedges between settlements.

In all, as part of the Council's strategy with regards to the environment and biodiversity the goal is to protect native plants, animal species and their habitats by the promoting and implementation of sustainable conservation management practices and ensuring that pollution levels do not exceed the capacity of the natural systems to recover.

The green infrastructure plan: adopted by the Council commits the Council to positive action.

The Council will arrange for surveys of and the monitoring of parks, green spaces and corridors and their species.

The Parks and Green Space Strategy supports the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in parks and green spaces in accordance with NERC (Natural Environment and Rural Communities) 2006.

The Council will prepare a programme for the adoption of management plans for every significant park and green space that includes measures to enhance biodiversity.

The Council will continue the Local Nature Reserve Designation Programme.

The Council will support the development of effective partnerships and funding arrangements to enhance biodiversity in parks and green spaces.

The Council will raise awareness and support education for all sectors of the community relating to habitats and species within parks and green spaces.

Biodiversity in Parks

With reference to the Community Plan: Environment and biodiversity the Council's goal is to protect native plants, animal species and their habitats by promoting and implementing sustainable conservation management practices and ensuring that pollution levels do not exceed the capacity of natural systems to recover.

Nowadays we understand that the state of the environment cannot be left to chance. Protecting or creating natural habitats is essential for the biodiversity of the Chelmsford area. Increasingly areas are being developed for residential or commercial use and mean, that more than ever before network of green corridors which provide continuous habitats for wildlife are essential for the movement of flora and fauna. Managing for biodiversity in parks and green spaces is not optional. In managing sites for the benefit of native plants and

wildlife we are able to maximize the opportunities for people to experience nature close to hand.

Planning policy

The natural environment is protected through a range of planning policies.

- Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9), sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity conservation through the planning system.

Climate Change & Biodiversity

On 16 July 2019 Chelmsford City Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency with a commitment to take action to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030. The Declaration also expressed an ambition to create a 'Climate Change Partnership' where everyone – residents, community organisations and businesses – are encouraged to take responsibility for, get involved in and to work together to shape and contribute to a more sustainable future for Chelmsford and surrounding areas.

On 28 January 2020 the Council agreed a Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan with an initial focus on fifteen key areas of activity, principally aimed at reducing carbon emissions, lowering energy consumption, reducing waste and pollution, improving air quality, greening Chelmsford, increasing biodiversity and encouraging more sustainable travel choices.

Love your Chelmsford is a point of reference for 'all things green' in Chelmsford; providing inspiration, advice, options and opportunities to access a programme of activities and events, to get actively involved in helping to address the Climate and Ecological Emergency and meet the carbon reduction challenges for the area.

- Improve biodiversity in the Borough.
- Promoting and expanding green infrastructure
- Preserve and expand large nature recovery networks

Chelmsford Biodiversity Forum

Chelmsford City Council is the lead organisation for the Chelmsford Biodiversity Forum, a group of 18 organisations working within the borough to protect and enhance biodiversity. This group is responsible for producing, monitoring, and delivering the Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan.

How Biodiversity Policy is translated within Park Services

The 'biodiversity' areas within the parkland are highlighted in the nature conservation plan below.

The text and the plan set out a range of management operations that should be carried out

in order to enhance the biodiversity value throughout the parkland.

It is acknowledged that these sites are primarily public open space areas for people to enjoy and therefore any changes should not have a negative impact on the people's enjoyment of the sites but rather enhance visitor experience by creating a purposeful balance between the areas for general recreation and areas where visitors can observe wildlife and native flora.

These parks form a coherent area in which to consider ways to enhance biodiversity.

Biodiversity assessment

Central Park extends into the heart of the city centre and therefore it is a very well-used site. Most of it is managed as formal open space with large areas of amenity grass which is used for ballgames, events and informal activities and traditional bedding and shrub beds. Admirals Park and West Park lie immediately west of Waterhouse Lane.

In considering the opportunities for biodiversity enhancement within the park it is accepted that most of this park will be formally managed and include areas that can be used for events including fairs and circuses.

The various sections of the park are considered separately in order to assess their present value and the opportunities that they might provide.

Central Park Main

The main part of Central Park consists of largely formal open space that is relatively open and can be used for a number of events. The key features that have some biodiversity values are the main lake and the riverbank. The lake supports a range of waterfowl, mainly ducks, coots and moorhen. It is largely open with a narrow band of vegetation around the perimeter of the lake. Most of this consists of species such as dog wood and gorse. There are small patches of reed and iris present. The presence of fish and the lack of suitable vegetation around it means that the lake does not have a high wildlife value as it does not provide optimal habitat for amphibians or invertebrates.

The riverbank through Central Park similarly is relatively formally managed and therefore its wildlife value is more limited. There is some limited cover provided by the trees and shrubs along the banks.

There is a native Black Poplar (*Populus nigra* ssp. *betulifolia*) growing immediately to the west of the viaduct. Recent genetic analysis has shown this to be a Clone 28 variety, the so-called Manchester Poplar. Unfortunately, this clone is particularly susceptible to Poplar scab and therefore it is recommended that cuttings are not taken from this tree for propagation.

Bell Meadow and Sky Blue Pasture

These form the eastern extent of the park and lie on the north and south of the river between The Parkway and shopping centre.

Marconi Ponds

This site has been actively managed as a nature reserve since 2005. It totals 1 ha and comprises of ponds, scrubby woodland, and wildflower areas. It is managed by the Friends of Marconi Ponds with support from the Council. Its eastern boundary is with the large railway embankment that is relatively undisturbed and comprises of trees and scrub while at the northern end it adjoins Central Park at Meteor Way. Due to these links, it forms part of a larger block of habitat most of which is relatively undisturbed.

Central Park Meteor Way

This section is to the west of the viaduct and south of the river. It is less heavily used and comprises mainly close mown grass with a new shared used cycleway/path running through it. Along the southern boundary with E2V and then running northwards to the river is a deep ditch that holds water for much of the year. It is currently heavily shaded by dense scrub.

The riverbank along this section is less intensively managed. There are some fishing platforms along the section and one area where the grass is cut close to the river to provide views, but the rest is left undisturbed.

Central Park West

This follows the north side of the river from Waterhouse Lane to the viaduct. It is mainly used as cycleway/ pedestrian route to the town centre. Areas of grass close to the river have been left longer in order to provide more cover for wildlife. There are a number of mature trees between the river and path.

Frank Whitmore Green and Memorial Garden

The site comprises mainly amenity grassland. There are a number of mature trees within the area, most notably several large oaks in a line, the remnants of an old boundary. In addition, there are several large limes and sycamores. Around the perimeter are a number of shrub beds.

The Memorial Garden is more formally managed however there are a number of flowering shrubs such as Hebe and Sedums that are reliable sources of nectar. The dense shrub beds can also provide cover for nesting birds. There are several large limes on the site.

Potential for enhancing biodiversity.

Based on this assessment of the present situation the following opportunities are considered worth pursuing in order to further enhance the biodiversity value of the park.

- The areas west of the viaduct provide the best opportunities to achieve larger scale biodiversity benefits by undertaking additional habitat management and creating stronger links between the key elements.
- Marconi Ponds is the most significant area at present as it is being managed primarily for biodiversity already. There is a good opportunity to improve the link between this

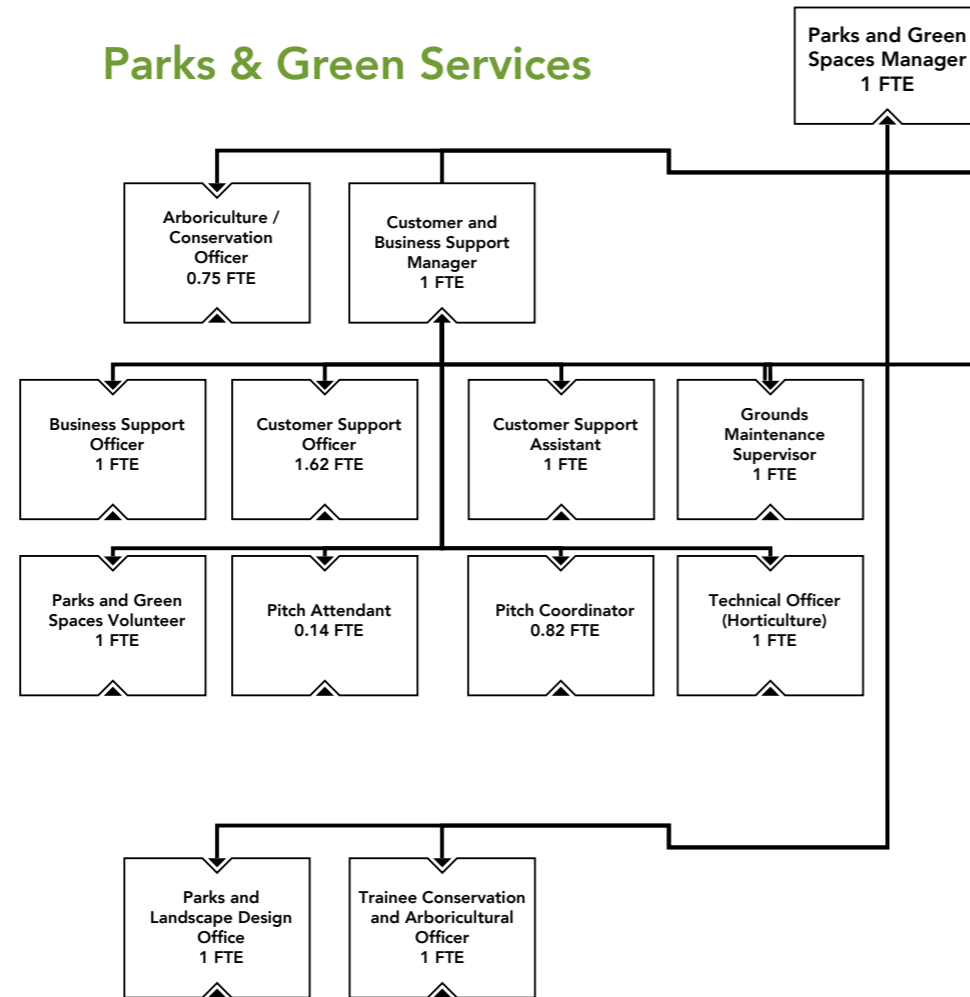
site and Central Park Meteor Way by better management of the small area of grassland in the western side of the cycle path and the ditch and scrub area on the northern boundary with E2V. It is recommended that the grass area is cut twice a year in the spring and autumn initially to reduce the dominance of the nettles and larger plants. Scrub on the north side of the ditch should be coppiced in blocks to allow more light to reach the bottom of the ditch and thereby help a greater variety of plants to establish. There is a short section of hedge that could be planted on the boundary with E2V between the end of the ditch and the scout buildings.

- The areas of longer grass will be monitored to see if there are improvements to their species composition.
- Within the main park area there is some scope to improve the lake side vegetation particularly on the northern bank by planting plugs of plants such as purple loosestrife that will provide additional colour as well as enhancing the habitat. Within the more formally managed areas replacement planting should seek to include varieties that provide good nectar sources. This includes the flood defence bank and large swathes of grass running toward the recently newly declared Admirals Park Local Nature Reserve.

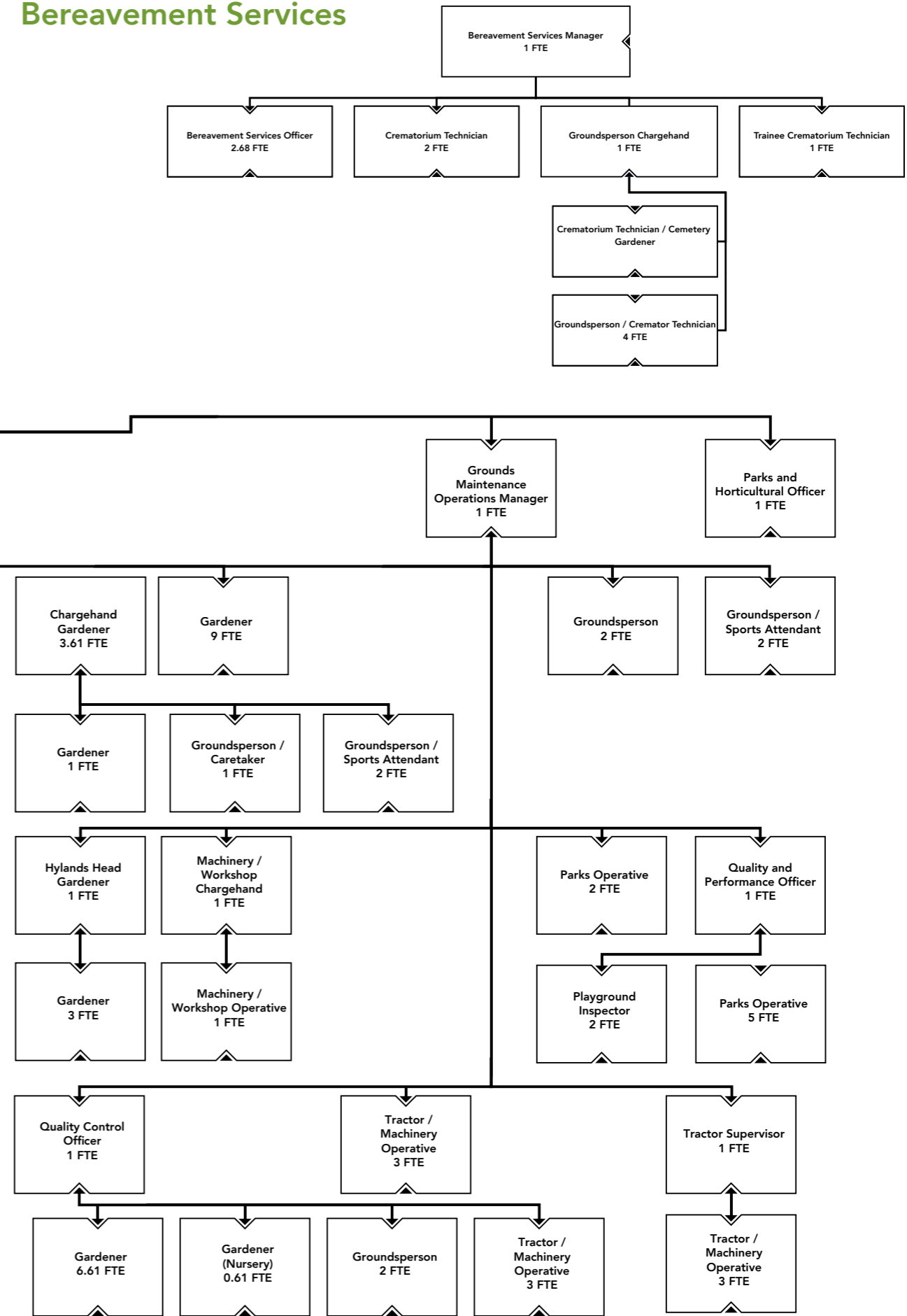
7 The Management Team and its business partners

7.0 About Parks & Green Spaces

7.01 Organisational Chart



Bereavement Services



7.0.2 Service Vision

“Parks and Green Spaces belong to local people. They should be safe, accessible and cherished: managed for the future in order to achieve an ever-improving quality of life for local people and visitors.” The service is committed to ensuring that the City of Chelmsford remains a safe place to live.

