

OAKLANDS PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2026

Oaklands Park Management & Maintenance Plan

Protect manage and enhance
green space assets



Foreword

Good quality green spaces generate enormous social, economic, environmental and ecological benefits as well as making areas more attractive. They are central to every community. They bring people together, encourage physical activity and allow our communities to spend time enjoying the great outdoors. In short, they are essential for a healthy and active nation.

The City Councils Corporate Plan puts down a marker on its intent to deliver quality parks and green spaces. The plan states we will achieve quality accreditation for the care of our parks and green spaces.

We also have to 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 real legacy for those who come after us.

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

Oaklands is an established award winning park. It covers approximately five hectares (12 acres) of grounds within the historic quarter of Chelmsford City. It was first opened as a public park in 1930. Today it boasts both Green Flag and Green Heritage status. The general layout of the park has not changed greatly in the last 100 plus years when the property was a private Victorian residence. A proportion of the park's treescape can be traced back to Victorian and Edwardian times.

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.



Cllr Rose Moore
Cabinet Member for Parks & Green Spaces

Summary and Outlook



Guidance in reading the management plan

Management plans within Chelmsford's Parks Services 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 a discipline of planning. The plan builds upon previous plans written for the site. The first plan was published in 2004 and subsequently 2009-10 and in 2011, 2017 and now in 2022 it is in its 5th Edition. The current plan takes the best from the three previous plans and has been simplified much of the generic information has been drawn out and is now to be found in the companion document: Chelmsford Green Spaces – Strategic Framework Document.

This management plan is designed to be used as an 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

The complete document together with the Chelmsford's Green Spaces Strategic Framework Document captures information needed for the efficient and proper management of the site which will be of interest to the following parties:

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



Structure of the Plan



In the drafting of this document the Green Flag judging criteria were used as an audit tool with each component part being considered.

We recognise the importance of working towards an agreed national standard for good practice in the management of parks and have adopted the Green Flag criteria to form our eight key service 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

Use of the Green Flag criteria provides a standard for a 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.

This approach is used consistently when writing park management plans and ensures that standards across the City remain consistently high with no park being favoured over another.

When writing any management plans, we first undertake an assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses and external factors affecting the business and marketing environment ('SWOT' analysis) and to drive change where necessary. It is always good to compare the completed SWOT analysis with the previous analysis done in the plan prior so as to also determine if we are on an upward trajectory of improvement or to determine if things are static.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Good quality park (Green Flag and Green Heritage accredited)</p> <p>Recently extended museum building</p> <p>Established user groups</p> <p>Historical interest</p> <p>Rich biodiversity</p> <p>On site staff</p> <p>Integrated Signage</p> <p>Managed and extended car park</p> <p>Good relationship between Council and Community</p> <p>Good quality play areas</p> <p>Strong Park Volunteer presence</p> <p>Café facility, linking Park with Museum</p>	<p>Trees within the site – lack of succession planting in the post war years (only now being addressed)</p> <p>Capital funding is not guaranteed, or likely for this site.</p> <p>Section 106 / CIL funding is likely to be limited in this area of town.</p> <p>Outside funding has been difficult to achieve in Oaklands Park due to match funding constraints.</p> <p>Pressure on available parking spaces due to increased visitor numbers.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>To further investigate external funding sources.</p> <p>To develop further the biodiversity of the site.</p> <p>To develop further the historical nature of the site.</p> <p>To reduce the effect of a small minority of dog walkers who are inconsiderate.</p>	<p>Imposed budget restrictions on revenue and capital funding may inhibit future provision.</p> <p>Lack of capital investment in essential infrastructure may result in a missed opportunity to improve service provision.</p>

A performance monitoring checklist was completed to determine how conditions on the ground ascribed to the vision, aims and objectives set out in The City Councils Corporate Plan.

In addition to the checklist an analysis was carried out to look at the additional components, each having their own important contribution to make towards effective service delivery.

- 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 is regularly monitored and reviewed. An asset valuation has been completed for the site in 2010 and revenue budgets specifically for the site are set annually. The 5 year site action plan is costed per item line and planned improvements are undertaken within budget constraint. Some items being delivered from external sources such as grants and S106 Contributions / Community Infrastructure Levy.

Outline changes will be included in the annual executive summary. Reference will be made to both internal and external funding opportunities as they arise throughout the life of this plan.

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 of the following normally drives change:

Political will/legislation/public perceptions/best practice/new technologies. Additionally developing trends/fashion and expectations heavily influence design related to sports facilities and children's play. With regards to the latter many children have access to bikes and want to use them in safe but challenging terrain. Additionally currently skateboards, rollerblades and kite flying are all, currently in vogue.

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

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

Each year the management plan will be reviewed and changes to the electronic master document will be added in bold green text with a footnote at the base of the page showing the year of change.

New actions are added to the Action/improvement plan in the same manner annually.



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The structure of the Plan is as follows:

Section 1: Introduction

This section covers the park in its setting as an asset managed by Chelmsford City Council. The maps and drawings in this section help the reader to envisage the park's setting and location. The text traces over 150 years of history outlining the previous owners of the land since the time that the land was part of the estate of Frederick Wells.

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. Further and supplementary information is contained in the companion document – Chelmsford's Green Spaces Strategic Framework Document.

Section 3: 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 man made features and structures within the parks. With the latter some explanation is given to their significance now and also in bygone days.

Section 4: Sustainability and green housekeeping within land management practices

This section of the plan introduces City Parks Environmental Strategy and particularly considers the environmental issues relevant to the 'land manager'. The section also sets out our statutory duty as it relates to biodiversity and how we are developing the sites to improve their value as habitats.

Section 5: 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 6: 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 7: 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 8: 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 9: Publicity, marketing & promotion

This covers aspects on how we identify and engage with residents, workers and visitors who are all potential customers, it shows 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

1.0 Introduction & Brief History of the site

Oaklands House was built in the 1860's for Frederick Wells, a director of the Chelmsford Brewery. It is in the Italianate style of architecture which was highly fashionable at the time.

Originally the house was set in an estate of 12 Hectares (29 acres). It extended to the present day Rothesay Avenue. The land was previously farmland owned by the Mildmay family. The estate was laid out with plantations, parkland, pasture, a small farm, a walled kitchen garden and shrubberies. Some features such as the shrubberies, specimen trees and the ha-ha can still be seen. However the original entrance running from opposite Elm Road has gone, although the Lodge remains.

It appears that the Wells family did not share the Victorian passion for plant collections as there is little evidence of ornamental horticulture such as ornate bedding.

The Wells family sold Oaklands in 1908 after Frederick's death. Between 1915 and 1919 it was used as a military hospital for local troops.

The house was bought by the Flowers family in 1921. They sold parts of the estate for housing before the Urban District Council bought it in 1929 when only 12 acres remain in the estate. The park and museum were officially opened on Empire Day 24th May 1930.

Further detail on the Parks history and the restoration strategy can be read in the 2010 Historical Survey and Restoration Strategy.

In 2006 Oaklands Park was awarded Green Heritage Site status in recognition of Chelmsford Council's work to preserve its historic character. Over the last 10 years the City Council has sought to carry out improvement works to both the park and the buildings and structures within the park sympathetic to the fabric of a Victorian Park. Every year since the award was first made the park has retained that status.

Since 1980 a number of schemes have been proposed to enlarge or move the museum at Oaklands Park. The last scheme in 2004 failed to attract Lottery funding, and a year was spent looking at town centre sites, and debating what the 21st century museum should be. Since many stakeholders voiced their affection for the Victorian building and its park setting, Chelmsford Borough Council agreed that the museum should remain and be developed in Oaklands Park.

In September 2006 it was announced that English Heritage had recognised the architectural importance of Oaklands House, by awarding it Grade II listed status noting the property as a Victorian Villa set in its grounds.

A year later the Council moved forward with its plans to extend the museum building within

the park appointing architects to come up with a new design concept. The chosen architects, Thomas Ford & Partners (TFP), were appointed in October of that year. TFP are known locally for their work on the last three phases of restoration at Hylands House.

Planning permission for the extension and new main entrance was approved by Chelmsford Borough Council and ratified by the regional government office, Go East, in October 2007.

