

CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

20 MARCH, 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO LEADER - ENVIRONMENT

GREEN FLAG AWARD

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To advise Cabinet of the application for Green Flag Award in 2008.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Endorse the application for a Green Flag Award for Cannock Park in 2008.

2.2 That Cabinet agree and endorse the Management Plan (2005-2015) for Cannock Park

2.3 That Cabinet agree to fund the Action Plan up to year 2010, as contained within the existing Capital/Revenue budgets and agree to receive additional reports to consider the financial implications of the remaining Action Plan.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales and is designed to recognise and reward the best green spaces in the country. It is also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in green spaces.

It is an independent award that aims to set standards for management and to promote the value of parks and green spaces as social places as well as places for walking, play, informal sports and for nature conservation.

3.2 The Green Flag Award in addition to being a PSA 8 target is a Local Area Agreement, a BVPI target, a District Delivery Plan target and an Environmental Services Business Plan objective.

4. Summary

4.1 The scheme is at the heart of the commitment to create cleaner, safer and greener communities for all. The Award is one of the Government's key mechanisms for measuring high standards and each park or green space is judged against eight key criteria

- A Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe and Secure

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- Clean and Well Maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community and Heritage
- Marketing
- Management
- This is assessed from a Management Plan that must be produced by the Council, which details the vision for the Park and details how improvements are to be financed and progressed. The Action Plan from the Management Plan (2005-2015) is enclosed at Annex1.

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Section 1

Background

The Award system is independently managed by the Civic Trust on behalf of the Green Flag Award Advisory Board, which was established in February 2005 as a stakeholder group chaired by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to provide advice on the delivery and strategic direction of the Green Flag Award Scheme.

The role of the Board is to advise the DCLG on the development of the Scheme and to bring together the principal stakeholders to discuss its future direction and monitor performance. It also supports the DCLG in helping to meet its commitment, as part of a public service agreement target (PSA8), to ensure that the number of local authority areas with at least one Green Flag Award standard space increases to 60% by 2008.

The Board comprises representatives from DCLG, CABE Space, current Green Flag Award sponsors (Countryside Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and English Heritage), original founders of the Scheme, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Glendale, Green Flag judges, a Green Flag winning local authority, a Green Pennant winning community group and the Civic Trust as the scheme's manager.

Each site that is entered for Green Flag has two distinct areas, which are assessed. Firstly the Council must submit a Management Plan in January of the application year, which deals with all of the above issues in significant detail. The plan is scored by two independent judges out of an overall score of 30. The Plan must score a minimum of 15. The Council are not told of the score until after the Park is judged. The site is then visited to assess the standards achieved on the ground as detailed in the plan. The actual site score is out of 70 of which a minimum score of 42 must be reached. The two scores are added together and the Park must reach a minimum score of at least 66%. If successful the Council are able to fly a Green Flag as a mark of excellence. This is an annual occurrence and judges provide a detailed breakdown of strengths and recommendations at each assessment. The recommendations in particular act as a guide for improvements that must be addressed in order to retain Green Flag accreditation. The judging process follows strict criteria, which judges have to score on the day. At this stage the original score for the management plan maybe adjusted dependent upon the actual quality of the site.

Section 2

Details of Matters to be Considered

The IDeA launched a number of reputation themes that Councils should consider on what the lasting impact of its services has on users and visitors. A number of Reputation Meetings were held in 2006 and chaired by the Councils Chief Executive. Following a presentation by the Parks and Open Spaces Manager and the Streetscene Team Leader to the group, a Cannock Park Partnership was established. This comprised of officers from the District Council, County Council, Fire Service, Police, Glendale and the Friends of Cannock Park. The Partnership was deliberately diverse to ensure that the required Management Plan took into account all of the stakeholders views.

Section 3**Contribution to CHASE**

Children and Young People – Play, in particular has a vital role in developing the physical and social skills of children and young people. Imaginative play and the provision for exploration with friends help to develop children’s potential for achievement. Developing culture among children and young people can be defined as a ‘way of life’ and ranges from arts, sports, street scene, heritage, tourism, parks, open spaces and countryside. Culture is sustained and developed through the provision of opportunity for expression/participation in developing and challenging communities. This could be by providing physical or mental skills which help to promote self-esteem and creativity such as time spent on a countryside volunteer programme or attending a formal park event. Culture has a common goal in that it is experienced through shared value lifestyles and leisure choices that often shape an area’s public realm and social life.

Healthier Communities, Housing and Older People – access to well maintained, good quality greenspace does have a positive impact on both mental health e.g., the ability to concentrate and physical health e.g., healing capacity and physical activity. Studies have also shown that there is a link between environmental quality and population health so there is a clear need to ensure greenspaces are accessible and of a high quality to lead to improved community health and well being.

Access to Skills, Economic Development and Enterprise – parks, open spaces and countryside play an important role in the quality of people’s lives and it is important that all users can access such sites. There is a clear linkage between public open space, free at point of entry and the Council’s Equality and Diversity Strategy.

Safer and Stronger Communities – greenspaces provide important spaces for people to meet, either informally or formally with others in their local community.