7.0.3 Parks & Green Spaces: Operational Management Structure

Parks & Green Spaces was set up in 2014 as part of a corporate reorganisation and the Cemetery and Crematorium Service was added to the Service. In that year, Parks and Green Spaces are part of a Public Places Directorate with the four divisions [Parks Strategy and Development, Hylands Estate, Grounds Management, & Cemetery and Crematoria] all being managed by the Parks & Green Spaces Manager. Other areas of the new Directorate cover waste management, recycling and street care environmental health and CCTV.

The Service has five divisions.

Parks Strategy and Development promotes development of new parks, sports pitches, play equipment and open space through S.106 agreements, grant aid and directly funded schemes. Parks Strategy Team provides a design service, management direction, a tree management service, community engagement and involvement along with Service promotion and marketing.

Hylands Estate comprises Hylands House and the Stables Centre (now under separate management), and Park for community use. The House activities include weddings, corporate hires, public days, exhibitions, and events. The Stables Centre offers additional facilities such as artist studios, stables, gift shop, educational/multi-function room, as well as Hutton's Courtyard Café. The Park is the venue for a number of events, large and small.

Grounds Management maintains parks, sports pitches, open spaces, and allotments totalling 686 hectares, as well as housing estates and highway verges. Sports pitches include 47 football, 6 rugby, 8 cricket and 9 bowling greens.

Grounds Management Workshops Parks and Heritage services maintain all their grounds maintenance machinery at its workshops at Waterhouse Lane the workshops are well equipped and employ technicians who can maintain the variety of equipment in use. Very little down time is experienced with 90% of problems being sorted in house.

Cemetery and Crematoria Service includes operation of the Chelmsford Cemetery and Crematorium.

7.0.4 Parks Management structure at Greater Central Park.

The two divisions of Parks Strategy and Development and Grounds Management both have an input into the management of the Parks.

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 oversee the maintenance activities undertaken at the parks. The parks are staffed through the working day. 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.

Business Partners: Sports and Play

There are published strategies for both Sports & Play. Files can be downloaded from the Council's website.

In addition to Parks & Green Spaces our Sports Development Unit and Play Services also have a major input to services provided in the park. The former amongst other things provides term time and holiday sports courses, including children with disabilities. The Sports Development Unit run courses for children during Essex County Council term time periods. In addition, the Unit provide a variety of courses during Essex County Council school holidays excluding the Christmas holiday. These sports courses provide the opportunity for children to participate in a fun setting.

Work is also ongoing to encourage adult participation in sport with adults being invited to take up a new activity, make friends and stay fit and healthy. Additionally, the Sports Development Unit is committed to increasing the awareness, inclusion, and activity level of people with disabilities.

Play Services promote play provision, play schemes and youth provision in parks. There are variety of activities available for children of all ages which run during the school summer holidays.

“Playground Play ” are short play sessions providing a variety of art, craft and games activities aimed at children from 2+ along with their parents/carvers based in their Neighborhood Play Areas. Not normally easily accessible by car.

Play in the Park is an activity run during the summer holidays. At each venue there are always a variety of activities running. The activities are Free, and no pre-booking is required.

A play day scheme also operates and is offered in partnership with local Parish/Town Council.

Children under 5 must be accompanied and supervised by their adult careers (a maximum of 5 children per career).

7.0.5 Staff training, learning and development.

Staff training, learning and development is an investment Chelmsford City Council takes very seriously. Core training revolves around health & safety, IT and the operation of machinery and equipment.

Chelmsford City Council believes that the health, safety, and welfare of its staff, and all those who encounter its operations, are of high importance. We have therefore introduced a robust but flexible health and safety management system to protect not only our staff but park users, contractors, and others.

Health and Safety Training All employees receive a standard Health and Safety induction as well as manual handling training. Safety training is provided for users of specialist equipment. e.g., chainsaws, mowers, strimmers, spray equipment etc.

As part of the policy a separate Health and Safety file is produced for the Parks operatives, and a Risk Assessment File is produced for each contract site. All employees receive a personal copy of the Employee Safety Guide that details Council policy. (A Health and Safety guide goes to each park as well as the nursery and workshops. In addition, four copies are held in the office for depot-based staff).

All staff who work with children are CRB checked, and each employee is informed of the Parks Services Child Protection Guidelines and are provided with their own individual copy of the guidelines.

The document is intended as a guide for all employees (including volunteers) of Chelmsford Borough Council's Park Services. It introduces the concept of child abuse in all its forms and gives good practice guidelines through which to provide a safe environment for children at council facilities.

The booklet is distributed in conjunction with training provided at child protection awareness sessions that deal with the policy and procedures necessary if an incident arises. All staff dealing with children are required to undertake this training and training for parks staff will be undertaken at the right time.

7.0.6 Annual performance & development reviews

All staff receives an annual review in order to provide a dedicated opportunity to talk on a one-to-one basis with their line manager about a range of development issues including personal objectives, competencies, and training.

Cross Service Working

To manage the complex systems involved, the council needs effective joined-up working and sustained partnerships. Different services must work closely together to embed multi-disciplinary working.

7.1 Public Places

Love Your Chelmsford Team (LYC)

This is an initiative introduced by the Council as an educational tool to encourage residents to take an active role in managing public places.

Additionally, RiverCare was launched in 2009, the scheme formulates and delivers various environmental actions to clean up the waterways and draws heavily on the use of volunteers from all levels of society.

Dog warden service

Dog wardens assist Parks staff with regards to enforcement of legislation relating to dog fouling and collection of strays.

Noise abatement

Environmental Protection Staff monitor noise levels at the larger planned events held in parks.

7.2 Leisure & Heritage Services: Sports & Recreational Development

Sports in Parks

The Sports Development Unit at Chelmsford City Council work with a wide range of local organisations to help deliver a number of sporting events around the city. The Unit is committed to increasing the awareness, inclusion, and activity level of people in general from the very young to the not so young.

The Unit run a number of exciting sports courses throughout the year for children, adults, older people, and people with special needs in addition to sports courses run for children during Essex County Council term time periods. Sports Development also provides a variety of courses during Essex County Council school holidays excluding the Christmas holiday. These sports courses provide the opportunity for children to participate in a fun setting.

Forever Active is Chelmsford City Council's new brand of activities specifically tailored to those over fifty who want to become and remain fit, active, and healthy. The new brochure of activities will include intensity ratings for all sessions, making it easy to find the sessions right for you.

Chelmsford City Council, with support from "Chelmsford Sport", has produced a Sports Directory that publicise details of most sports clubs in Chelmsford.

Healthy living / Healthy walks

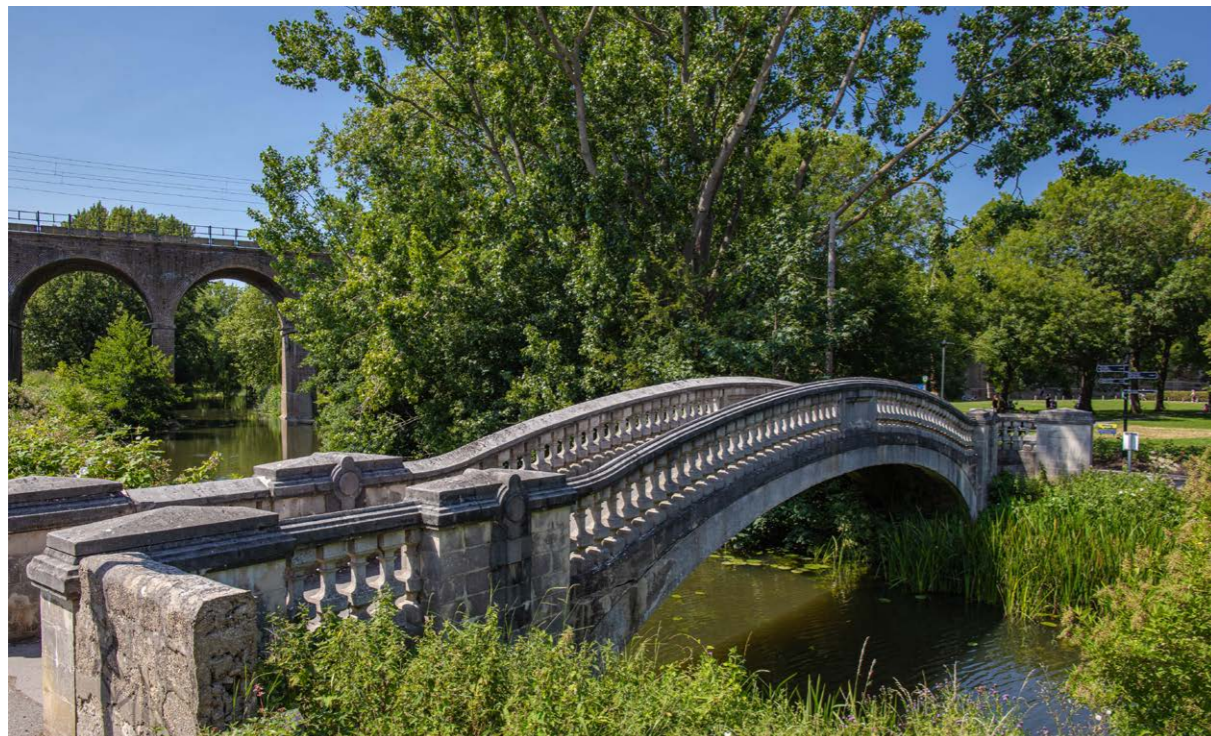
The parks are promoted as safe places for walking, exercise, and physical activity. Currently the walks programme sits with the Safer Communities Directorate, but it is anticipated that Leisure Services will oversee the healthy walks programme in conjunction with the local PCT. Key parks are being used by the scheme to promote healthy living concepts to the community at large. Greater Central Park is one such venue for such walks. The project uses volunteers to lead the walks on a regular basis for short, pleasant walks for patients who have been referred by their doctor to the scheme.

7.3 Leisure & Heritage Services: Arts & Entertainment

The Arts Development team at Chelmsford City Council offer advice and encouragement to individuals, arts groups, schools, youth groups and other agencies within the borough. We also provide an ongoing programme of community-based arts and education workshops.

7.4 Leisure & Heritage Services: City Council Special Events team

Leisure and Heritage Services staff contributes to the annual parks events programme to ensure that the public are served by a varied entertainments programme. We actively seek to ensure we have a mix of events that will appeal to both the public and to minority groups.



8 Clean and Well Maintained

There is a strong link between the vibrancy of local communities and the quality of their local environment. Good quality public spaces have been shown to:

- support the local economy and make neighbourhoods more desirable, as people visit places and spend money there.
- enhance physical and mental health, as people are more willing to pursue healthier lifestyles through exercise.
- benefit children and young people because they have areas in which to play, socialise and exercise safely.
- reduce crime and fear of crime – research has shown a direct link between perceptions of visible disorder and fear of crime.
- support social cohesion through community action to create quality spaces.
- reduce the number of short car journeys, as attractive and unthreatening environments encourage people to walk and cycle, and consequently reduce carbon emissions.
- protect biodiversity and enhance the environment.
- help local areas to adapt to climate change.

8.0 Service Standards: Clean and Well Maintained

This section outlines both management objectives and operational arrangements set in place to ensure visitors experience a high-level satisfaction in Service and in the facilities provided.

8.0.1 Management objectives

The core objectives of Parks Services can be described in broad terms as helping to make Chelmsford Borough 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 Borough 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. Surrounding countryside and unique heritage.

General objectives

- Maintain the quality, appearance, and facilities at all three Parks to provide a safe and attractive environment for visitors.
- Maintain structures in a sound, clean condition always.
- Maintain sports facilities in a sustainable manner.
- Monitor plant establishment and replace plantings as necessary to maintain amenity and ecological objectives.

8.0.2 Sports specific objectives

Chelmsford City Council has a sports strategy that guides the provision and development of sport within the Borough. This coupled with the PPG17 Open Spaces Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy seeks to ensure that sport is accessible to all residents within the Borough.

Sports Facilities.

Uses of the sporting facilities at the parks are actively encouraged. The following sports facilities are available.

Football Pitches	Central Park Main
Fishing	Central Park Main
Adizone/Tennis Court	Central Park Main
Skateboard Park	Central Park Main

8.0.3 Safety orientated objectives

Risk assessments, policies etc are available to all staff via SharePoint which is accessible from tablets or smartphones.

Monitoring of policy is undertaken through systematic reviews of performance based on data from both monitoring activities and independent audits. The information produced is then used to revise the safety policy, implementation methods and techniques of risk control. A regular review of policy is undertaken annually in accordance with legislation, changes in circumstances or services.