A new modern museum building connected to the Victorian Oaklands House opened to the public in January 2010 and was officially unveiled by the Duke of Gloucester in February.

The extension, which was funded by Chelmsford Borough Council for a total cost of £5M, provides a new entrance and climate controlled display areas for the industrial collection, temporary exhibition & Essex Regiment Museum, as well as an education suite, office, workshop and toilets

The two storey building contains the following new features:

- New level accessible entrance/exit, atrium, shop and toilets
- ‘Bright Sparks’, an interactive exhibition about the industrial story of Chelmsford
- New temporary exhibition gallery
- New Essex Regiment Museum
- New Essex Yeomanry display
- New education/meeting room(s)

The new dynamics introduced by the Museum development now means that on average visitors spend more time on the site.

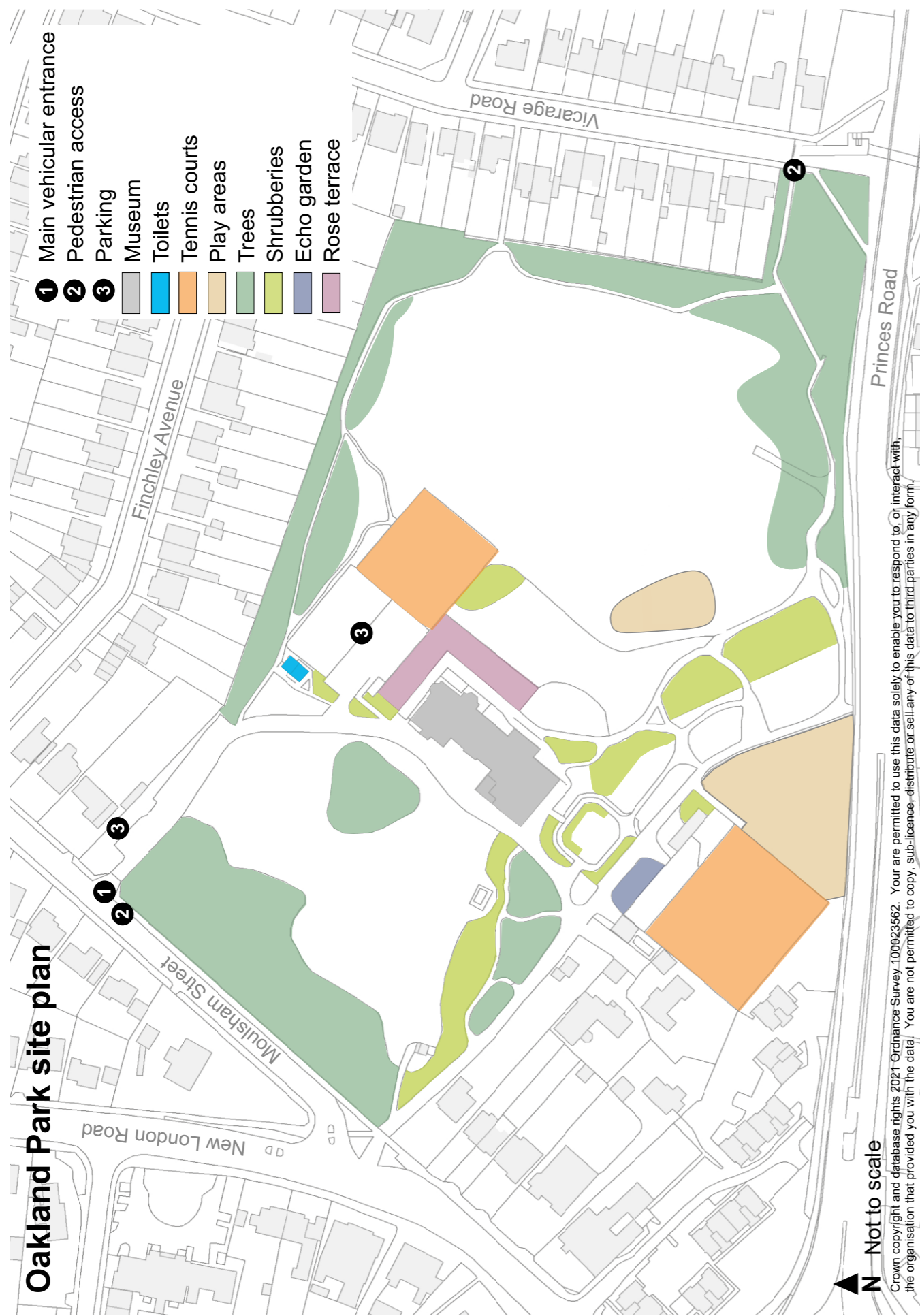
In September 2015, Chelmsford Museum was awarded a Stage 1 pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop plans for an estimated £2m project to redisplay the older galleries within the museum, invest in the infrastructure of the Victorian House (eg new heating and lighting), and provide a café for use by the museum visitors, the park users and local residents.

The café has been built into the house’s original drawing room where the sunshine floods in through floor to ceiling windows throughout the day, allowing for breath taking views of the surrounding park and Rose Gardens. This has all been made possible by the HLF funding of our redevelopment project.

The Lottery bid has allowed the Museum and Park to be made more of a single, holistic visitor destination.

1.1 Site information

Site Name	Oaklands Park, Chelmsford
Site Status	Designated as public open space.
Total Area of Site	4.8 Hectares, 12 Acres
Component areas	Pleasure Gardens (Formal Victorian style gardens), Conservation areas, Football pitch, Tennis Courts, Car park, Children’s Play areas, Picnic Areas, toilets. In addition to Victorian Parkland the park is also home to Chelmsford and Essex Regiment Museums.
Surrounding land	Built up residential area (Conservation Area)
Natural Geology	
Significant features/Key issues	Easements, Public right of way.
Tenure	Freehold
Location	Moulsham Street, Chelmsford.
Ward	Moulsham Ward
District	Chelmsford
County	Essex
Post Code	CM2 9AQ
OS grid reference	570320 205532
Asset register reference	
Asset value	£13.5 m
Bylaws	Yes
Opening Hours	Park accessible 24/7 Car Park subject to Traffic Regulation Orders restricting parking to two hours.
Use	Primarily a Victorian park within a residential area and near to the City Centre.
Essex Police Support	Emergency 999 Non-emergency 03003334444 Via text message 07624800101



1.2 Land use & function

Heritage Value & Significance

Oaklands Park some 4.8 hectares in size has, over the years developed into a park that was primarily sports orientated providing football pitches and tennis courts but in recent times we have been at pains to ensure that park nowadays provides varied user attractions catering for many tastes from passive to active recreational activities, with the diversity of formal and informal areas in which to relax and play.

Today's Park facilities include:

- Chelmsford Museums (free admission)
- Cafe
- Education Workshops
- Car park
- Children's play areas
- Toilets
- Landscaped gardens including the award winning Echo Garden
- Kickabout area
- Tennis courts
- Healthy Walks Programme

The Parks Heritage value and significance is well documented and today the park is maintained in such a way as to celebrate the Victorian era of park layout with detailed restoration of the gardens taking place since the first written management plan was published in 2003.

1.3 Parks Management and oversight

Public Service

Oaklands Park is one of a number of historic parks in the City given to the people of Chelmsford as a place to recreate. It is the aim of the City Parks to maintain this wonderful resource building on the legacy to meet the needs of the current park user.

The layout of the park has changed little since the time spanning the Victorian period (see figure 12 in the Historical Survey and Restoration Strategy 2010)

The choice of tree and shrub material and indeed the street furniture all where possible emulate the type of materials the Victorians would have been familiar with.

1.4 Sports in the Park

There are tennis courts available and the parkland to the rear of the museum building is also used for picnics and informal sport.

1.5 Leisure & Heritage Services – Sports Development

The Sports Development team of Leisure & Heritage Services encourage sport across the spectrum; both indoor and field sport.

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

Sports Development have their own web site and publicise Sporting events, sporting activities, finding a sports club, information for sports clubs, sports coaches & volunteer information and sport for schools.

1.6 Public Spaces Safer Communities – Environmental Services

Staff from the above Service have a positive input to make to the effective and efficient day to day management of the park.



2 Management Context: Strategic & Policy Framework

2.0 Strategic & Policy Framework

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 annual service plans.