Site safety initiatives.

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.
- Antisocial behaviour is eliminated.
- Contact with Essex Constabulary and Safer Neighbourhood Teams is maintained.

8.1 Site Maintenance Arrangements and standards

8.1.1 Maintenance Regimes

Central Park and environs are managed by Chelmsford City Council (CCC) Parks & Green Spaces. Specifically, it is the responsibility of the Grounds Operations Services Manager, who is supported by the Parks Management Team. This team is responsible for the day-to-day management of the park including all aspects of customer services within the park, to visitor information and welfare, public relations, marketing, promotion, and special event planning.

The Grounds Management Service, a section of Park & Green Spaces undertakes landscape maintenance work under the terms laid down in the works specification.

All maintenance operations are run through a 'Confirm' computer asset management system. All work is instructed according to the Park Management's requirements. This system generates a monthly instruction sheet detailing the routine maintenance operations required in particular areas of the park. The Grounds Maintenance Supervisor can then adjust the frequencies and timing of those operations to account for any seasonal fluctuations etc before issuing it to the ground staff. Any operation or repair, which is not 'routine' is detailed in a variation order / instruction also linked to the database system.

Grounds Management Services employ 58 staff who are trained to appropriate levels of horticultural experience and recognised qualifications.

The Grounds staff who undertake works in the park have the necessary skills set to

undertake a range of horticultural work.

The work includes:

- All grass maintenance (mowing, feeding, spiking, and differentially applied according to regime requirements).
- Sports ground maintenance
- Planting and maintenance of young trees (to establishment), shrub beds, herbaceous borders, Spring and Summer bedding.
- Litter clearance
- Road & Path Sweeping
- Leaf clearance
- Daily play area inspections (daily tick sheets, reported weekly).
- Salting / gritting and special duties in icy weather.
- Landscape works (to instruction)
- Assistance at specific events

8.1.2 Tree & forestry works.

The Arboricultural and Conservation officer is responsible for the Council's tree stock and issues instructions to private tree surgeons for any works required, be it tree maintenance works or safety work within the park.

The trees in the park are inspected on a regular basis by the Arboricultural Officer. It is important that the trees are maintained in a safe condition and any safety works required are highlighted by inspection and dealt with effectively / efficiently.

Park staff undertake weekly visual inspections of trees and record any defects on the general site inspection sheets in turn information from these sheets are relayed to the Arboricultural and Conservation officer as is deemed appropriate.

8.1.3 Hard works & Infrastructure

Facilities Management are responsible for the maintenance of the hard landscape areas of the park, services, and buildings maintenance. They undertake regular inspections of the facilities and prepare annual estimates to enable an effectively costed planned maintenance regime to be in place. Work recorded on the database generates a monthly instruction for routine maintenance tasks for hard works / infrastructure, including surface inspections.

The majority of buildings in the Parks are subject to annual safety audit reports undertaken through Safer Communities Directorate. The audits are arranged through Park Services. 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 recommendations are included within the 5-year programme of landscape improvements (see section 10.6)

8.1.4 Contracted cleaning services – Toilets

There is one toilet block operational in Central Park. The cleaning of these toilets is the responsibility of Operational Services. The service specification is included within the ground's maintenance contract. The toilets are subject to three visits per week. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Floors and surfaces are cleaned, and sundries replenished. Litter and graffiti are removed and drains, and waste pipes are unblocked. The Contract Manager inspects the facilities once a week. The toilets are inspected daily by Parks staff. Toilets are steam cleaned with pressure jets every 3 months.

8.1.5 Play Areas

The play area on site is inspected daily by the Grounds Maintenance staff and any defects are recorded on inspection forms and passed to the Play Inspectors who will instigate the necessary repairs. The inspectors routinely visit all the 120 play sites within the borough.

In addition to the previously mentioned the play site at the park has a ROSPA inspection carried out annually plus the Council's insurers arrange their own independent inspection.

The Playground inspector is required to carry out visual inspections and simple physical testing of play equipment, minor maintenance, and report on condition of playground. Routine maintenance would include retightening, replacing, lubricating, and cleaning of fixings, fastening and moving parts, the removal of graffiti, litter, sharps, and other debris.

Maintenance of the park's ancillary buildings is undertaken by contractors employed by Facilities Management.

Funding comes from Central Government and Council tax receipts. Income is derived from sports bookings, and some public open space hires.

A Repair and Renewals Provision account is in operation. This covers works such as re-roofing, refurbishment of gates/railings/walls/fencing, resurfacing paths, refurbishment of toilets etc. Annual contributions are made from the service revenue account in order to build sufficient funds for later use. This enables asset managers to plan for future work rather than to bid for funds as part of the annual budget process for the year in which the work is to be carried out and provides certainty that the monies will be available when required. Schemes are reviewed on a regular

basis to enable annual contributions to be adjusted to ensure costs of the work are covered. The rules governing the use of the Provision are that work is to be on a cycle of no less than 3 years and at a cost of no less than £5,000.00. Its use is at the discretion of the Service Manager.

8.1.6 Water safety in general

Chelmsford City Council is aware of the danger of open bodies of water and uses the banding system produced by RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) to identify the scale of the danger to the public and to assist with the safe management of water bodies in its ownership.

8.1.7 Miscellaneous items

A Repair and Maintenance Budget is also in operation. This is for minor items such as repairing vandal damage, and general maintenance items not covered by other provision. The Park team draw on this budget in order to action repair of faults/ damage found on their daily inspection of the park.

In 2005 an independent D.D.A. Audit was undertaken. Certain works were determined to be required as a result. of the audit and phased works to comply with DDA recommendations were scheduled.

8.2 Grounds Maintenance Standards and obligations

The Grounds Management Service undertakes grounds maintenance. The 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, seasonal and permanent planting beds, trees, hedges), grass sports pitches, tennis courts and hard landscape including furniture, litter collection and cleaning duties, and locking/ unlocking duties. The performance level requirements are borne out of the departure from CCT contracts and Park's reorganisation.

The Grounds Maintenance standard controls the standards of health and safety management expected of Grounds Management Services. Grounds Management Services are bound to adopt safe systems of work, to ensure that all health, safety, and welfare measures required by enactments and/or regulations are complied with and ensure that all employees observe all the provisions to ensure health and safety at work.

Grounds Management Services maintain copies of all risk assessments and produce method statements on elimination/control of said risks. Health & Safety issues are an agenda item at the fortnightly Parks meetings held between the Head of Service and Senior Managers.

The relevant clauses within the document are listed under the following headings.

- Performance of Service
- Standards of Service
- Contractors staff
- Health and Safety
- Part One Health and Safety Statement, Part Two Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Certificate of Safety Policy

Safety, Health and Welfare Measures

- Health and Safety clauses are contained within the contract preambles covering the general items listed below:
- Statutory Obligations
- Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Management
- Noise control
- Storage –Special Provisions
- Fires
- Access to the Public
- Protection of Existing Structures, Surfaces and Vegetation
- Damage Arising
- Methods, Materials, Machinery, Vehicles and Mechanical Plant
- Vehicles
- Notification
- Inspection Procedures and Contract Monitoring
- Pesticides and Fertilisers: (legislation), (practice/ guidance notes), (storage and transportation; client/contractor liaison and notification), (operative certification), (application/contamination), (machinery and equipment), (disposal), (cleaning of equipment).

The daily inspection of the park by the onsite parks staff incorporates an element of general health and safety review. Damage and faults are recorded, and remedial work actioned. The public can report faults to Park Services by contact numbers advertised in the park. The health and safety of visitors is reviewed via the inspection regime in operation in the park (see Section 3.4).

Generally, in accordance with principles of the Council's Community Plan the use of

herbicides and pesticides are kept to a minimum. Contractors use only those herbicides pesticides or cleaning agents, which are approved for use and as specified in the contract.

All buildings within the park are subject to an annual Building Safety Audit undertaken by Technical & Parking Services. This audit covers building maintenance, security as well as general safety, fire safety, legionella, and mobility access.

Staff, both grounds men and caretakers can help 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.

The Park play areas are subject to daily safety inspections by play staff and an annual safety audit undertaken by the Community Service & Play Manager and independently by an annual inspection by a qualified engineer.

Main pedestrian surfaces are kept clear of debris and snow under the terms of the Grounds maintenance Specification. Safe access checks are undertaken on a four-monthly cycle. Resurfacing of paths is routinely undertaken under the Repairs and Renewal Provision.

The landscape elements within the park have been categorised as follows:

Landscape Type	Work Clause in Grounds Maintenance Specification	Minimum expected frequency of operations/ year. (Guide only performance specification)
Grass Amenity Fine Natural	1.7	Min. 14 cuts Min. 25 cuts Min. 1 cuts
Sports turf	No unique feature	As per type
Shrub Beds	1.8	Min. 7 visits
Herbaceous Border	1.8	Min. 9 visits
Paving Paths and roadways	11.4	Min 15 occ Mechanical sweep five times a year April, June, October, December, and February Min 2 Occ
Miscellaneous Detail	11.11	Min 3 Occ
Hedges	1.9	Min 9 visits
Trees		Min 10 Occ
Native species plantation	11.1	Min 2 Occ
Site furniture		

Landscape Features	11.1	April-Sept. min 2 visits Oct-March min. 1visit
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8.3 Health & Safety obligations

Grounds Management Services are fully compliant with all aspects of the Health & Safety legislation. Management keeps various files on the subject to ensure compliance and to encourage good working practices.

The Health and Safety File includes:

- The Safety Bulletin Register- internal memos on safety related issues.
- The Risk Assessment Register- assessment of TASK (under the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations), e.g., grass cutting, use of hand tools and other parks equipment, toilet cleaning etc.
- The COSHH assessment register –assessment of SUBSTANCE used (under the Control of Substances (Hazardous to Health) Regulations), e.g., weed killer, fertiliser, cleaning products etc.
- The Safe Working Practice Register –assessment of Application, i.e., equipment pre-use checks, starting and operating procedures, repairs, and adjustments etc.
- Statutory Test Certificates
- Depot audits
- Accident reports

The Risk Assessment File includes:

- Generic risk assessments, e.g., grass maintenance, tree pruning,
- Site specific risk assessments, e.g., water, traffic, sharps/needles.
- Relevant Codes of Practice, e.g., grass cutting on steep banks.
- Sample Immunisation sheet
- Leptospirosis card

Use of tools and machinery.

The Health and Safety implications for the maintenance of tools and machinery are taken very seriously. All tools and machinery are inspected and maintained according to manufacturer’s guidelines. Machinery is serviced mid-season and a further full service takes place during the winter months.

Training for the safe use of tools and machinery

All staff are trained in the use of specific equipment and attend courses at appropriate training centres, particularly Writtle Agricultural College. Refresher courses are also utilized when necessary. When new equipment is purchased, manufacturers are required to give training demonstrations to operatives.

Use of chemicals/COSHH Assessments.

Fuel, chemicals, and other substances are stored in designated areas under the 'Control of Substances Harmful to Health Regulations 1992'.

The following general precautions are followed, in conjunction with those detailed in the individual COSHH assessment sheets:

- Follow safe working practices, avoiding skin & eye contact with chemicals and avoiding breathing fumes, vapours, or dusts.
- Read and follow all instructions, safety precautions and emergency procedures detailed on the containers and in the assessment sheets.
- Wear all PPE as recommended in the assessments.
- Do not smoke, drink or consume food whilst using, or in the vicinity of, the products listed in the assessment.
- Observe good hygiene –thoroughly wash all parts of the body and remove any clothing which may be contaminated with chemicals before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- Follow all relevant codes of practice when using pesticides.
- Keep all chemicals sealed in their original, labelled containers and store in a secure place: when not actually in use, dispose of used containers in a safe and proper manner.
- Clean all application equipment after use.

Personal Protective Equipment – All operatives are provided with and required to wear appropriate personal equipment under the 'Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992'.

PAT testing and Portable Appliance testing

Any item of electrical equipment over 12 months old is tested on an annual basis as required by the regulations.

8.4 Accident reporting and recording

Accident records for the Parks are kept by Parks Services who have an appointed person to manage first aid on site to cover fixtures 7 days per week. Standard CCC accident forms are completed wherever possible.

Parks Service Procedures. Grounds Management Services are required to fill out standard accident forms for each incident whether involving staff (Accident/Incident Report) or members of the public (Report of Accident to Members of the Public on Council Property) These are passed to the teams Health & Safety Coordinators and to the Health and Safety

Advisor in Personnel Services. First Aid / Accident notification forms once completed are immediately sent to the advisor.

The Grounds Operational Services Manager is required to report immediately any incidents involving health and safety to the Council's Safety Advisor.

All accidents must be reported to the relevant manager and entered into the Accident book. An accident/incident report form must also be completed. A weekly summary of accidents is sent to the Health and Safety Advisor for monitoring purposes.

If following an accident at work an employee is unable to perform normal duties for more than 3 days, the HSE (Health & Safety Executive) area office must be notified using the RIDDOR form F2508 and the Health and Safety Advisor informed.

A 'First Aid and Accident Reporting Safety Code' is issued to all Grounds Management staff.

8.5 Inspections and monitoring

All services carried out are subject to regular quality inspections by the Parks Quality Performance Officer. Table 1 illustrates the current inspection regime in operation in the park. Copies of all inspection sheets are attached at Appendices, including the daily inspection sheet.

Table 1 Park Inspection regime

	Toilets	Play Area	Buildings/ Structures	Litter	Dog Bins
CCC Parks Management staff	*	*	*	*	*
Grounds Maintenance Services		*	*	*	
GMC – Quality and Performance Officer	*	*	*	*	*
Playground Inspector and Maintenance Contractor		*			
CCC Environmental Services	*				*
CCC Architectural & Design Services			*		

The area supervisors inspect their sites on a weekly basis. The Park's staff inspects 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.

Buildings

The inspection regime is undertaken by the Parks team and consists of daily visual inspections by the parks staff dedicated to the park: - The Park staff inspects all the buildings on a daily basis including the inspection of toilets any defects are reported to building maintenance inspectors who implement any necessary repairs within set performance agreements.

Building Services undertake formal inspections of facilities and features at the intervals recorded in the boxes below. And / or options relate to inspections that are sometimes increased due to seasonal activities.

Building maintenance inspections	6 monthly
Security inspections	Daily and/or bi-monthly
Safety inspections	Monthly and/ or 6 monthly
Hygiene patrol	Daily – summer/ school holidays weekends – all year

Table 2 Park Building Inspection regime

	Staff Welfare Building	Public Changing facilities	Toilets
Risk assessment	Yearly	Yearly	Yearly
Building maintenance	6 monthly	6 monthly	6 monthly
Security	2 monthly	2 monthly	2 monthly
General safety	6 monthly	6 monthly	6 monthly
Fire safety	monthly	monthly	monthly
Mobility access	4 monthly	4 monthly	4 monthly
Legionella	Annually	Annually	Annually
DDA – monitoring	Annually	Annually	Annually

Toilets

Toilets are subject to three visits per week by the cleaning contractor (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) Parks Staff inspect the toilets daily. Any major defects are reported to Operational Services.

Play area

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

Rivers and open bodies of water

Staff in Central Park are responsible for the care and maintenance of the riverbanks and in the main these features are managed to benefit wildlife. Care is taken to remove objects that have been thrown into the river. Problems relating to silting and riverbank erosion are monitored and reported to the Environment Agency.

8.6 Accident & Vandalism reporting at Central Park

Accidents occurring on site are reported by either site staff or members of the public. Full details are recorded centrally.

Control of Vandalism

The national trend of rising anti-social behaviour affects all parks to a lesser or greater extent. Any damage generally occurs during the evenings when the park is least used.

Park policy on vandalism has evolved in accordance with CCC 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.

The current approach consists of:

On site presence of staff during the working day

- Security patrols as required and dependent on events and occurrences.
- Public co-operation through ParkWatch
- 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. The Parks staff are required to report any theft, vandalism or other damage caused to any plant, horticultural feature, or location immediately to the Grounds Management Services Manager. Reinstatement works are carried out under instruction. All incidents reported on the Park Watch telephone number are recorded by the duty officer and a report is forwarded to the Police as and when the situation dictates.

Graffiti is reported immediately to the Grounds Management Services 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.

ParkWatch Report Line

ParkWatch is a 24-hour incident line aimed at reducing vandalism and anti-social behaviour in any park or Public Open Space owned by Chelmsford City Council.

Calls may relate to security, vandalism, fire, misuse of council property, traveler encroachment, weather related damage, defective or unsafe play equipment in CCC managed areas or persons locked in CCC parks after gates have been closed.

When members of the public are locked in parks once the area has been secured, ParkWatch staff will only attend where children are present or where vulnerable individuals are involved.

Calls relating to illicit or inappropriate behavior, serious offences or acts of violence should be directed to the police in the first instance.

The contact number for ParkWatch is 07831 189918.

For all other general queries please report them to the Waterhouse Lane Depot on 01245 605566 during normal office hours.

8.7 Security in the Park

Park users need to feel safe whilst in the park and to that effect the Service has dedicated parks staff working on site. Staff are permanently on site throughout the working day, and over weekends as necessary – primarily for litter clearance.

High standards of upkeep and cleanliness, and the presence of permanent park staff and sports club members are contributory factors to the creation of a sense of security.

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

Parks staff are able to report anti-social behaviour to the local Police and, and pass on any

relevant details e.g., a person’s description and car registration numbers.

Details of how to contact Parks & Green Spaces in an emergency are displayed at the main park entrances. (Park Watch, Ranger Service and Service telephone numbers being displayed). In addition, for the more serious crimes and incidents Essex Police contact numbers are also displayed.

Park & Green Spaces operates a lost property procedure, including items found or lost in the park.

Strong links have been forged with the Community Police/Community Support Officers who visit the park frequently, both Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers – PCSO’s.

As with all the City’s parks the three Parks are covered by the Park Watch Scheme. ParkWatch is an initiative run by the City Council with Police support and operates in all parks 24/7. People can talk direct to the duty officer or send a text to the phone number. Each call is logged, with the information / contact details remaining confidential.

Parks are also routinely visited by a private security firm which provide an out of hours service when staff are away from site. All major parks are patrolled out of hours by an external security firm, with a minimum of one visit being made to each site per night. Sites with identified problems are visited more often until problems abate. Visits during daylight hours may also be made during school holiday periods.

The findings of visitor surveys suggest that the city is perceived as a safe place to live and visit.

Chelmsford’s Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership meets regularly to co-ordinate a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour in the city by working across the boundaries of the individual organisations represented by the group. The partnership brings together Chelmsford City Council with the Police, other local authorities, health specialists, emergency services and various voluntary and statutory organisations.

24/7 Report lines

Noise line	01245 265504
ParkWatch	07831 189918
Other Emergency	07836 256688

8.8 Park Lighting

The majority of the park path network are recognised public highway and cycle ways are lit by street lighting columns maintained by Essex County Council. Each column has its own identification number and contact number for the public to call and report any defects that might occur.

8.9 Issues of conflict, safety, and antisocial behaviour

Control of Dogs and Dog Fouling

Dogs and dog owners are an important part of the park community as dogs bring life and energy to a park and their owners provide surveillance during early mornings and late evenings.

It is extremely important, however, that dogs are controlled in the parks as they can also cause problems if their owners are irresponsible.

Throughout the life of the park, it is essential that dog owners act responsibly by:

- Picking up after their dogs immediately. This is a legal requirement under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.
- Disposing of any dog mess in the dog waste bins provided, not in playground or litter bins.
- always Keeping an eye on their dogs, preventing them from causing nuisance or entering spaces that are obviously not designed for them such as playgrounds and amenity bedding areas.
- Respecting other park users
- Respecting the trees and equipment in the park, not allowing their dogs to maul or damage them.

Dog-bins are located throughout the parks to encourage owners to clean up after their dogs. They are emptied on a regular basis. In an instance were a member of the public wishes to report an overflowing dog bin they can phone 01254 606620.

Refuse and Recycling are responsible for emptying and cleaning the bins on a weekly basis. The Park staff can request more frequent servicing as and when necessary. The bins are inspected daily by park staff.

Dog fouling is not seen as a major problem as dog owners who use the site do so responsibly recognising that the area is primarily dedicated to sports use.

Chelmsford's Dog Wardens aim to respond to reports of stray dogs within one hour.

The Dog Wardens also enforce The Dogs (Fouling of Land Act 1996) * in public places and areas designated by the council. They also undertake foot patrols in highly populated dog walking areas such as parks and housing estates, and regularly speak to the public. Free bags are offered to the public for clearing up after their pets. The Dog Wardens also supply parish councils with larger quantities of bags to ensure that the public have easy access to the bags provided.

People allowing their dogs to foul but refusing to clear up after their pets are liable to incur a fixed penalty ticket from the Wardens or prosecution for failure to pay.

Various information leaflets are available at the Environmental Services reception, obtained through various external agencies i.e., RSPCA, NCDL (now known as dog trust).

Chelmsford Dog Wardens regularly liaise over the installation of dog bins in public places and erect signage informing the public of the current legislation.

Failure to clear up after your dog in a public place or an area designated by the council is an offence and could lead to a £50.00 fixed penalty being issued by the Dog Warden, or even court prosecution.

Dog Wardens are fully trained for the Micro Chipping of dogs and offer this service to the public at a small cost. Other services are also available, and wardens are happy to act in an advisory capacity to talk to schools and interested groups.

Control of litter

(See also Energy and recycling information 5.9)

Grounds Management Services are responsible for all litter/rubbish collection and general cleansing in the park. Under the current specification they are bound to collect and clear litter the same day as it is generated and remove off site to their tip (or alternatively to a litter collection point), 7 days a week, and within 3 hours of the clients written instruction. Category A litter, i.e., that greater than 100mm in any direction on any area of amenity or fine grass, is removed within 24 hours. Litter on any other area (Category B) is removed once a day. All permanent litterbins are emptied regularly in accordance with the Standards specified.

Standard	Frequency of Emptying	Period
A	Once a day Once a day	Summer (Easter to August) Bank Holiday Remainder of year – except Winter Bank Holidays
B	Once a day	Except Winter Bank Holidays
C	Once a day Twice a week	Summer Winter
D	Once a week	Winter

Litter is an item on the daily inspection schedule.

The dog wardens employed by Operational Services are empowered to issue fixed penalty notices to anyone dropping litter in the park. The wardens patrol the Council's parks on a regular basis targeting known hot spots.

Control of drug use

Incidents of drug abuse in the Parks are low with very few needles being found within the Parks. 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.

Management of staged events

The following health and safety procedures are in place regarding Events held in the three Parks. Events are arranged through Parks & Green Spaces, where officers are responsible for monitoring Health & Safety requirements of an event.

Special event organisers and helpers are required to:

- Submit to the Council a completed application form detailing the proposed event.
- Comply with the conditions in the Schedule of Conditions for Special Events' form issued to all Applicants.
- Have public liability insurance cover of at least £5 million & provide a copy of the policy document at least one month before the date of the event.
- Submit to the Council copies of all licenses, event programme and the event layout plan.
- Submit to the Council a written risk assessment for the event if required.

All schools' events & activities must be booked. All schools are sent a pre-visit guidance note that ensures adequate adult/child supervision ratios, explains staff responsibilities and clothing requirements.

The Parks Service has a policy of regular Police checks on staff involved with leading activities for children. All staff working with children have received appropriate training through an accredited assessor employed by the council. Staff also complies with a generic assessment for school visits. Demonstrators/participants are issued with Health & Safety guidelines based on this.

Qualified first aiders are available at staged events and always carry first aid kits during those events. The St John's Ambulance Service attends larger events.

Park Services carry out risk assessments for booked events that involve the use of tools or substances. Where children are taking part in such events they must be accompanied by an adult/guardian.

Was it is planned to stage guided walks the controls listed in the work operations and activities risk assessments are adhered to together with BTCV's guidelines and EWT's Codes of Good Practice?

Parental consent forms are requested if there are plans to involve the media in the activities and photographs are to be taken and used with press articles.

8.10 Complaint's procedure – Customer Promise

Complaints & enquiries can be received in person, verbally or in writing. Staff are trained in

how to handle and deal with complaints in a courteous and polite manner.

Front line staff working on the site have an option to use 'business cards' if they are unable to resolve the problem themselves. The cards give people the contact details for Parks officers and contain information giving several ways of contacting a manager. On the reverse of the card details are printed relating to Park Watch Report, a 24-hour report line and useful enquiry line numbers.

All complaints are logged on a computerised system and the complainant is given a unique reference number to aid in follow up. We aim to resolve complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible. Parks Services operate an industry approved system, Positive Action, Result and Resolution.

Chelmsford City Council has a three-stage complaint procedure. Stage 1 tries to resolve problems informally face to face and stage 2 is formal (with complaints received in writing or by phone). Complaints are acknowledged, investigated, and responded to in 10 working days. The complainant has the right to appeal to the Chief Executive (20 days). If the matter is still not resolved, the individual can thereafter take the matter up with the Local Government Ombudsman to ensure the Council has acted fairly and in accordance with its agreed procedures.



9 The Park Audit: Physical description and use of the space

9.0 Natural Fabric

This section describes the different 'living' components that make up the essential character of the 'park' – landform, trees, grass, shrubberies, and sports areas. It seeks to describe how these are important to the physical appearance of the park for visitors and to determine other contributions which these components make to the habitat value of the park.

Biodiversity

The existing natural assets of the parkland will be conserved and enhanced. The Park will be managed to realise its biodiversity potential within the constraints of public use. The aim will be to maintain and, where possible to enhance an appropriate mosaic of habitats (grassland, trees, freshwater, woodland etc) and within these to encourage as much structural and species diversity as possible and to maintain the balance of succession.

Policies regarding issues regarding biodiversity are drafted with the help of an independent environmental consultant. Chelmsford subscribes to partnership working and are active contributors to the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan through the Chelmsford Biodiversity Forum and the Councils own BAP.

Ecology & Wildlife

There have been numerous improvements to the ecology of the parks already.

Opportunities for future improvements to the park ecology include:

- Maintaining tree cover in accordance with the tree management and replanting strategy.
- Continue to reduce reliance on chemical herbicides and pesticides and using more ecologically sound methods of control.
- Continue to modify grassland management regimes where appropriate to increase the biodiversity content within sites.

With reference to the Community Plan: Environment and Biodiversity, the Council's goal is to protect native plants, animals' species, and their habitats by promoting and implementing sustainable conservation management practices and ensuring that pollution levels do not exceed the capability of natural systems to recover.

With reference to the Community Plan: land use management, the Council's objectives cover:

- The protection and enhancement of important natural resources.
- The protection and enhancement of important green links within the town and green wedges between settlements.

Conservation plans and environmental action plans for specific sites are all guided by the principles set in the Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan, which in turn feeds into the Essex BAP. The successes of strategies relating to the environment are attributed to partnership working with other bodies including the County Council, statutory agencies, and the voluntary sector.

9.1 Habitat creation and management

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, October 2006 places a duty of care on local authorities to manage land holdings in a manner sympathetic to biodiversity and wildlife.

Trees

The overall structure of the tree planting with succession of trees, informal groups and open assemblies of parkland trees will be maintained through an ongoing planting and tree renewal programme with purposeful sighting, selection, and enhanced range of species.

Grasslands

The extent of the grassland shall be maintained generally in its current regimes with the majority held as amenity grass. Different mowing regimes including meadow will be implemented to ensure that the character of the sward remains appropriate to the nature of each area and its use and to, where possible, contribute to biodiversity targets.

Differential mowing regimes are employed within the sports ground. Within the grounds maintenance specification heights of cut are detailed in work schedules. It is hoped that in future we can develop a range of different cutting regimes across the site to encourage natural flora to re-colonise areas of the parkland.