For these strategies and policies to translate to how Oaklands Park is managed objectives and outcomes take account of the principal 6 Corporate Objectives:

STRENGTHS	PARK OBJECTIVES – OAKLANDS PARK
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 protect and enhance the park environment for the enjoyment of families, children and visitors.
3	To work with other organisations and volunteers to deliver clear education, health, sport and participation opportunities.
4	To conserve and enhance the natural environment of the Park.
5	To deliver greater value for money through increased income generation.
6	To demonstrate organisational excellence.

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

- Defining priorities for investment and future development.
- Specifying maintenance, security and access arrangements.
- Understanding the links between strategic and policy documents and what needs to happen on the ground.
- Ensuring resources are best used to help us achieve our agreed objectives.
- To ensure there is a clear understanding of the heritage value of the park and that any change in the fabric of the park is measured and appropriate to the space and the setting.

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. This plan follows the earlier document produced in 2003 and the interim plan covering the period 2009-2010. The interim plan reflected a time of radical change and improvement resulting from external works connected with the museum refurbishment and extension. The management plan 2011 – 2016 listed a number of actions designed to improve the visitor experience many of the objectives set have been met but certain strands permeate into the new plan 2022-2026.

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

Vision statement: Chelmsford City Council 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.

‘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

Parks and Green Space 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

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

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 in order 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 high 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.

Situated within the town envelope the park is a prominent example of the priority placed on green spaces and green links in the Borough.

The diverse interest of this green space is also reflected in the varied provision of activities within the parkland and its use as both a community and destination park. The various uses to which the space is used and the events staged whether large or small help to achieve better social cohesion, promote equality of access and use, and add to the overall appeal of Chelmsford and District.

Oaklands Park provides a good example of the importance given to parks. It has long been recognised that parks help provide publicly accessible open space that goes to make the borough that bit more special, an attractive and enjoyable place for those who live, work in and visit Chelmsford.

The commitment to achieving both the Green Flag Award, the national standard for parks, together with a Green Heritage Award also emphasises Chelmsford’s aim to be Essex’s Capital City and a renowned prestige Borough, with parks and countryside being considered important factors in that goal.

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

2.2 Corporate Policy and Strategy

Parks Services operations are guided by the following Council Policy & Strategy documents:

- Our Chelmsford Our Plan 2019
- Chelmsford Local Plan 2020
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Service Priorities: Public Places

In essence all of the above plans and priorities reflect the importance of Parks and Green spaces and support Green Spaces vision of a network of easily accessible, safe, attractive and welcoming parks, gardens and green spaces which meet the needs of everyone. These 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. We actively engage with these agencies to deliver a quality service to residents and visitors who use our parks.

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.

Our Chelmsford Our Plan 2019

Welcome to Our Plan that sets out our priorities for Chelmsford City Council in the coming years.

As England's newest city, Chelmsford is one of the fastest growing centres in the East of England. We have a rising population, strong economy and low unemployment, and most of our residents experience a good quality of life, but we can make Chelmsford even better.

Our ambition remains for Chelmsford to be recognised as a leading regional centre, leading by example and helping to make our society safer, greener, fairer, and better connected. We believe that Our Plan will help make these ambitions a reality, whilst recognising that we will need to remain flexible and responsive if we are to continually adapt to an ever changing social, economic and environmental landscape.

- Fairer and inclusive Chelmsford; Promoting sustainable and environmentally responsibly growth to stimulate a vibrant, balanced economy, a fairer society and provide more housing of all types.
- A safer and greener place; Making Chelmsford a more attractive place, promoting Chelmsford's green credentials, ensuring communities are safe and creating a distinctive sense of place.

- Healthy, active and enjoyable lives; Encouraging people to live well, promoting healthy, active lifestyles and reducing social isolation, making Chelmsford a more enjoyable place in which to live, work and play.
- Connected Chelmsford; Bringing people together, empowering local people and working in partnership to build community capacity, stronger communities and secure investment in the city.

We recognise that the quality of our public spaces directly affects the quality of life of our residents. We will provide clean, safe and accessible streets, parks and other public spaces which will help Chelmsford remain a place of choice for people to live, work and visit, and for businesses to invest

Our Chelmsford Our Plan identifies both community and council priorities, and gives a focus for service planning and budget setting. Actions include:

- Protecting and enhancing wildlife, habitats and landscapes in and around Chelmsford and connecting people with the built and natural environment
- Providing attractive, high quality green areas and public places that are clean, safe and easily accessible for all
- Promoting physical and mental wellbeing
- Providing access to sport leisure and recreational activities that encourage healthy, active lifestyles

In order to achieve these 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 is a reflection of 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

The goals, objectives and strategies adopted by the City Council are identified and are translated in how we manage parks:

The relevance of these to the management of Oaklands Park is discussed under the relevant headings elsewhere in this section. The key Service priorities centre on:

- Improving the appearance of the Borough.
- Minimising the effects of global warming.
- Reducing antisocial behaviour – particularly focusing on youth nuisance in City 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.

Corporate responsibilities as they relate to parks

A number of generic statements concerning corporate responsibilities can be found in the plans appendices under the following sub headings.

- Corporate Health and Safety Policy
- Biodiversity Duty
- Equalities & Diversity
- Weed Act 1959
- Duty of Care to adjacent land owners
- Tree inspections

3 Conservation in both the natural & built environment



3.0 Management of park areas to benefit biodiversity

We believe in 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.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a statutory duty on all public authorities to conserve biodiversity. Our Parks and Green Space Policy put emphasis on biodiversity making it a key theme. The policy enables the authority to demonstrate that it is complying with the act.

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 maximise 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.

The Council has a statutory duty to care for the environment and to encourage biodiversity. Within Parks management plans, time is taken to consider the topography of the site and the use the land is put to. Wherever possible we look to enhance the wildlife value by the style of management and to promote that resource to the visiting public and to school groups who are encouraged to use parks as green class rooms.

Management of the tree stock in relationship to Wildlife

There is a policy for maintaining and improving wildlife habitats as part of arboricultural operations ensuring that as a consequence of arboricultural works the following will result.

1. Maintain and improve wildlife habitats
2. To ensure that no wildlife habitat is damaged or lost due to arboricultural operations

An overall policy of non-intervention will be applied if at all possible.

Management of tree stock in parks in relation to the visiting public

The Parks Service will:

1. Carry out essential safety works to ensure that trees on the site do not pose an unreasonable threat to park users and others
2. Leave dead wood in natural state as possible were it is practicable to do so.
3. Where arboriculture operations have to take place, take care with regard to the surrounding flora and fauna, and take into account all existing legislation and recommendations relating to their care.
4. Ensure that risk assessments carried out by the term contractor prior to undertaking tree work operations.
5. Take account of protecting existing habitats and flora.

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

With reference to the Community Plan: 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 City conservation area and the City 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 Park consider means to visually and physically link features to enhance visitor appreciation.
- To improve the presentation and interpretation of the landscape design of the park.
- To ensure that footpaths and design improvements to the park consider 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.

With reference to Historical survey and to Restoration Strategy

• Condition of Historic features

Sebastopol Cannon – The setting and upkeep of the fabric associated with the cannon is guided by both conservation needs and overseen by the Curator of Essex Regiment Museum

Ha Ha wall – appropriate maintenance is scheduled through Facilities Management to ensure that the materials used meet with the conservation brief.

- Use and enjoyment of historic features – the features within the park are readily accessible to the public and are well documented.
- Maintaining historic character and appearance – the historical survey and restoration strategy carries a wealth of information and guide the appropriateness of new developments and alterations.

4 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
- Energy
- Recycling



4.0 Promoting Sustainable Management and Awareness

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

This management plan and 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.

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 Heritage Services reflect the Council's overarching policies set out in the Corporate Plan; the Council wide- Green procurement strategy and the Climate Change policy to name but a few..

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.

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.

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 usage [kg]

Bulky top-dressing usage [kg/tonne]

Pesticide usage [kg a.i.]

Carbon footprint [kg/tonne CO2]

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]

4.1 What Climate Change means to Chelmsford Parks & Green Spaces

As climate changes 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 more important for people and it is likely that the pressure on existing spaces will increase as numbers using the spaces as well the duration and frequency of use will 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 most and plan for any changes needed.