Fauna

The combination of the three parks supports a broad range of native fauna and is an important site for wildlife being a buffer of green space within the urban landscape.

Water Management and riverbank maintenance

The River Can flows through Central Park. In addition, there are a number of water courses on site. Consideration is given to the fact that water from these sources enters the natural eco-system and as such care is taken not to pollute these courses with herbicide residue or high concentrations of artificial fertiliser arising from maintenance operations associated with the sports playing fields. When and wherever possible litter is removed from the river flowing through parks.

Landscape & Design Considerations

The combined Parks are key areas of open space due to their location near to the centre of Chelmsford.

A full landscape appraisal of Parks was carried out during the preparation of the Development Plan. The plan identified contemporary design issues and opportunities for development. 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 much of the parkland is primarily used as a sporting venue, but this should not exclude other groups from enjoying the facilities.
- To ensure that developments accord with the strategic context of the Park
- To provide for better way-marked footpath links to, through and around the park
- To preserve and enhance existing appropriate leisure facilities.
- To develop children's play facilities in appropriate locations
- To develop interpretation of the park.
- To protect, enhance and develop horticulture.
- To protect, enhance and interpret ecology and wildlife.
- To provide quality playing surfaces

The horticultural performance skills of the ground staff are of the highest standard. The performance and standards of service are monitored under the terms of the contract.

9.2 Buildings and Hard Landscape Fabric

Buildings and Structures

The Park has a number of buildings and structures that the Service is required to maintain. Parks & Heritage Services is the key Service for managing much of the infrastructure on site.

Toilets Central Park Main

Park's maintenance buildings Central Park Main

Play areas Central Park Main & Bell Meadow
Café by the Lake Concession Central Park Main

Boundary Treatments and Entrances

The main vehicular entrance for maintenance vehicles is via Waterhouse Lane for Central Park West & Central Park Main with a second access point of Parkway. Public travelling to the parks by car are able to park at various car park in the town centre.

There are numerous pedestrian access points to the parks which are shown on the site drawings contained in this plan.

Road and Path Network

Roadways in the Parks are all hard surfaced tarmac finishes. The path network is 'adopted highway' and serves as a Sustrans Cycle route in addition to a pedestrian footpath. Such paths are zoned to indicate which paths have dual use.

The path network in the main is adopted public highway and as such much of the network is maintained by Essex County Council.

Park Lighting

Much of the path network is lit with the lighting columns being the responsibility of Essex County Council. Lighting inspection regimes are organised by ECC (Essex County Council) whilst the 'avenue trees' tree pruning regimes are organised through Parks & Green Spaces.

9.3 Park furniture & Signage

The Park provides a variety of park furniture and structures specifically designated and located for the use, safety, and comfort of visitors. The main elements and associated issues are set out below.

Bench seats

There are over 50 benches in the park supplied by Orchard Seating's – Packham bench design. New benches are now installed with armrests to be DDA compliant and are also set onto enlarged concrete plinths to enable a wheelchair to draw up beside the bench.

In addition to the conventional seats simple wooden benches have been installed at chosen locations along the riverbank. These benches are supplied by Street Master.

Picnic Tables

Picnic tables have been installed in Central Park West, Central Park Main, and Bell Meadow. The tables are made from heavy duty timber and come from the Orchard Seating Range.

Litterbins and dog bins

Litterbins on the site are supplied by Streetmaster from their Cardiff range. Dog bins are supplied by: Earth Anchors, Unicorn and Glasdon.

Over time Dog bins will be standardised to that of Unicorn bins.

The management team considers that there are a sufficient number of bins to suit visitor needs, although this will be monitored to ensure the level of adequacy is maintained.

Signage & site interpretation

Quality signage is provided at the main park entrances and throughout the park to help orientate the visitor.

9.4 Public Accessibility

Our open access policy actively seeks to promote parks to the whole community. Much work has been done to understand the needs of minority groups and other hard to reach groups. Due to the nature and topography of the site and its 'gateway to' adjacent natural environment the value of the park is recognised especially for those who find it difficult to enjoy the health and well-being benefits which access to nature can bring.

Getting to the parks

By Car

People arriving by car are afforded good adjacent access to car parks.

Pedestrian

Pedestrians can access the parks from a number of points indicated on the site access plan. Aside from recreational wandering the park has key routes between shopping centre, station, and residential areas to the south.

Access for the disabled

All paths within the park are designed in accordance with DDA and Part M regulations.

A proportion of the equipment in the children's play area have been chosen and installed with people of varying levels of disability in mind. The integration carousel is designed specifically for wheelchair users.

Cycling

Cycling within Central Park West, Central Park Main and Bell Meadow is encouraged and there are cycle lanes alongside the main footpaths. The laid-out cycle lanes link into the national Sustrans Route.

Maintenance Vehicles

Maintenance vehicles can access the main park via Waterhouse Lane. Maintenance vehicles must conform to the 5-mph speed limit indicated and are required to operate hazard lights when travelling along the paths. Traffic movements are kept to the bare minimum. There is a parks maintenance depot situated in the middle of the park.

Emergency and Event Vehicles

Access for Emergency and Event Vehicles tends to be via Waterhouse Lane and Parkway entrances. Emergency vehicles can access at these points at any time as the locking system enables their crew's access.

By public transport

Buses - The Park is on First Bus main route. In its central location the parkland is close to a number of bus routes.

Trains - The Park is in short walking distance from Chelmsford Station.

Access Audit and Access Plan

In 2005 independent consultants were commissioned to produce an access audit and access plan for all parks embracing all aspects concerning the Disability Discrimination Act. An action plan was devised with phased improvements in line with the recommendations.

To complement this a recent ROSPA Audit recommends improvements to active monitoring. This is being achieved through robust inspection reporting by the site staff. Inspection reports are regularly scrutinised by the Performance and Monitoring officer.

9.5 Access Target Groups

Chelmsford's Parks are open to all, and we encourage community use of the parks and green spaces throughout the City and Borough.

For the communities served by all three Parks we look to increase and broaden the impact of culture and sport, to enrich individual lives, strengthen communities and improve the places where people live, now and for future generations.

Four main groups have been highlighted regarding accessibility within the park over and above the sports user.

Older People

Older people are an important user group of the park. This group of people use the park for informal exercise and relaxation. Organised 'Healthy Walks' from the park are being undertaken.

Heart & Sole is an initiative set up in partnership with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) 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 exercise for anyone interested in participating. Doctors can refer patients to this programme through the local GP referral 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.

Children and young people

To further enhance access to culture and sport for children both play and sports programmes are run from the parks over holiday periods to provide opportunities to develop their talents and enjoy the benefits of participation. In addition, as recognised drivers we look to increase the take up of cultural and sporting opportunities for people in this age group. We seek to tackle the increase in obesity among children under 11 years and similarly we seek to focus people aged 16 and above on the sporting opportunities available to them.

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.

People Counters

During the life of this plan, it is envisaged that people counters will be installed to measure the volume of people accessing the parks, on foot or by car. It is seen as most important that the volume and profile of park visitors is known, in order to access usage patterns and plan for the future.

To date we have people counters at the pedestrian access points to Bell Meadow.



10 The journey towards excellence

Shaping the future

10.1 Landscape Character

In this section the aesthetic characteristics of the parks are considered in relation to views and vistas both within the parks, into the parks and from the parks.

- Sports activity zones
- Play zone
- Picnic zones
- Nature zones
- Formal Garden zone
- River & Water Zones

The visual character of a park is dependent upon the quality and nature of the views.

Policy: Landscape Character

The parks will be managed to conserve and enhance its overall character and locally distinct variations of character areas within, whilst maintaining and complementing the diversity of the natural and recreational settings. The key views and vistas to, from, and within the park will be protected and where appropriate, strengthened.

10.2 Key Management issues

The Parks in general serve the wards of St Andrews, Marconi and Waterhouse Farm and their immediate environs. They provide activities and scope for anyone enjoying outdoor pursuits.

10.3 Site Specific Features

Facilities available to the visitor

Central Park

Central Park is situated alongside the River Can and has strategic recreational importance and offers many walking and cycling routes. The Park provides the town centre's primary

green lung and being situated in the changing city context, is crucial to the success of a sustainable town centre providing green links with residential neighbourhoods.

Central Park West

- Linear site
- Mature trees
- Bounded to north by residential/fire station/AWA flood mound defenses.
- Bounded to south by river.
- Grassland character
- Tennis courts
- Cycle track linkage
- Fishing in the River Can
- Riverside walks
- Seating and picnic tables

Central Park Main

- Large central space dissected by tree lined path network (including Centenary Avenue of donated trees)
- Linkage via underpass to Bell Meadow
- Bounded by noisy road to north.
- Bounded by river to south.
- Railway viaduct on western boundary
- Large lake at western end
- Maintenance depot
- Pedestrian linkage to adjoining housing via an ornamental 'stone bridge' to south, and less attractive 'engineers' bridge to Virgin Active/un adopted footpath to NWS car park, r/o indoor cricket school.
- Fishing in the River Can
- Riverside walks
- Cycle track linkage
- Children's equipped play area
- Football mini-pitch and kick about goals

- Skate ramp facilities
- Tennis courts
- Seating and picnic tables
- Bridge to Seymour Street Grade 11 listed – concrete replication of the Stone Bridge in the High Street

Frank Whitmore Green

- Basketball pad

Memorial Garden

- Landscape Gardens
- Sculpture

Meteor Way

- Linear site connects to Marconi Ponds via pedestrian link/cycleway.
- Bounded to north by river.
- Bounded to south by small units/car park.
- Bounded to west by busy road.
- Grassland character
- Kick about pitch
- Fishing in the River Can
- Riverside walks

Marconi Ponds LNR

- Linear site connects into Central Park main via footpath to Meteor Way and the pedestrian 'Stone Bridge.'
- Bounded to the east by railway line.
- Bounded to the west by industrial area.
- Bounded to the south by residential.
- Excellent pedestrian linkages to Central Park main and Meteor Way
- Large, secured pond.

- Conservation planting
- Seating
- Cycle track linkage
- Managed to benefit fauna and flora.

Bell Meadow

- Small linear park
- Small narrow frontage onto rear of Marks & Spencer's
- Bounded road/service yards to north
- Bounded by river and Sky Blue Pasture to south
- Existing mature trees
- Cycle path and footpath run separately but parallel to one another
- Children's play area
- Seating and picnic tables
- Seeks to be a formal park with traditional bedding

Sky Blue Pastures

- Small linear park
- Bounded by noisy road (Parkway) to south
- Bounded by river and Bell Meadow to north
- Slopes from south to north
- Existing mature trees

10.4 Landscape and site Features

Soft landscape features

Trees – All the Parks benefit from the mature trees that help to frame the setting.

Plantings – The planting strategy aims to work with local growing conditions and reflect the desires of the public with emphasis on plants that will support nectar seeking insects and foraging birds.

Shrubs – Plantings designed for all year interest: Texture, form, and colour.

Ecology areas: The conservation theme in the park is a well-received addition as a developing resource for schools to use in their curriculum studies. Habitats include wildflower

areas, plantations of native hard wood species and plantings encouraging birds and nectar loving insects.

Hard landscape features

Paths, roadways, block paving, fencing, gates, and car parking areas are all maintained to a high standard and any repairs are undertaken in a sensitive manner taking care to use the correct materials to match with the existing.

Repairs to buildings, fixtures and fittings also take account of the type and style of construction.

Play equipment is repaired using the correct manufacturer's spare parts, likewise seats and litter bins. A partnership with the local PCT is currently being considered with a view to providing 'Green Gym' equipment.

In the design stage any new features being proposed are considered for their suitability by considering the type and style of the existing features.

Ecology – Ecological features on the site follow the general strategy through parks to protect and enhance wildlife and flora value whilst balancing the needs of the park user.

The climate Change Strategy and the Essex Local Area Agreement commits the Council to improving local biodiversity by increasing the proportion of local wildlife sites where positive conservation management is in place.

Enhancement of Wildlife Value – Drawn to Nature

- Increase and improve habitat linkages through appropriate targeted planting.
- Increase structural diversity of site.
- Increase species diversity of site.
- Maintain and enhance wildlife interest.
- Enhance habitat for existing Biodiversity Priority Species.
- Provide opportunities for colonisation by additional Biodiversity Priority Species

Botanical survey

- Trees – see tree survey.
- Fauna – List of sighted species to be compiled.
- Water fowl

Animals – Hedgehog, Grey Squirrel, Pipistrelle Bat, Fox, Rabbit, various mice, and voles.

Birds - Blackbird, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Green Woodpecker, House Sparrow, Pied wagtails, Collared doves, Crows, Wood pigeon, Robin, Mistle thrush, Wren, Linnet, Goldcrest, Song Thrush, Starling, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Magpies, Jackdaws and Jays.

Invertebrates – Butterflies – Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Peacocks, Commas, Tortoiseshell, Orange tip, hedge browns, white (all three types) Diptera. Bumblebee, Eyed Ladybird, 7-spot Ladybird,

Wildlife report

- Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

Dedicated areas for conservation

- Log pile and standing dead wood within the woodland area.
- Habitat creation to attract breeding bats and birds.
- Relaxed mowing regimes
- Planned riverbank maintenance.

Enhancement of areas of formal horticulture and fabricated visitor attractions

It is fundamentally important to ensure that maintenance of the parkland is budgeted for to ensure that it remains vibrant and attractive to its visitors.

To achieve these annual reviews are undertaken taking account of budgetary constraints & user aspirations.

The site action plans contain references to continuing improvements to the more formal areas of the park and increasing the richness of both the tree plantings and the shrub and herbaceous borders. There has been a period when no refurbishment or replacement planting was undertaken due to budget restrictions and high levels of vandalism. We are seeking to redress the situation by restoring some of the original design principles.

Enhancement of sporting & Fitness opportunities

Parks & Green Spaces facilitate a number of Sports User liaison meetings over the course of the year involving a number of clubs. The objective is to promote high standards and improvements, adding new actions to annual action plans and to discuss points of concern.

It is planned for the site to have a trim trail to compliment the good path network that already encourages people to exercise in pleasant surroundings.

Enhancement of learning & play facilities

The whole site is excellent as a learning environment and schools are encouraged to use the Park for various activities that link into the key stage learning modules.

The benefits in engaging with children are very much understood. Indeed, engaging with the various age groups has helped to reduced levels of vandalism.

When it comes to play children are consulted on the type of equipment, they would like to see installed in the designated formal play areas.

Natural play and incidental play in less prescribed spaces is encouraged. It is recognised that children and young people like to play throughout whatever domain is accessible to them, which goes well beyond manufactured play equipment. Children and young people relish opportunities for play that offers risk and challenge.

Educational facilities and interpretation

Use of the Parks by schools is actively encouraged. The parks provide a gateway from the urban development into a natural landscape.

School children are encouraged to get involved in wildlife days and planting days organised by the Service.

An interpretation plan has been established for the park based on the guiding principles in the interpretation strategy produced for the City's main parks..

- Engage the local community in all aspects of the borough's history and heritage, using the park as a focal point, in order to enhance their enjoyment of and interaction with the park and town for leisure, learning and recreation.
- Enable visitors to understand and appreciate the significance of the park itself, and to understand its role in reflecting the town's wider heritage.
- Enhance visitor experiences and enjoyment of the park, to ensure that visitors can easily and confidently locate its particular highlights, and to encourage them to explore links with other sites of interest around the town.
- Assist in enhancing Chelmsford City as a quality visitor destination and encourage visitors to explore the area, to stay longer and to return.
- Encourage involvement and participation at all levels.
- Provide a mechanism for evaluating and monitoring the interpretive initiative in order to guide future developments.
- Welcome and orientation points at the entrances.
- Community arts projects.



10.5 Landscape Strategy: Future development and Management

Section seven of this management plan sets out the physical description, use and character of the parkland and describes how the site is used and the significance of creating 'garden areas'. The purpose of setting out details of use and character is to ensure the dynamics of the site are understood to ensure that labour and financial resources are used to maximum benefit.

Key Management issues

The chain of Parks Landscape Management Strategy contains proposals for the future development of the Parks. Its purpose is to provide a guide to the management of the park, considering the objectives for which it exists, and key issues faced at the present time and in the medium and longer term."

The strategy aims and objectives were 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 Parks in their settings.
- Preserve, enhance, and interpret the ecological value of the Parks.

A summary of the main proposals of the strategy follows:

- The landscape architect to review and advise upon all design proposals.
- The preparation of a Landscape Management Plan
- The formation of a three Parks Consultative Group comprising of members of the Sports User.

- Undertaking local consultations to seek support for the Plan and then finalise it as a document adopted by the Council.
- The undertaking of a further study to identify funding opportunities to further enhances the facilities currently available.

10.6 Landscape improvements (2022-2026) Five-year Action Plan

The five-year Action Plan is set out in tables shown in the following pages. The plan sets out a series of targets, which respond to park issues, reflect the vision, and key objectives. It is not possible to achieve everything at one time, so the management plan contains a five-year action plan, reviewed annually to check on the progress with the agreed actions, to reprioritise against budgets as necessary and to pencil in new actions over the period of the plan.

The action plan is subject to annual review and update by the Parks and Horticultural Officer to ensure a continued programme of park improvement is achieved. In the current period of shrinking budgets improvements must be prioritised to ensure improvement is continuous and meaningful, any realigning of time frames will be explained at the time of annual summaries marking improvements made in service delivery.

Long term Objectives (with in the life of the plan – 4-5 years)

No	Objective	Time frame	Cost implication
Objective 1	Promote the parks as venues for community and sporting events creating a network of enhanced extension and new public spaces via LYC website.	1-5	n/a
Objective 2	Increase bulb planting in borders to add seasonal colour.	1-5	Current revenue budget
Objective 3	To develop a wide range of partnerships and stakeholders in the parks by identifying and bringing them together with a common aim.	1-5	Current revenue budget
Objective 4	To increase the perception of safety amongst park users by empowering park users to become involved. Upgrade CCTV system	1-5	£20k
Objective 5	To increase length of time spent in the park-by-park users through attractive additional facilities.	1-5	Current revenue budget
Objective 6	To make biodiversity a key element of the park, carrying out regular monitoring and ensuring that the maintenance is supportive of biodiversity within user constraints. Marconi Ponds Local Nature Reserve.	1-5	Current revenue budget

Objective 7	Encourage more use by the community by creating activities and interests that deliberately draw an audience through the park. Refer to policy for outdoor events.	1-5	n/a
Objective 8	To engender feeling of ownership by retaining a strong volunteer group.	4-5	Current revenue budget
Objective 9	Enhance the visibility of the green network and watercourses through the town centre emphasising the links with the countryside.	1-5	Current revenue budget
Objective 10	Maximise the potential of riverside green spaces as public parkland for recreation, tourism and routes for pedestrians and cyclists.	1-5	Current revenue budget
Objective 11	Continue with the tree management strategy within the parkland associated with establishing a succession of plantings to plan for existing trees nearing maturity.	1-5	Current revenue budget

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 for the Parks 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 site interpretation boards to promote conservation & biodiversity.	2-3	£6k
Objective 2	Undertake wildlife surveys to develop further understanding of the biodiversity of the site.	2	£3k
Objective 3	Enhance site entrance points through further landscaping.	2	£5k
Objective 4	To promote understanding of the value of the park to its users by the installation of interpretation panels giving information about the site (Historic context) developing further understanding of the historical nature of the site.	2-3	£10k
Objective 5	Further develop Helen Rollason area to include more bulbs together with wild flowers.	1-5	£1.5k
Objective 6	To promote the park to a wider audience by bringing in new demographics.	2-3	Current revenue budget

Short term actions (to be achieved within a year)

No	Objective	Time frame	Cost implication
Objective 1	Monitor water bills, check for leaks, and encourage adoption of water saving devices.	1	Current revenue budget
Objective 2	Install flood lights at the skate park	1-2	£15k
Objective 3	Create additional willow weave animal sculptures in Café grounds	1	£3k
Objective 4	Improve environs around lake.	1-5	£40k

The overall aims and objectives of the development plan are to:

- Develop a range of facilities that will improve access for all park users and increase usage.
- Visually enhance the site.
- Conserve water consumption.
- Access to Nature: 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.
- Ensure that fear of crime does not deter local community from using the park.
- Seek to ensure the best possible service by continuously reviewing policy and procedures.

10.7 Management issues; Objectives and Actions.

The following section highlights current key issues relating to the management and maintenance of the park. The key issues are grouped using the same key criteria as used by Green Flag.

To support the objective of providing a **well-managed Park**, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

Objective	Actions / Targets
Maintain Green Flag Status	Develop interpretation of park history on site in preparation for Green Heritage application.
Maintain a Geographical Information System for the Park	Record site details on GIS system
Maintain a customer care complements and complaints database (Escalator)	Record and monitor performance and problem resolution and opportunities to improve.
Maintain a staff presence.	Dedicated staff working on site during each working day, promoting sense of security in the visiting public.
Maintain long term training policy for all staff	Determine training needs at individual performance review interviews.
Maintain Parks Volunteering group	Develop a yearly works programme.
Achieving an Essex Playing Field Association Award	Secure award annually as a mark of performance recognition

To support the objective of providing a **welcoming Park**, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

The Park is managed to provide a peaceful and tranquil landscape with a varied ambience of formal and informal settings. Facilities and infrastructure are managed to promote access for all and an enjoyable experience for the public at large.

Objective	Actions / Targets
Consolidate style of seats and bins.	Bin and seat styles recorded in management plan for future replacements of the same type.
Introduce actions identified in the conservation plan.	Report on progress annually
Introduce more soft landscaping into the park setting.	Monitor and review progress annually.
Develop a house style for street furniture within the site.	House style determined and recorded in management plan.
Continue to provide open, free access to the public.	Ongoing
To improve access in and to the park	Develop opportunities with Essex County Council and the Environment Agency
Seasonal bedding displays have been maintained for the pleasure of the visiting public. The design for the summer and autumn arrangements are reviewed each year taking into consideration new introductions, seasonal changes and difficulties associated with climate change and water restrictions.	Secure award annually as a mark of performance recognition

To support the objective of providing a **healthy, safe, and secure Park**, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

The Park is managed to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for the visiting public and for staff working in the park.

Carry out risk assessments for all new park tasks.
Supply all staff with new or replacement uniforms and individual tools, as necessary.
Operate Park Watch.
Maintaining a system to document all incidents that take place in the park.
Maintaining a site defect and incident reporting system. Ensure priority removal of visible signs of vandalism – breakages / graffiti approach is taken.
Park Team to promote sense of security in visiting public through on-site presence of Park staff and security patrols.
To promote healthy living and well – being initiatives in the park

To support the objective of providing a **well maintained and clean Park**, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

The Park is managed to ensure the built fabric, hard and soft landscape are the maintained in line with best practice and to a high standard.

Progressing actions in the 5-year plan
Support a grounds maintenance management system to schedule and record all maintenance tasks.
Progressing building maintenance schedule agreed with Facilities Management.
Maintain high standards of horticulture.
Maintain hard surfaces and infrastructure in accordance with best works management practice.
Ensure that the standard of presentation remains high and responds to / adapts to changing visitor pressures.

To support the objective of providing a **Sustainable Park**, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

The Park is managed to maintain sustainable development through effective protection of the environment, prudent use of resources, social progress which recognises the needs of everyone and maintaining stable levels of economic growth.

Chelmsford City Council have signed up to Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

Introducing facilities to allow the composting of green waste generated in the park in order to produce mulch / soil improver / reduce park waste going to landfill.

Establish a system for recording all energy and fuel consumption in the park.

Record monthly water returns related to the automated watering systems; this aims to reduce consumption of resources including mains water to a minimum.

Restrict the use of residual herbicides within the park and eliminate all unnecessary chemical usage including pesticide usage.

Eliminate peat usage within the park and reduce demand in nursery production of plants. Respond to results of the non-peat trials and assess the potential to become peat free.

Adopt a tree management strategy within the site.

Maintain policy for memorial benches with 10 year agreement contracts

To support the objective of providing a **Park that addresses conservation of heritage and nature**, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

The Park is managed to protect and enhance the historic and natural environment.

Introduce actions to promote biodiversity.

Create areas of natural habitat within the park to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environments within the park.

Undertake wildlife surveys as a method to determining how maintenance specifications are impacting on biodiversity.

To maintain heritage pattern (trees) and features giving the park an ordered and developing character.

To support the objective of providing a **Park where community involvement is encouraged**, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

The Park is managed to improve the quality and range of services for visitors to and users of the park whilst encouraging wider access by priority groups and non-users.

Parks & Green Spaces are keen to work in partnership with other organisations to find synergies and combining projects to find savings and added value.

Promote Park Watch and the Volunteer scheme

Provide a range of appropriate events / activities to engage people of all ages and abilities with the diversity of the park.

To support the objective of providing a **well marketed and promoted Park**, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

The Park is marketed corporately to raise the profile and increase understanding of the role and value of Parks to visitors and residents alike.

Update and review Park's web pages relating to the park.

Establish links from the Parks and Green spaces web site to club websites and vice versa.

Promote Community and Club events within the park.

Widen the opportunity for visiting the Park and to raise understanding and awareness of the Park's resources and qualities.

10.8 Benchmarking

Various benchmarking groups are subscribed to in order to compare our performance to similar local authorities, including the APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) groups for Parks and Sports, and Parks East.

10.9 Future improvements: Key Areas

Over the course of the life of this plan improvements are planned in the following key areas.

- Improvements to lake and immediate environs
- Improvements to the general fabric of the park
- New and improved landscaped areas.
- Better site interpretation
- Park user / volunteer involvement

10.10 Annual Progress review

The Parks Team are responsible for ensuring the park is managed and developed in

accordance with the policy framework and objectives set out in the Park Management Plan and the action plan contained therein.

The gradual decrease of budgets, in real terms, is putting greater demand on the Park Team to achieve effective standards of maintenance and make the improvements desired.

We have been required to operate on a 'zero budget growth' basis for a number of years. Although general inflation has been added to wages and energy budgets each year, this has not met the ever-increasing costs and pressures on maintenance budgets.

We have also been subject to a number of efficiency cuts and savings as a result of the authority finding itself with a budget deficit. The net effect of these reductions in budgets and the unlikelihood of additional resources being made available for some time reflects the project lists in the plan, produced based on current trends in income and expenditure. However, should the Service be subject to further budget cuts over the next five years, the list of proposed projects will have to be reviewed accordingly?

10.11 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The issues identified above have to be considered in continuum and therefore are regularly reviewed. Responses, solutions, and remedial actions may be implemented in the short term (e.g., prompt response to remove graffiti) or may require longer-term planning and budgeting. The Parks & Horticulture Officer assembles respective improvement plans in January each year setting objectives, highlighting the key tasks / targets and priorities for action for the coming year. These are set with consideration of the revenue budgets discussed with and submitted to the Parks & Heritage Services Manager and with due regard to the potential risks / incidents which the park may have to deal with during the year.

A robust monitoring & evaluation framework is seen to be essential as it establishes the mechanisms required to monitor continuous improvement and assess the status of greenspace across the Local Authority area not least the Greater Central Park.

To check progress on and update action plans for Central Park the following methods are used:

- **Publish achievements** – achievements will be publicised using press releases and the Chelmsford City Council website to promote and celebrate successes.
- **Performance indicators** – progress will be checked against recognised performance indicators.
- **Management Plan Review** – Annual reviews of the Management Plan will be undertaken.
- **Customer feedback** – Resident surveys, user surveys, records of complaints, advice from parks users 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, Equality Impact Assessments, stakeholder mapping exercises, independent inspection 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 the Green Flag Award Scheme and the Essex Playing Fields Association will be assessed and acted upon.