The rising temperatures usually causes a deterioration of air quality in the urban environment. Green spaces and especially urban trees have significant roles to play. Trees which are currently common place such as ornamental fruiting trees may not be able to survive in the longer term and could possibly 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, etc. will be required in the shorter term. This is somewhat 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 seek to link parks and tree strategies to the climate change 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 will 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 generally the Council is actively seeking to reduce emissions from Council assets and to make them more energy efficient.

4.2 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 by a local grower 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 builds on earlier guidance contained in such documents as the Environmental Method Statement and 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 & Green Spaces).

4.3 Resource Conservation

Vision and strategic approach to sustainable energy use is high on the corporate agenda and covers all of 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.

Environmentally sustainable management is now firmly embodied in our management practices with environmental reviews taking place at regular intervals and as a minimum, once a year. Reviews include looking at things such as:

- Materials used
- Chemical usage
- Water usage
- Energy usage
- Flora and Fauna surveys of areas managed to promote and enhance biodiversity
- Monthly collection of visitor numbers to both the park and to the museum

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 are turned off when not in use. This applies to the buildings at Oaklands Park. 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.

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.

Park and Green Spaces and the Energy and Contracts Manager monitor water bills and water efficiency issues within the park. Leaks in toilet fixtures are noted and/or 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.

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.

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
- 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 8.5

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	1445	MOWER
Stihl	FS400	Strimmer
Husqvarna	520iHE3	L/H Hedge Cutter
Husqvarna	536LiB	Blower
Husqvarna	536LIHD70X	S/H Hedgecutter
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.

Carbon management programme: – The Council has participated in the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme (LACM) and has received technical and change-management support and guidance to help make carbon emission savings.

By design – The museum expansion took account of a number of environmental factors.

As far as possible, the Museum extension has been built using materials from renewable sources which can mostly be recycled. A ground source heat pump has been installed with pipes going 90 metres down into the ground. In the summer, the museum is cooled by dispersing heat into the ground and in the winter, residual heat in the ground is extracted to help warm the museum.

There is also energy saving insulation in the new extension and in the roof of the original Museum building. This means less energy is needed to heat the building in winter and to cool it in summer. Heat exchangers to recycle the energy from air extracts and waste water have also been fitted, together with energy efficient light fittings, heating to reduce energy consumption and water-efficient taps.

In addition, rainwater is 'harvested' from the building roof and stored to provide irrigation for the park.

Wildlife

Bats are known to roost in the Victorian House at Oaklands so in an effort to keep these and encourage more of our small visitors, we have sited 30 bat boxes within the park along with two in the new building.

Five different species have been identified:

Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)

- smallest & most common bat in the UK - dark red/brown fur on backs with yellow/brown undersides
- rapid, agile fliers, flying about 5-10m above the ground
- feed on small moths, gnats and other small insects

Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*)

- strikingly large ears (3/4 the length of the head & body) - a buff-brown colour with a pink-brown face
- have a slow and fluttering flight, and often fly close to the ground
- feed in flight on moths and also pluck caterpillars, spiders and other prey off twigs and leaves

Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*)

- pinkish limbs (giving rise to the old name of 'red-armed bat') - pink/light brown faces & ears with brown wing membranes. Fur is light brown above and buff below.
- feed on small flies from foliage and branches. They also take prey in flight, usually above water

Serotine bat (*Eptesicus serotinus*)

- one of the largest British species of bat - have long dark-brown fur, with a yellow-brown underside. The ears and nose are black
- emerge at early dusk to feed on moths and beetles

Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*)

- along with serotine bats, noctules are one of the largest British species – have short, golden-brown fur, with a slightly lighter underside. The ears, nose & wing membranes are dark brown with the fur extending on to the wing membrane, the ears are short and stout
- emerge early, sometimes before sunset, to feed on moths, beetles and other large flying insects. They fly fast and high above the ground

Green Housekeeping

4.4 Environmental Sustainability

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

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 it 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 support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in parks and green spaces in accordance with NERC 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.

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.
- Chelmsford Biodiversity Partnership

4.5 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.

At a county level Chelmsford City Council is an active member of the Essex Biodiversity Partnership; a group of more than 40 partners working together for the biodiversity of Essex. The EBP provides advice and support for specific projects including survey work.

4.6 Tree & Woodland Management

The Arboricultural & Conservation officer is responsible for the trees cape on the site. There are many interesting tree species planted at Oaklands including a splendid Redwood prominent in the landscape.

New tree species have been introduced in recent years to complement the legacy left by the Victorians.

The Council has a published tree strategy and operates a computerised tree management system – Treewise.

4.7 The use of Pesticides and other chemicals

The Council as a whole now 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. Where possible use will be made of biopesticides.

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. 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 Services Manager.

In accordance with the principles set out in the Community Plan the use of herbicides and pesticides within the Park is limited to the absolute minimum.

Parks Services follow the COSHH regulations when specifying pesticides. All specifiers 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 grounds maintenance specification, pest and disease control is not carried out as a routine operation. An instruction is required for any pesticide application and only used 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 and to the 'Code of Practice' reproduced in the Health and Safety Policy section Control of substances hazardous to health.

Parks Services 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. One person is also trained in first aid. Team members are trained to PA1/PA6 level.

4.8 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 at Oaklands Park.

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

The Service is currently trialling 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.

4.9 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.



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 Services. 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.

4.10 Energy and recycling

Both onsite and offsite 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 onsite 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 re-use 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. Where appropriate footpaths through woodland areas in parks are dressed with chippings.

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

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

4.11 Pollution reduction measures

With reference to the Community Plan: pollution and waste management, the Council's goal is to limit hazard 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 Services 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 Services risk assessment summaries and safe working practice sheets.¹¹ There are no chemicals stored onsite.

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 Services 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.



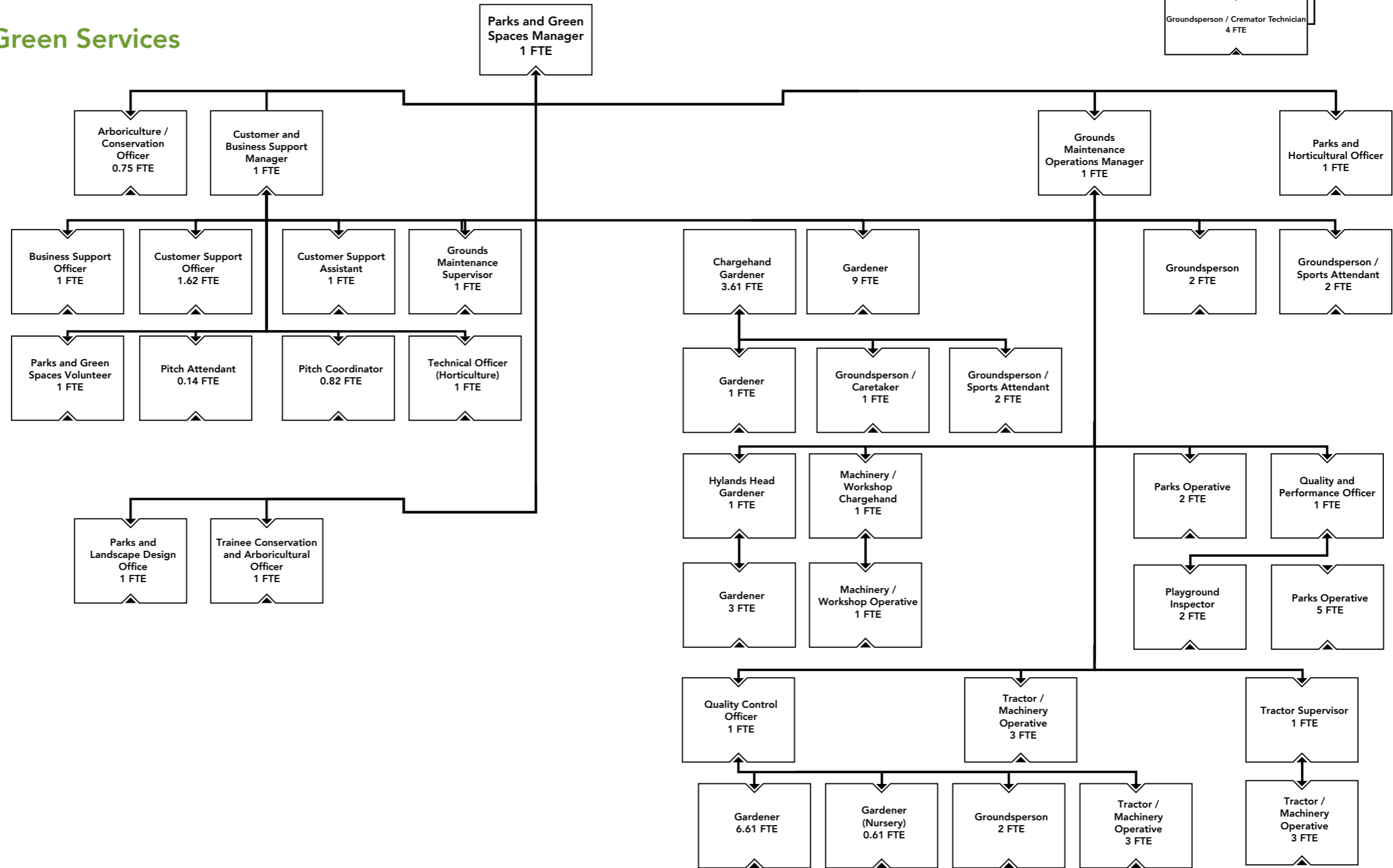
5 The Management Team and its business partners