Green Flag Judges Feedback

The annual application to the Green Flag Award is a quality monitoring tool, providing the motivation for the park to improve each year and a guide to improving management practices. Green Flag now forms part of the local performance indicator set and provides a further objective assessment.

Commissioned survey reports

- Green Flag Group Award Reports
- Customer care – mystery shopper surveys.

Annual review

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. There is active engagement with the following groups: CCC planning design, Parks Volunteers Group, park users, sports clubs, County Cricket Club, town centre businesses, Marconi Ponds Nature Reserve group, Sport England, and the Environment Agency.

11

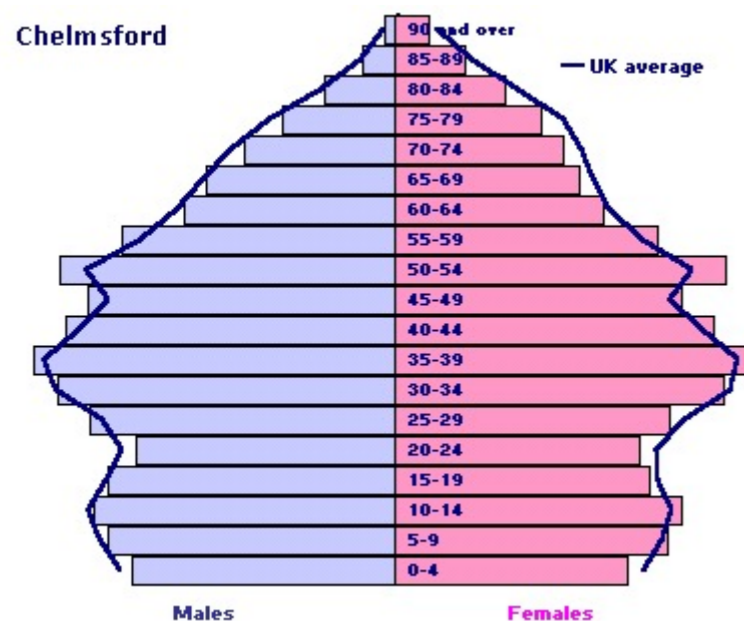
Publicity, Marketing & Promotion



11.0 Understanding the needs of the customer

Demographics

AGE PROFILE (of Local Authority area)



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Borough Profile

- The population of the Borough is 171,633
- 78.6% of households are owner-occupied.
- Single person's households make up 20.5% of the Borough total.
- Average household size was 2.43 persons in 2001, which reduced from 2.8 persons in 1981.
- The population of Chelmsford's Urban Area is approximately 100,000.
- The population density of Chelmsford in 2002 averaged 465 people per square kilometre compared with an average of 284 for the region and 380 people per square kilometre for England overall.
- The life expectancy for a male Chelmsford resident is 78.2 years, 2.1 years longer than the national average. The life expectancy for a female Chelmsford resident is 83 years, 2.3 years longer than national average.
- In 2001, 94.1% of Chelmsford's population was White British. The largest ethnic minority in Chelmsford City is Asian or Asian British, representing 1.1% of the population.
- The City Council area is the second least deprived local authority area in Essex.
- Chelmsford City is ranked as being within the 10% least deprived authorities in England.
- In 2001, 16% of households in Chelmsford did not have a car or van, compared to 27% in England and Wales as a whole. Households with access to two or more cars or vans accounted for 40% of all households in Chelmsford, compared to 29% of households in England and Wales.
- Pockets of deprivation exist in the northwest of Chelmsford's Urban Area.
- The city has the 6th largest workforce in East of England – 79,575.
- The largest employment sector is wholesale and retail 16.8%, with business sector amounting to 12.4% and the health sector 11.9%
- 17% of the resident Borough workforce commutes to London.
- Other popular destinations for Chelmsford City residents to work are Basildon, Brentwood, and Braintree.
- 27% of people working within the Borough live outside the area.
- The manufacturing sector is still significant in Chelmsford with the fourth largest workforce in the Eastern region.
- The construction sector employs 6,430 within the Borough, the second highest both regionally and in Essex.
- The city area is 34,300 hectares, of which 12,888 hectares is Metropolitan Green Belt.

This means that 37.57% of the Borough is designated Green Belt.

- Chelmsford is the 24th busiest railway station in Britain, the 10th busiest outside of Greater London.
- Chelmsford's first Park & Ride service, from a purpose-built site at Sandon, commenced operation on 31 March 2006.

A summary of the population trends and projections indicate that the key demographic trends for Chelmsford that will impact on service provision over the next few years include:

- Increasing population through planned housing growth.
- An aging population
- Slower growth in the population within the 14–44-year age group
- Increasing numbers of A, B and C1 socio-economic groups; but with some areas of deprivation
- A rise in black and minority ethnic population
- Larger numbers of people meeting the definition of disability as set out on the Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Community Policy

With reference to the Community Plan, the Council's goal is to provide a wide range of recreational, cultural, social, and learning opportunities, which enrich people's lives and promote healthy active lifestyles. The management of these Parks are undertaken to meet council Community Plan objectives for open space, enjoyment of the environment, provision of play opportunities, awareness and appreciation of natural and human history, cultural awareness, and provision of educational services, sporting activities and 'Healthy walks.

Comprehensive visitor surveys of Parks have been undertaken in recent years to help understand the public perception and usage of the park. This information has guided the preparation of long-term management and development proposals for the Parks as well as providing a benchmark for future surveys. It has also led to an Interpretation Strategy being developed for the park.. The main findings of the surveys can be summarised as follows. (The data for Chelmsford correlates well with the national trend).

Equality & Diversity – Parks for All

The Council is delivering its equality agenda by following a national framework called the Equality Standard for Local Government.

By following the Equality Standard, Chelmsford Borough Council delivers its services within current equalities legislation. The Council draws on information supplied by the Equal Opportunities Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission.

Particular emphasis is placed on applying the requirements of:

- **The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000** which imposes a statutory duty on the Council to promote race equality by eliminating discrimination, promoting equality

of opportunity, and promoting good relations between people from different ethnic groups.

- **The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)** which makes it unlawful for there to be barriers to a disabled person being able to access a service. From 2004 this Act places a legal duty on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to the physical environment to ensure that people with disabilities can access their facilities.

Equality issues are high on the agenda, and it is our intent that Parks should be for everyone. A report was commissioned in 2008, entitled Equalities & Diversity – minority groups. The purpose of the report was to determine what barriers peoples in such groupings faced in accessing and using the town's parks. Reassuringly the report showed that there were no real barriers.

All sports clubs that make bookings for use of pitches are required to sign and adhere to the borough's Anti-Racism in Sport Charter. The Service encourages events that celebrate ethnic diversity and racial harmony.

Equalities schemes and equality impact assessments

As a Local Authority Our aim is to integrate Equality and Diversity best practice into everything Chelmsford City Council does, ensuring equality of service delivery to all our customers and a discrimination free work environment for all our staff.

There are six strands of Equality: Race/Ethnicity, Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion/Belief and Disability. A raft of Legislation covers many of these strands and ensures public involvement in developing our services to best meet customer and staff needs.

Each Service has an Equality Representative who is involved in the Equality and Diversity work program me and who has the responsibility of feeding information both to and from their individual services.

As a Council and as a Service we aim to be inclusive in all that we do. Every written policy and strategy are now equalities impact assessed.

11.1 About the user

Public use

This section considers the volume and profile of park visitors, the range of activities or events that attract users to the park and the level of satisfaction with visitor experience.

Public Access

The Parks are open every day of the year. Foot visitors can gain access at any time of the day or night although the formal pedestrian and vehicular gates are opened and closed at set times throughout the year. Opening and closing times can be found in the general site information on page one of this document.

Visitor Profile

The most recent estimate of the total number of visits made to the park is in excess of 400,000 per annum. 70% of visitors are local (within a 3-mile radius). People visiting from outside the area are mostly those associated with visiting sports teams, both players and spectators.

The main reasons for visiting were predominantly that of playing or watching organised sport.

Making the invisible visible

User benefits focus; 3 Parks something for every taste.

- Improved physical health and well-being from exercise and relaxation.
- Money savings via use of a free or low-cost leisure service that is open to all.
- Educational resource and venue for school outings
- Impact on child physical and cognitive development
- Improved mental health and happiness through connection with nature.

Community- benefits focus.

- Fostering good health and social cohesion.
- Venue for community events and meeting other people.
- Contribution to tourism in providing area character.
- Visual and physical amenity for local people and visitors

11.2 Events and activities

The Park is used for both passive and active activities. Sports programmes are run during the school holiday periods. The events operating on site tend, in the main to be sports orientated but are geared to include a broad spectrum of people from various social and cultural groups.

In addition, the clubs associated with the site operate their own events and social programmes.

11.3 Visitor Amenities

Each of the distinct park areas have their own appeal and the blend of facilities holistically provide something that will appeal to most people.

11.4 Community perception, involvement pride and ownership

The current management of the park encourages community involvement. Chelmsford Parks have an active Sports User Group and a Volunteers Group. The current Park Watch scheme encourages regular users to report items of concern to Park Services on a daily basis. Additionally, in 2007 a Volunteer Warden Scheme was set up which complements Park Watch.

Chelmsford City Council works with its partners to promote the park and provide links to the major sports clubs operating from the site.

We have established regular links with a number of organisations who have an interest in the park.

11.5 Public Consultation

Park & Green Spaces are proactive in this sphere of work and see it as most important to understand public perception of the service and to develop links within the communities to be sure the services being provided meet the needs of the user. In addition to consultation arranged through Parks and Heritage Services, Chelmsford City Council undertakes MORI poles and telephone questionnaires and regularly analyses customer feedback recorded through user surveys, records of compliments and complaints and advice from Friends Group and other stakeholders.

11.6 Focus Groups

Following on from the adoption of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy, various focus groups and partners have been developed along with consultative panels representing various sections of the community.

- Citizens panel
- Sports User Forum
- Volunteers
- Local Schools; workshops
- Chelmsford Biodiversity Forum
- Susan Trust
- Cleaner and Greener Chelmsford

11.7 Volunteer Groups

Garden Volunteer A garden volunteer scheme is in place in Central Park. In essence volunteers are recruited to work with garden teams, becoming a volunteer could be one of the most rewarding ways for people to show their support for some of Chelmsford's unique parks. Becoming a volunteer enables people to develop their knowledge, whilst providing much needed support ranging from weeding herbaceous borders, pruning, and cutting back vegetation.

11.8 Visitor satisfaction

Much work is undertaken to understand how visitors use our parks and what the key barriers to use are. Below is listed a number of ways in which the Service consults and undertakes surveys to ensure customer views are considered in setting standards and making policies. Such data also provides a useful evidence base.

Chelmsford City Council has reason to be proud of its Parks and Green Spaces.

- **Satisfaction with parks and open spaces:** In the 2018 General Survey 86% of respondents held parks in high regard.
- **Satisfaction with parks and open spaces:** While the majority (70%) of respondents providing a response feel that parks and open spaces have stayed the same over the last three years, the proportion feeling they have improved (22%) is greater than the proportion (8%) who feel they have deteriorated.
- **Frequency of use of parks and open spaces:** Nine in ten (90%) respondents report that they have visited a park or open space in the last twelve months, including more than half who report at least weekly use.

To ensure good management of Parks & Green Spaces it is important to have answers to the following key questions:

- Who visits the space?
- How do they use the space?
- What are the perceptions about the space and the quality of provision?

National trends and surveys provide good indicators of how the public view parks and use their leisure time.

The parks web site regularly invites visitors to complete an online survey to determine their likes and dislikes with Chelmsford parks. www.chelmsford.gov.uk/parks

The key findings of the national Park Life report include:

- Parks are central to our lives: 83% of respondents believe that parks and green spaces are a focal point for communities and only 2.5% have never visited a large park.
- Parks are essential spaces for children: Just over two thirds (68%) of children (aged under 16) visit parks or green spaces with their friends and just under half (48%) go there to meet other friends.
- Parks help us to maintain a healthy lifestyle: 65% of people who visit parks and green spaces do so on foot and 45% visit primarily to go for a walk.
- We want more to do when we visit: 43% of respondents are not happy with the range of facilities provided in their local parks or green spaces.
- We want better standards of maintenance: Nearly four out of ten (38%) of respondents are not satisfied with standards of maintenance and levels of cleanliness.

- We have never been asked our opinions before: 85% of residents have never been asked their opinion on how they feel parks and green spaces are managed.

Profile of people who do use Chelmsford's Parks.

White British (92%), Male/Female, 18-50 (70%); 50+ (27.6%), 90% no disability, Christian (45.7%); No religion (44.9%), Single (48%); Married (34.1%), NVQ's- Post Graduate Degree (25.2% have no qualifications), Employed (full/part time) 37.1%; Unemployed 40.1% 68.5% have less than £100 per week disposable income.

Profile of people who infrequently use Chelmsford Park.

White British (88%), Male/Female, 18-50 (70%); 50+ (37.1%), 88.8% no disability, Christian (50.3%) No religion (39.9%), Single (50.7%); Married (35.9%), NVQ's – Post Graduate Degree (23.8% have no qualifications), Employed (full / part time) 26.6%; Unemployed 42.7%. 21% retired. 58.7% have less than £100 per week disposable income.

Profile of people who do not use Chelmsford Parks.

White British (93%), Male/Female, 18-50 (59%); 50+ (40%), 27% have a disability, Christian (43.4%); No Religion (52.5%), Single (54.5%); Married (31.3%), NVQ's – Post Graduate Degree (44.4% have no qualifications), Employed (full/part time) 19%; Unemployed 41% 31% retired. 71% have less than £100 per week disposable income.

In conjunction with other urban parks feedback data shows the following sports profile.