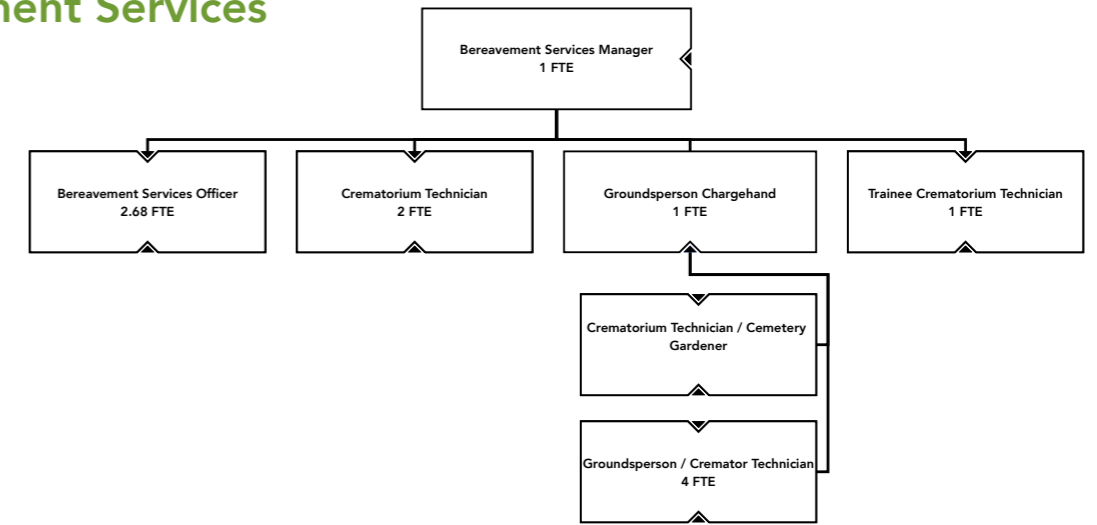
5.0 Public Places Directorate: About Parks and Green Spaces

Management Structure: Organisational Chart

Parks & Green Services



Bereavement Services



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 Borough of Chelmsford remains a safe place to live, work in and visit.

Parks & Heritage Services: 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.

Parks Management structure at Oaklands Park.

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

The Parks Strategy Team provides a design service, management direction, a tree management service, management of Park volunteers, 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 by two full time members of staff who undertake a broad range of maintenance operations. Their work is complemented by mobile gangs who undertake tractor grass cutting, and playground inspections. Private tree contractors undertake tree works as directed by the Arboricultural & Conservation officer.

Equipped Play

Play Service functions in park is managed by the Grounds Operations Manager on the day to day basis. The manager oversees the day to day maintenance of equipment at the Borough's 107 play sites.

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

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

The playgrounds are also subject to programmed safety inspections, by the playground inspector.

Minor faults are rectified at the time of inspection. More serious damage is reported to the Grounds Maintenance Service Manager within two hours of the inspection and dealt with as an urgent item. Damaged and dangerous play equipment is made safe by the inspector by means of hazard warning tape, flexible fencing and signage during the inspection. The response time for the inspector on a call-out is:

- Winter period (1 Oct-31 March) call before 1.00 pm or summer period (1 April 1-30 Sept) call before 2.30: Inspector to attend the same day
- Winter period (1 Oct-31 March) call after 1.00 pm or summer period (1 April 1-30 Sept) call after 2.30: Inspector to attend the next day irrespective of whether weekday, weekend or public holiday.

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

Playground Inspectors and Maintenance Contractors are required to undertake training

relevant to the guidelines laid out in the RoSPA publication 'Assessing Risks in Children's Playgrounds', e.g. the ISPAL Playground Inspecting and Reporting Course undertaken regularly every three years. The Contractor is also required to hold appropriate and current 'Construction Industry Scheme' certification.

Park Buildings: Safe access checks are undertaken on a four-monthly cycle. Ramps are inspected for algae and other slippery surfaces and pathways for ruts or cracking and that they remain unobstructed by plant growth. For further information about building assessment inspections refer to Section 3.5.

Business Partners: Sports and Play

There are published strategies for both Sports & Play available to download from the Council's web site.

In addition to Parks & Green Spaces, Leisure Services Sports Development Unit and Environmental Services Play Unit also have a major input to services provided in the Park. The former, amongst other things provide 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 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 days scheme also operates and is offered in partnership with local Parish/Town Council.

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

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.

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, trimmers, spray equipment etc. All but specialist training is undertaken in house.

As part of the policy a separate Health and Safety file is produced for the Parks staff, 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.

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 City Council's Parks and Green Spaces. 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 required to undertake child protection awareness are CRB checked as a condition of service.

Annual performance & development reviews

All staff receive 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

5.1 Safer Communities: Environmental Protection

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 large planned events held in parks.

5.2 Leisure and Heritage Services: Sports and 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 Borough. 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 the majority of sports clubs in Chelmsford.

Healthy living/Healthy walks

The parks are promoted as safe places for walking, exercise and physical activity.

Leisure and Heritage Services manage the healthy walks programme across the borough and ensure that the volunteer walk leaders get the support they need.

5.3 Leisure and Heritage Services: Arts and 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 and also provide an ongoing programme of community based arts and education workshops.

5.4 Leisure and 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 general public and to minority groups.



6 Clean and Well Maintained

6.0 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 of satisfaction in Service and in the facilities provided.

Management objectives

The core objectives of the Parks and Green Space Service can be described in broad terms as helping to make the City of Chelmsford 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 policies and activities that enhance and protect Chelmsford's built and natural features plus the surrounding countryside and unique heritage.

General objectives

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

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

Use of the sporting facilities at the park is actively encouraged. There are two tennis courts and a kickabout area.

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.

6.1 Site Maintenance arrangements and standards

Maintenance Regimes - Oaklands Park is managed by Chelmsford City Council (CCC) Parks Services. Specifically it is the responsibility of the Parks & Green Spaces 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 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 the appropriate horticultural skills levels. Staff are encouraged to partake in internal and external training to gain 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)
- 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

Tree and 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 tree stock within Parks Services remit is now monitored on new tree management software 'Tree Wise'.

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 is relayed to the Arboricultural and Conservation officer as is deemed appropriate.

Contracted cleaning services – Toilets

There are a number of toilet blocks operational in Oaklands Park, two sets being available to the general visiting public (One toilet block external to the museum building and the other within the building) and others provided with in the sports complex buildings. The cleaning of these toilets is the responsibility of Operational Services. The toilets are subject to daily visits. Floors and surfaces are cleaned and sundries replenished. Litter and graffiti is 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.

Hard works and Infrastructure

Facilities Management Building Maintenance team are responsible for the maintenance of the hard landscape areas of the park, along with services and buildings maintenance responsibilities.

Building maintenance carries out regular inspections of the facilities and prepares an annual planned preventative maintenance regime 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 at Oaklands Park are subject to annual safety audit reports undertaken through Safer Communities Directorate. The audits are arranged through Park and Green Spaces. 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.

Play Areas

The play areas on site are inspected daily by the Grounds Maintenance staff and any defects are recorded on inspection forms and passed to the Quality & Performance Officer who logs the defect and passes the report to the Grounds and Operational Services Manager who will instigate the necessary repairs. The inspectors routinely visit all of the 107 play sites within the borough.

In addition the play sites at the Park have a ROSPA inspection carried out annually; the Council's insurers arrange their own independent inspection.

Maintenance of the play area forms part of a separate arrangement, currently administered by the Grounds and Operational Services Manager. 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.

Building Maintenance

Maintenance of the park's ancillary buildings and the museum complex 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.

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.

Maintenance of Equipment/machinery

All plant is maintained by our workshop staff and every item of machinery or equipment that goes into the workshop receives a service record. These records are kept electronically. Portable Appliance testing is undertaken by an external company.

6.2 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 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 strictly 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 are able to 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.

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 Facilities Management. This audit covers building maintenance, security as well as general

safety, fire safety, legionella and mobility access.

Staff, both grounds maintenance staff and caretakers can offer assistance to 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 annual independent 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	Minimum expected frequency of operations/year. <small>(Guide only performance specification)</small>
Grass Amenity Fine Natural	Min. 15 cuts Min. 25 cuts Min. 1 cuts
Sports turf	As per type
Shrub Beds	Min. 9 visits
Herbaceous Border Paving Miscellaneous Detail Hedges	Min. 9 visits Min 15 Occ Min 2 Occ Min 3 Occ
Trees Native species plantation Site furniture	Min. 9 visits Min 10 Occ Min 2 Occ
Landscape Features	April-Sept. min 2 visits Oct-March min. 1visit

6.3 Health & Safety obligations

Grounds Management Services are fully compliant with all aspects of the Health & Safety legislation. Management keep 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 manufacturers 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 properly 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

- The following general precautions are followed, in conjunction with those detailed in the individual COSHH assessment sheets:
- Follow safe working practices, avoiding skin and 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

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.

6.4 Accident recording

Accident records for the Park are kept by Parks and Green Spaces 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 Line Manager and to the Health and Safety Advisor in Personnel Services. They also keep their own First Aid / Accident book in which details of incidents are recorded.

The Parks & Green Spaces 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 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.

6.5 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			*		

Grounds

The area supervisors inspect their sites on a weekly basis. The Park 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 necessary repairs within set performance agreements.

Facilities Management undertake formal inspections of facilities and features at the intervals recorded in the boxes below. The 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	2 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 daily visits during week days by the cleaning contractor. At weekends parks staff undertake the cleaning duties. 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 Years Eve, New Years Day). The Park staff inspects the areas as part of their daily duties. An external consultant, Zurich Insurance, undertakes an annual safety audit of the play equipment.

6.6 Accident and Vandalism reporting at Oaklands 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, including Oaklands Park. 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 Borough.

Chelmsford City Council has a very efficient Crime and Disorder Partnership and has successfully gained a Charter Mark for the service. The recognition of the Charter Mark for this type of service is the only one of its kind in the country.

The current approach consists of:

- On site presence of staff during the working day
- Security patrols
- Park Watchers providing intelligence
- 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 is 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 Parks & Green Space 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 Parks & Green Space 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, traveller 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 contact Waterhouse Lane Depot on 01245 605566 during normal office hours.

6.7 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 when pre-planned matches are being played.

High standards of upkeep and cleanliness, and the presence of permanent park staff and staff at the Museum, 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 pass on any relevant details e.g. a person's description and car registration numbers.

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

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

The majority of the site is monitored by CCTV cameras.

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

As with all of the Borough's parks, Oaklands Park is covered by the ParkWatch Scheme. ParkWatch is an initiative run by the City Council with Police support and operates 24 hours/day for all parks. 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 Borough 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 Borough 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

6.8 Issues of conflict, safety and antisocial behaviour

Control of Dogs and Dog Fouling

Dog walkers are welcome in the parks providing they act in a responsible manner by keeping their animals under control and that they clean up in the proper manor. Dog walkers are not permitted to take their dogs into either of the play areas or on the sports pitches.

Since the introduction of The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 it has become an offence not to clean up after a dog if it has fouled on footpaths, bridle paths, parks, grass verges or amenity areas. The provisions of the act are enforced by the Council and breaches may be subject to a fixed penalty ticket or prosecution for failure to pay.

Dog-bins are located throughout the park to encourage owners to clean up after their dogs. They are emptied on a regular basis. In an instance where a member of the public wishes to report an overflowing dog bin they can telephone 01245 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 generally do so responsibly, recognising that the area is first and foremost 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 them are liable to incur an on the spot fine 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.

Dogs within the park do not cause any significant problems and the occasional instances that do occur are dealt with by the dog wardens.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 does allow the introduction of dog control orders but to date specific orders have not been considered necessary.

Control of litter

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 Oaklands Park are low with very few needles being found within the Park. 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 Borough.

Management of park events

The following Health and Safety procedures are in place regarding events held in Oaklands Park. Events are arranged through Parks & Green Spaces, where officers are responsible for monitoring Health and 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 and 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, together with event programme and the event layout plan
- Submit to the Council a written risk assessment for the event if required

All schools events and activities have to 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 & Green Spaces 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.

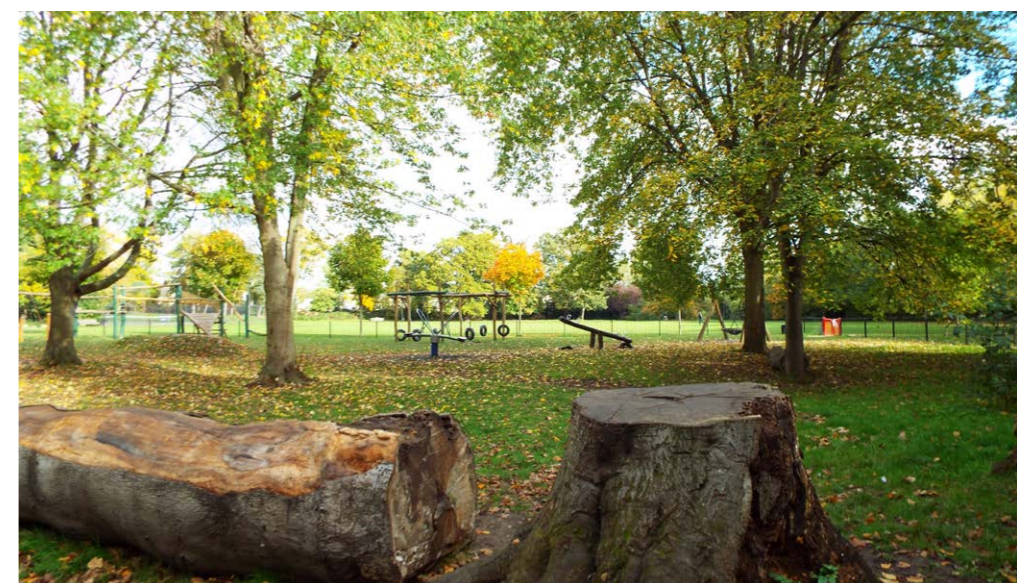
Qualified first aiders are available at staged events and carry first aid kits at all times during those events. The St John's Ambulance Service attends larger events.

6.9 Complaints procedure – Customer Promise

Complaints and 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.

All complaints are logged on a computerised system and the complainant is given a unique reference number to aid in follow up.

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.



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



7.0 Natural Fabric

This section describes the different 'living' components that make up the essential character of the park – trees, grass, shrubberies, woodland 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 City Council 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

The Park includes areas set aside for the benefit of flora and fauna.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act October 2006, puts a duty of care onto local authorities to responsibly manage sites for the enrichment of biodiversity for sites that they are responsible for.

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.

Ecological Survey: Work is in hand to develop a Wildlife Strategy for the parks, following on from the initial wildlife and conservation assessment. This will be based on a full ecological survey and correlated with the Tree Management Strategy.