- The Park is popular for sporting activities.
- Only one third of visitors visit the park alone, however of that number 34% of females visit the park alone that is much higher than the national average; this suggests that the park is perceived to be a safe place to visit.
- Children and teenagers represented 55% of visitors to the park which is comparable with national figures.
- Teenagers and young adults combine to make up over 50% of visitors to the park.
- Only 11% of visitors to the park were elderly and, therefore, appear to be underrepresented users of the park.
- Only 17% of visitors live within 5 minutes of the park which is significantly less than the national average. Being a sporting venue teams are attracted from outside of the area.
- 56% of visitors were from the local area; 22% from Essex but outside Chelmsford Borough; 19% from outside Essex but in England and 4% from another country. This confirms that Chelmsford, the park, and its facilities are an attraction to a significant number of visitors, and it must satisfy local, regional, and international visitor requirements.
- 44% of visitors walk to the park; 12% use public transport; 42% arrive by car or motorcycle.

- Many people visit the park more than ten times each year, many of these visits weekly.
- The most popular reasons for visiting the park are to play sport (72%); to relax (44%); to take a walk (52%); to accompany children (42%); to attend an event (35%); In line with national trends, the number of parents who visit the park with their children is high.

These findings had major implications for the interpretation process, such that Melbourne Park needs to:

- Cater for sports enthusiast and the local people.
- Meet the needs of children, families, and young people as a priority.
- Appeal to repeat visitors.
- Be designed to attract older people, who are under-represented there.
- Add value to the experience of walking around or taking a short cut through the park.

Recent research emerging from the Phase 1 & 2 of the 2009 Parks & Gardens Audits show that there are no access barriers to any community groups. There are no barriers amongst any of the ethnic groupings in Chelmsford. Minority groups were found to be proportionally representative of the population of Chelmsford. First phase results showed 6.9% of the general park users having a disability. 3% of the population being disability living claimants 2007 – 2008. www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk.

Phase 2 research targeted the unemployed. Areas of deprived households were canvassed along with users of Chelmsford Job Centre and Benefits Offices. (Door to door surveys were conducted in the Marconi and Waterhouse Farm areas).

Top 9 reasons for using Chelmsford's Parks for both frequent and infrequent users in our last survey revealed the following

1. for children to use play facilities
2. to walk the dog
3. to walk
4. for children to use open space for play
5. to enjoy the surroundings
6. to use sports facilities to enjoy gardens.
7. as a walk through
8. to socialise
9. to eat lunch / picnic

Researchers asked: What would make you want to use your local parks and gardens more often

- Safer environment
- more specific facilities
- more appealing events
- nothing
- more personal or family leisure time
- closer proximity to home
- better access
- other
- Improved natural areas.
- better health

Top five reasons for visiting central park

- Walking into city centre
- Dog walking
- Taking child to play area.
- Enjoying the river and lake features
- A visit to the Park café

11.9 Marketing information

Marketing has a key role to play in service development and is key to ensuring the customer's viewpoint is understood and considered.

Marketing of the park as a place for people is undertaken through managers liaising with relevant staff through marketing meetings 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. For our parks, it is also a case for better promotion of what we already do to develop brand recognition.

All three Parks in addition to providing obvious sporting opportunities also offer the important provision of public open space to the resident community.

Communication regarding events and activities at the Parks where appropriate 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.

In addition to the previously mentioned there is the Parks and Green Space Marketing Strategy and Plan. The plan sets out a considered approach to marketing from brand to communicating what is on offer within Parks.

News concerning the park is distributed in a number of ways to ensure information is in the public realm, at offsite venues. This is done in a number of ways.

- Chelmsford City web pages
- Events diary

11.10 Promotion

Printed material

Our Brand image is important and is translated on all the printed material the Service produces so that the information is easily identifiable to the public. This includes, banners, posters, leaflets, park notice boards, vehicle livery, uniforms etc. The emphasis is increasingly on technology though and to that end there is greater emphasis on the use of web-based information.

Public Relations

The Service works in association with Corporate Communications and uses various mediums to promote the Service from word of mouth through to local press and media. Press releases are issued regularly. This ensures Parks & Green Spaces is a Service readily identifiable and understood by the public.

Green Flag

The Green Flag Award Scheme providing a 'national standard' for Parks is seen and used as a vehicle to convey the fact of Chelmsford having a number of stunning parks. Media coverage of this award brings both regional and national recognition to Chelmsford in a very positive way. Achieving Green Flag accreditation is important to the Council itself as research has shown that the way people view parks has a major influence on how they view the Council as a whole.

Fields in Trust

Essex Playing Fields Association make annual awards for the best kept playing fields in the county. Within Essex Chelmsford have achieved major successes when submitting playing fields for annual inspection.

11.11 Communication: Press & Media Cover

Press releases to local and national media are managed through Chelmsford City Council News and Media Centre.

The Corporate Communications team responds to all media and press enquiries including consent requests for filming and photography.

Radio interviews: The Service uses all mediums available to it including local radio.

BBC Essex: The Service uses all mediums available to it including TV Broadcasts and use of the BBC Essex Website.

Web site information www.chelmsford.gov.uk and www.loveyourchelmsford.co.uk

11.12 Quality and Performance Management accreditations

- Investors in People (IIP)
- Community Safety Charter Mark
- Quality of Built Environment
- Green Flag Award
- Fields in Trust Award

Quality Audits

Green Flag: The National / International Standard for Parks

Overall qualities of Chelmsford's major Parks are monitored through the annual Green Flag Awards scheme. The Green Flag Awards scheme is the national standard for parks and green spaces and provides a benchmark against which excellence and provision of high-quality landscapes are measured. The annual Awards play a key role in ensuring the continuing quality of the Parks, the provision for community and visitors, development of environmental standards.

The process for Green Flag Judging involves an in-depth review of Park Management Plans prior to a site visit. Each visit is written up into a summary and includes an overall score for the park out of a total 100. General comments relating to each assessment criteria are included highlighting any particular issues as well as acknowledging where positive management action, projects or initiatives have occurred.

Parks are assessed against the following criteria:

- A Welcoming Place
- Health, Safety and Security
- Maintenance of Equipment, Buildings and Landscape
- Litter Cleanliness and Vandalism
- Environmental Sustainability
- Conservation Heritage and Nature
- Community Involvement
- Marketing

Association of Public Service Excellence [APSE]

The above provide opportunities for performance networking with other Authorities in the Association.

Fields in Trust Award

Central Park received a Certificate of Merit for the standards of park maintenance and upkeep.

Local standards

High quality, multi-functional and accessible green space can make a real difference to the quality of life and sustainability of urban communities. However, whilst local authorities find it relatively easy to map and quantify green space, understanding and assessing the quality of green space has been a real challenge.

Our local standard/measure identifies five criteria for assessing quality:

- Accessible and well connected.
- Attractive and appealing places
- Biodiverse, supporting ecological networks.
- Active, supporting health and wellbeing.
- Community supported.

Over and above the accreditations Chelmsford City Council achieve the Service is governed by a number of 'local indicators' to measure both quality and performance.

NI 195(a) (CPI 7 a)	Improved cleanliness - Litter
NI 195(b) (CPI 7 b)	Improved cleanliness - Detritus
NI 195(c) (CPI 7 c)	Improved cleanliness - Graffiti
NI 195(d) (CPI 7 d)	Improved cleanliness – Fly posting
NI 197	Improved local biodiversity.
L001	Public conveniences
PRK 1	Parks & Open Spaces Provision
PRK 4	Sports Pitch Users
PRK 6	Volunteer Work Hours
PRK 7	Volunteer activity – equivalent value

Complaints (OPS 2)

PP LP13	Visitors to all parks
PP LPI 8	Green Flag Awards
PP LPI 8a	Green Heritage Awards
PPK 2	Parks and Open Space provision compared to LDF space standard.
PP CORP LP 03	% Of calls answered in 8 rings
PP CORP LP 04	Confirm we have received your email / letter within 5 days.
PP CORP LP 05	Satisfaction of Service Users
PP CORP LP 02	The number of working days lost due to sickness absence.

The use of the quality value assessment is not just a useful planning tool. It can provide a further means of assessing the success of management plans in delivering real improvements to the quality of green spaces and identifying the weakness that can be addressed through the management plan / action plan process.

Action plans will be monitored annually and will be submitted on an annual basis for scrutiny by Green Flag. Whilst this plan covers a period of 5 years action plans will be refreshed every 5 years to reflect current trends and current policies, strategies, and funding.



Appendices

Local Plans and Strategies

Parks Services operations are guided by the following Council Policy & Strategy documents:

- Chelmsford Corporate Plan
- Community Plan Our Chelmsford Our Plan
- Our Planning Strategy for the Future: Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy – sets out the policies and special strategy that will shape the future of the borough and deliver the objectives of the Community Plan. The LDF includes a Core Strategy that sets out a number of strategic objectives:
 - Managing Growth
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Environmental Protection and Enhancement
 - Balanced Communities
 - Quality of Life

Chelmsford Town Centre – Public Realm Strategy – provides the statutory planning framework for the town centre covering transport, development, and public spaces.

Government: 'Living Places, safer, greener, cleaner'

Equal Opportunities Policy – The Council is delivering its equality agenda by following a national framework called the Equality Standard for Local Government.

Essex Biodiversity Action Plan

Chelmsford City's Council's Green Procurement strategy / Sustainable Products List

Chelmsford City's Parks & Green Spaces Environmental Strategy

Chelmsford City's Tree Management Policy

Chelmsford City's Fixed Playground Strategy

Chelmsford City's Sports and Recreation Strategy

Chelmsford City Council's Waste Strategy – reference to CPA case study, Community Plan & Best Value Improvement plan. Parks Services Environmental Statement.

Chelmsford City Council's Customer care policy

Chelmsford City Council's Equalities and Diversity Strategy

Council Policy Framework – Visitor and Tourism Strategy and Economic Development strategy, Local Plan, Older Peoples Strategy, The Housing Strategy. (Parks & Green Spaces seek to understand and embrace all the corporate strategies and policies and to tie them

into the core values we establish our Service Plan from).

All the previously mentioned plans reflect the importance of parks and green spaces and support the green spaces vision of a network of easily accessible, safe, attractive, and welcoming parks, gardens and green spaces which meet the needs of everyone which contribute to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of people and places now and for future generations.

There are a number of agencies and organisations which exist to help deliver central government policy and help local government to implement it. They include Communities and Local Government, Keep Britain Tidy Group, ISPAL, IPGS, Groundwork UK, countryside Agency, Environment Agency, Natural England, and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

In addition, there are a number of statutory obligations that affect the delivery of parks services. These Acts enable Local Authorities to hold land, provide services, enforce bylaws, and impose fines.

Chelmsford Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan identifies both community and council priorities and gives a focus for service planning and budget setting. Corporate actions include:

- Achieving the highest quality service for all our citizens
- Supporting the objectives of the Chelmsford Community Scheme.

To achieve the corporate priorities targets for park management have been set in the following areas:

- Reducing and recycling waste
- Accessibility to all.
- Improving our local environment. – Street scene, (BVPI. 199 BVPI 119). i.e., improvement of the environmental quality of street and public open spaces. Note: The application for Green Flag status for Parks reflects this target.
- Maintaining a safe community
- Enhancing healthy living
- Promoting stable employment and improved prosperity
- Promoting culture as a key to our future
- Meeting local transport needs more efficiently.
- Promoting opportunities for learning and personal development.
- Cleaner Safer Greener Communities

Summary of Strategic Themes and Corporate Priorities

Strategic Theme	Corporate Priorities
Excellent Customer Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put customers at the heart of our work 2. Strengthen capacity to continually improve services
Renaissance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Adopt the Local Development Framework (LDF) to help deliver the Council's spatial vision 4. Expand retail, leisure, sport, and cultural opportunities 5. Attract investment to deliver future infrastructure
Social Inclusion	Record and monitor performance and problem resolution and opportunities to improve.
Maintain a staff presence.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Embrace equality and celebrate diversity 7. Tackle deprivation in the wards of Northwest Chelmsford 8. Provide housing that meets local needs 9. Maintain a safe community
Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Maintain high quality public places 11. Reduce the impact of climate change on the borough 12. Improve recycling rates and reduce waste
Value for money	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Make best use of our resources 14. Innovate through innovative approaches to service delivery 15. Strengthen partnership working

Community Plan Our Chelmsford Our Plan

The community Plan currently has seven key themes:

- Improving our local environment
- Maintaining a safe community
- Enhancing healthy living
- Meeting local transport needs more effectively.
- Promoting culture as the key to our future
- Providing the best opportunities for learning and personal development
- Promoting stable employment and improved prosperity

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Brundtland, Our Common Future 1997).

The strategy aims to enhance the quality of life for residents within the Borough and promote ecologically sustainable development by providing measures to encourage participation in working towards achieving sustainability. It has been developed to play a key role in the implementation of the Corporate Strategy, and to provide a framework for the environmental initiatives the Council has begun. It is a working document and is reviewed both annually and in full every 3 years.

The goals, objectives and strategies are identified and are translated in how we manage parks:

The relevance of these to the management of Central Park is discussed under the relevant headings elsewhere in the document and can be found in the plan index.

The key Service priorities centre around:

- Improving the appearance of the Borough.
- Minimising the effects of global warming.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour – particularly focusing on youth nuisance in town centre and urban areas.
- Sustainability – working together to protect our environment.
- Improving access by the public to information and services.

Improving our environment is one of the key actions of the Community Plan. The protection and improvement of our environment is fundamental to the borough's progress towards a sustainable future. It is recognised throughout the Council that working together to take responsibility and make better environmental decisions is one of the greatest challenges we face. As a result, the Council's priorities for action include:

- Improving the facilities for waste recycling and minimisation.
- Encouraging businesses and individuals to support energy efficiency.
- Improving the quality of the built environment.
- Encouraging protection and improvement of wildlife habitats.

The Community Plan 'Our Chelmsford Our Plan' is in the process of being refreshed (in line with the timetable for agreeing the next Local Area Agreement) to create a truly Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS for Chelmsford).

Parks for People

The key to attracting people to a park is to know what users want from it.

Decisions about what facilities to provide, park opening times, promotional activities and communication can then be made.

Telephone 01245 606606

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www.chelmsford.gov.uk/parks

Produced by Paul Van Damme

Do you need an interpreting or translation service?

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