- **Recording** – The biological recording system shall continue to be used to store all ecological data for the park on a central system accessible to a number of users. The information pool will be used to inform management, and as a baseline for monitoring the changes in the biodiversity of the park. Public access to selected information using the biological recording system is also encouraged.
- **Monitoring** – An ecological monitoring strategy will be implemented which aims to collect standardised, repeatable information to allow managers to detect changes in the ecological condition of the park.

7.1 Habitat creation and management

Following a wildlife and conservation assessment of the site, records of flora and fauna are to be kept and where appropriate new habitat created. (Various actions are included in the action plan. Sec 8.5 each of the park 'zones' are recognised as having value to ecology 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 siting, selection and enhanced range of species.

Oaklands Park has a number of mature trees within the site boundaries which are important to the general ambience of the site and lend themselves to being host to many eco-systems.

There has been a full survey undertaken to assess the ecological, landscape and historic value of the site. It is recognised that the tree belts create additional wind protection on what is a rather open and exposed site and as such it is deemed important to ensure there is a degree of continuity planting to ensure.

Grasslands

The extent of the grassland shall be maintained generally in its current regimes with the majority held as sports 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 park. Oaklands Park supports a broad range of native fauna and is an important site for wildlife being a buffer of green space within the urban landscape. The presence of fauna within the Park adds to the experience of a visit.

Water Management

There is a drainage system serving the football area to the rear of the museum building. In addition there are a number of soak ways within the park to take water from areas prone to ponding.

Gray water from the buildings is captured in an underground reservoir and is utilised in the automated watering system for the annual bedding on the front lawn. In addition to the pop up sprinkler system there are also a number of water take off points where hosepipes can be connected.

Landscape & Design Considerations

Oaklands Park and its mixture of natural features provide an important area of open space due to its location within the heavily urbanised area. The Borough Council purchased the site in the 1930's.

A full landscape appraisal of Oaklands Park was carried out during the preparation of the Development P1an. 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.
- To ensure there is a good 'connection' between park and museum.
- 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.

7.2 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 & Green Spaces is the key Service for managing the majority of the infrastructure on site.

- Toilets
- Parks maintenance buildings
- Play areas
- Car parking areas

Boundary Treatments and Entrances

The main vehicular entrance to the site is via Moulsham Street. There are a number of pedestrian access points from all of the site boundaries.

Road and Path Network

Roadways and car parking in Oaklands Park are all hard surfaced tarmac finishes. In addition there is a footpath within the site which permits pedestrian access to the sports buildings and courts to those people in wheelchairs.

7.3 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 16 benches in the park mainly supplied by Broxap's – Rotherham bench design with armrests to be DDA compliant and are also set onto enlarged concrete plinths to enable a wheelchair to draw up beside the bench.

Litterbins and dog bins

Litterbins on the site are supplied by Orchard Seating Ltd. 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 to help orientate the visitor.

7.4 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.

Park closing times:

Jan, Nov & Dec	5.00 pm
Feb & March	6.00 pm
October	7.00 pm
April & Sept	8.00 pm
May & Aug	9.00 pm
June & July	10.00 pm

The park is open from 7.30am, although public access, by foot is not entirely restricted to any set times due to the open nature of the site.

Getting to the park

(1) By foot

The access points for the park are marked on the location drawings.

(2) By road

Via Moulsham Street.

(3) By private transport

The site provides parking for up to 52 cars including 4 bays for disabled parking.. Being home to Chelmsford Museum the park attracts a lot of visitors the majority of whom arrive by car. Parking is restricted to a maximum stay of 2 hours unless a day permit is applied for from the museum. This is to deter commuter parking.

(4) By public transport

Buses

The park is on 36, 42A, 40/50, 45, 46, 47 & 48 bus routes.

(5) Trains

The park is some 1.5 miles from Chelmsford Station.

7.5 Access Target Groups

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

Four main groups have been highlighted with regard to accessibility within the park over and above the sports user. The needs of these groups are under continual reassessment.

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 also 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. For this reason we have two well equipped play areas.

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 impaired, 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

People counters have been installed at key locations to measure the volume of people accessing the park, 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.



8 The journey towards excellence Shaping the Future



8.0 Landscape Character

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

- Pleasure garden zone
- Sports activity zone
- Play zones
- Picnic zone
- Woodland & nature zones

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

Policy: Landscape Character

The park 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.

8.1 Key Management issues

Oaklands Park is the main park serving primarily the ward of Moulsham Chelmsford and its surrounding environs. It is primarily a Victorian Park with many features of the bygone days remaining. It is seen to be one of the Jewels in Chelmsford's rich heritage. The Park is also home to Chelmsford Museum.

8.2 Site Specific Features

Facilities available to the visitor

- Free Car Parking
- Kickabout Area
- Tennis courts
- Children's Play Areas
- Park User Toilets
- Woodland walks
- Pleasure Gardens in the Victorian style
- Museum
- Café

Soft landscape features

Trees – Oaklands Park benefits from the mature trees that form the backdrop that helps to frame the setting. To perpetuate this legacy other trees have been planted throughout the site.

Plantings - The planting strategy aims to work with local growing conditions and reflect the desires of the general 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 wild flower areas, plantations of native hard wood species and plantings encouraging birds and

nectar loving insects.

Hard landscape features

Paths, roadways, 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.

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 value whilst balancing the needs of the user.

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

Dedicated areas for conservation

- Much development work has been undertaken, not least the provision (and interpretation for schools) of the following features.
- Log Pile and standing dead wood within the woodland area
- Habitat creation to attract breeding bats and birds
- Relaxed mowing regimes

8.3 Enhancement of the landscape

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 this 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.

Enhancement of sporting & fitness opportunities

The Council's healthy walks co-ordinator arranges a healthy walks programme that starts and finishes at the park, key parks are being used by the scheme to promote healthy living concepts to the community at large. Oaklands Park is important to this initiative and is being especially targeted due to the demographics of the area.

The park provides opportunities for those wanting to play tennis and football.

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.

Children are invited to become involved in various planting initiatives, and are regular visitors when it comes to woodland tasks, wild flower plug planting and bulb planting.

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 play areas.

Initiatives are planned each year around the topics listed below.

- Children's play
- Green Class Rooms – drawn to nature (Both natural and social history)

Educational facilities and interpretation

Use of the Park by schools is actively encouraged. School children are encouraged to get involved in wildlife days and planting days organised by the Service. The Park also works with the museum in hosting events and school parties where people use facilities both in the museum and within the park.

An interpretation plan has been established for the park based on the guiding principles in the interpretation strategy produced for the Borough'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

8.4 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 so that labour and financial resources are used to maximum benefit.

Key Management issues

Oaklands Park's Landscape Management Strategy contains proposals for the future development of the Park. Its purpose is to provide a guide to the management of the park, taking into account 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 Park in its setting.
- Preserve, enhance and interpret the ecological value of the Park.

A summary of the main proposals of the strategy follows:

- Continue with dedicated park staff within the site on a day to day basis
- The landscape architect to review and advise upon all design proposals
- To revise the Landscape Management Plan to compliment new developments resultant from the museum redevelopment works
- The continuation of the Oaklands Park Garden Volunteers Group.

8.5 Landscape improvements: (2021-2026) Implementation of the five year 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 and 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 have to 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.

Parks and Green Space management is largely funded through annual budget allocations. As Parks Services are not statutory, however, they are potentially more prone to cutbacks than other statutory services. For all parks, including Oaklands, there are three main challenges: finding new ways to raise money to make improvements, securing income to ensure long term sustainability; and managing the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.

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

No	Objective	Time frame	Cost Implication
Objective 1	To engender a strong sense of place through distinctive landscape design and clear signage.	Ongoing	Within revenue budgets
Objective 2	Promote the park as a venue for community events.	Ongoing	Within revenue budgets
Objective 3	To promote the use of the site by local schools to encourage children to consider the park theirs and to feel respect for it.	Ongoing	Within revenue budgets
Objective 4	To develop a wide range of partnerships and stakeholders in the park by identifying and bringing them together with a common aim.	1-5	Within revenue budgets
Objective 5	To increase the perception of safety amongst park users by empowering park users to become involved.	1-5	Within revenue budgets
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 sporting constraints.	1-5	Within revenue budgets

Objective 7	To engender feeling of ownership by supporting a strong garden volunteer group and school/college volunteering projects.	4-5	Within revenue budgets
Objective 8	Work with health and activity sectors to deliver initiatives which promote physical, mental and social well-being for those visiting the park.	1-5	Within revenue budgets
Objective 9	Initiate projects with selected local schools to develop opportunities to benefit nature and the environment.	1-5	£2K
Objective 10	Work in partnership with the Education sector to support delivery of elements of the curriculum as they relate to parks and open spaces.	1-5	£3K
Objective 11	Promote the park to those groups identified as being absent.	1-5	£1K
Objective 12	Provide high quality play opportunities across all age groups – toddlers, juniors, teenagers and adults.	1-5	£1K
Objective 13	Protect and enhance key features – of landscape, natural and heritage character, views and vistas- which are particularly valued by local people.	1-5	£3K
Objective 14	Manage the park in a way that allows it to adapt to the changing climate while enabling it to continue to deliver its primary public benefit.	1-5	£3K
Objective 15	Manage the park in such a way as to protect and enhance its potential value for wildlife and habitats.	1-5	£3K

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	Within revenue budgets

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.

- 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.

8.6 Management issues; Objectives and Actions.

The following section highlights current key issues relating to the management and maintenance of the park. It is good to consider tenants of management running through prior management plans for the site discounting some and improving on others. It provides an insight to the rationale to new decision makers.

The key issues are grouped using the same key criteria as used by Green Flag.

In order to support the objective of providing a well managed Park, the following projects are proposed during the life of this Plan:

Objective	Actions / Targets
Retain Green Flag and Green Heritage Status	Maintain both Green Flag Award and Green Heritage award status
Maintain a Geographical Information System for the Park	Record site details on GIS system
Maintain a customer care compliments and complaints database	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
Continue to facilitate user group meetings at regular intervals	Share information and ideas across the groups. Keep minutes of meetings
Establish and monitor key performance indicators, benchmark and define excellence standard.	
Determine funding streams to ensure adequate investment and regeneration.	
Secure budget investment in repair/replacement of infrastructure	

In order 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.

Consolidate style of seats and bins	Bin and seat styles recorded in management plan for future replacements of the same type
Maintain Park Notice Boards at all park entrances	
Introduce actions identified in the conservation plan	Report on progress annually
Enhance/restore soft landscaping into the park setting	Monitor and review progress annually
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 other partner Agencies

In order 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. Link into healthy walks programme and into Children and Young People Plan.

In order 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 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
Quantify the resources required to support the action plan and identify the next steps for service reinvestment/parks investment fund/invest to save.

In order 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.

Establish a system for recording all energy and fuel consumption in the Park
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.
Further develop the tree management strategy within the site.

In order 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
Develop ecological skills in the workforce to support appropriate management in all types of open space and quality standards to support this
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.

In order 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.

Develop links with local schools, colleges and clubs. Increase numbers participating in educational activities

Develop Parks User Groups to reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community

Promote Park Watch

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

Increase Community use and site activation – continue to support and facilitate local events and usage by interest groups.

In order 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 Parks web pages relating to the Park

Promote Community events within the Park

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

8.7 Future improvements: Key Areas

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

- Improved landscaped areas
- volunteer involvement

8.8 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.

We have been required to operate on a 'nil 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.

8.9 Monitoring and Review

The issues identified in 9.4 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.

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

- Publish achievements – achievements will be publicised using press releases and the Chelmsford Borough 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 – information gathered from surveys, records of complaints, comments from parks users and other stakeholders all of which are analysed and considered.
- Consultation – results of consultations with stakeholders especially the 'hard to reach' will be analysed.
- Citizen Panel – The panel meets on a regular basis and are a useful forum to use when we need customer feedback as the group is made up from a broad spectrum of residents within the Borough.
- 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 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 in itself 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 in itself provides a further objective assessment.

Field in Trust Awards – the outcomes of these awards will mark our standards of provision for outside sports and will help us to benchmark against other Authorities regionally.

Parks & Green Spaces - pursue benchmarking with an Essex Practitioners forum:- the Parks Managers meeting regularly to share ideas and develop policies and strategies for park management and maintenance, and to respond to changing needs.

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.

9 Publicity, Marketing and Promotion

9.0 Understanding the needs of the customer

Our Chelmsford Our Plan

With reference to the 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 Oaklands Park is undertaken to meet the City Council's 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 years past 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).

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.

9.1 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

Oaklands Park is 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 the region of 100,000 per annum.



To ensure that the park is relevant for all current and future generations to enjoy we have set 6 key criteria to develop within the borough's parks.

- Promoting health & activity
- Supporting education and learning
- Encouraging diversity and inclusion
- Ensuring safety and security
- Greater community involvement
- Promoting fun and enjoyment

Making the invisible visible

User benefits focus: The Park has something for every taste.

- Improved physical health and well-being from exercise and relaxation
- 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

9.2 Events & 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 to be geared to include a broad spectrum of people from various social and cultural groups.

9.3 Visitor Amenities

Oaklands Park is home to Chelmsford Museum along with being a Green Heritage Park steeped in history. The site has adequate parking facilities. Toilets are available to visitors during normal park opening hours.

9.4 Education: Health and Environmental education

The Natural health adviser to Natural England Dr William Bird confirms the natural environment will be centre stage in the Government's new 'get active' plan. These are all

indications of how important green space will be in future thinking. Parks Services seeks to be relevant in the services it provides and works with Health Providers and Environmental organisations to publicise the benefits of the facilities available and the benefits in visiting parks to improve general wellbeing.

9.5 Community engagement

We actively seek to engage with the local community to canvass their views and expectations. Various mediums are employed to this end from user surveys, to public consultation, through local advertising through partnership initiatives and the like.

As can be seen below we have many opportunities to reach the local population not just through those contactable through the various sporting organisations that use the park for there programmed activities.

9.6 Community involvement

The current management of the park encourages community involvement. Oaklands Park now has an established Garden Volunteer base.

9.7 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. Any major planned changes within the park are consulted on extensively. Friends Group and other stakeholders are invited to comment.

9.8 Focus Groups

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

- Museum Friends
- Garden Volunteers
- Local Schools

9.9 Volunteer Groups

Parks Services run a Garden Volunteer Scheme at the Park supervised by the Head Gardener. Sessions run weekly from March through to November. We also offer regular sessions for Chelmsford College Extended Learning Students and local Primary Schools on specific project work within the Park.

9.10 Visitor satisfaction

Chelmsford City Council has reason to be proud of its Parks and Green Spaces. 87% of residents hold their parks in high regard. 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.

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.

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 figure 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 under represented 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
- A large number of people visit the park more than ten times each year, many of these visit 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 Oaklands Park needs to:

- 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.

Top 8 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. as a walk through
7. to socialise
8. to eat lunch/picnic

Researchers have established that the following factors have a bearing on how people view a good local Park.

1. safer environment
2. more specific facilities
3. more appealing events
4. more personal or family leisure time
5. closer proximity to home
6. better access
7. other
8. improved natural areas
9. better health

9.11 Marketing information

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

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 of 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.

Communication regarding events and activities at Oaklands Park, 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.

News concerning the park is distributed in a number of ways to ensure information is in the public realm, at off site venues. This is done in a number of ways. Chelmsford City Council web pages

- Chelmsford City Council web pages
- Events diary

9.12 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 general public. This includes banners, posters, leaflets, park notice boards, vehicle livery, uniforms etc.

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 general 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.

9.13 Communication: Press & Media Cover

Press releases to local and national media are managed through Chelmsford Borough 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

Council publications in the main are organised through Corporate Communications although Park Guides and Events in Parks brochures are arranged by Parks & Green Spaces marketing.

9.14 Quality and Performance Management accreditations

- Investors in People (IIP)
- Community Safety Charter Mark
- Quality of Built Environment
- Green Flag Award

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 – Flyposting
NI 197	Improved local biodiversity
L001	Public conveniences
PRK 1	Parks & Open Spaces Provision
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

Action plans will be monitored annually and will be submitted on an annual basis for scrutiny by Green Flag.

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





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