Evidence suggests that if the full range of potential benefits of greenspace is to be achieved by society, a socially inclusive approach to design, layout and maintenance is required. It is important not to underestimate the role that greenspace and greenspace projects can play in community cohesion especially as they help to address barriers within and between communities. In particular, parks and open spaces contribute to social cohesion, which can, in turn, contribute to increased safety. Although community safety research is relatively limited it is known that the quality of greenspace is often linked to the community’s perceptions of it.

Environment – research has proven there is a strong link between the quality of Greenspace and attracting and retaining investment be it new or relocated businesses or for a place to live. Improving existing or establishing new greenspace as part of regeneration is essential and contributes to a wide range of environmental benefits including reduced flood risk, noise, and airborne pollution and meeting various biodiversity targets. Management and maintenance of greenspaces creates employment both directly and indirectly. The latter through volunteer programmes that also help to develop and improve skills leading to further employment.

Section 4**Section 17 Implications**

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The PDU have been involved in the Cannock Park Partnership Workshops and it is envisaged that any major implications for crime prevention would involve the PDU.

Section 5

Human Rights Act Implications

There are none identified as a result of this report.

Section 6

Data Protection Act Implications

There are none identified as a result of this report.

Section 7

Risk Management Implications

There are none identified as a result of this report.

Section 8

Legal Implications

Section 2 Local Government Act 2000, states that:

(1) Every local authority are to have power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve any one or more of the following objects—

- (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area,
- (b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area, and
- (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.

(4) The power under subsection (1) includes power for a local authority to—

- (a) incur expenditure, and
- (c) enter into arrangements or agreements with any person.

The Green Flag Award is consistent with existing Council policy and powers exist under the above statutory framework for the Action Plan to be implemented.

Section 9**Financial Implications**

The cost of the Green Flag application is estimated at £700 and can be met from existing revenue budgets within Public Open Spaces Service.

Annex 1 Action Plan for Cannock Park details some areas where expenditure has already been incurred and other areas where expenditure could be incurred in the future. Some of the expenditure is of a revenue nature and some is of a capital nature. The table below details the proposed expenditure during the next three financial years and proposed funding sources:

Action Plan	2008-09	2009-10	2010-2011	Funding source	Funding Description
Replace railings Stafford Road	£72,302	£0	£0	S106 Capital Programme	Q144 + Q214
New entrance Stafford Road	£17,000	£0	£0	S106 Capital Programme	Q144 + Q214
Standardised street furniture	£0	£6,000	£0	Revenue	Existing parks revenue budgets
Replace street furniture	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	Revenue	Existing parks revenue budgets
Annual tree survey	£21,000	£21,000	£21,000	Revenue	Existing General Public Open Spaces budgets
Refurbishment of pathways	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	Revenue	Existing parks revenue budgets
Introduce conservation area	£1,000	£0	£0	Revenue	Existing General Public Open Spaces / parks revenue budgets
Bat and bird boxes	£250	£0	£0	Revenue	Existing General Public Open Spaces / parks revenue

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					budgets
Art sculpture miners theme	£0	£3,000	£0	No funding	Future Delivery Change process or external sponsorship
Information point	£0	£800	£0	Revenue	Existing parks revenue budgets
Cannock Park leaflet	£1,000	£0	£0	Revenue	Existing parks revenue budgets
Total	£116,552	£31,800	£25,000		

Where future items can not be met from existing resources the Council will need to approve if and how it wishes to fund the work. Approved items would then need to be included in either the revenue or capital budgets. Any requests for additional resources to deliver Annex 1 should be via the Delivering Change process or via alternative funding arrangements including unfunded Action Plan items beyond 2010-2011.

Section 10

Human Resource Implications

The long term and challenging action plan will require ongoing commitment of human resources across a number of areas to see the project through to completion..

Section 11

Conclusion The Green Flag Award Scheme provides an independent assessment the site against prescribed criteria. The Green Flag Award is a national and regional/local target, which the Council wishes to aspire to.

Background Papers

Cannock Park Management Plan 2005-2015.

Annexes

Annex 1: Action Plan

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Action Plan

Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Refurbish tennis courts	Safe fully fenced tennis courts Accessible to all	Resurface Mark lines New fencing	Landscape Development Officer	April 2006	£70,000.00 C
Renew entrance gate at Park Road	Restored gates	New bespoke design by traditional blacksmith	Parks & Open Spaces Manager/Property Services Officer	May 2006	£8,000.00 R
Segregate pedestrian & cars entrance point at Park Road	Safe entry point for park users Cycle route marked out	Liaise property services Design implement	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	May 2006	£1,500.00 R
Install vehicle management system	Reduction in speed of official vehicles on site	Design Install anti-speed humps	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	Dec 2005	£300.00 R
Refurbish car park	Spaces re-marked free use for park users	Liaise property services	Parks & Open Spaces Manager Waste & Engineering Manager	Dec 2005	£1000.00 R

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Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Install car park sign	Clear signage for car park users	Contact suppliers Order & install	Parks Consultant	Dec 2007	£800 R
Install new parks notice board		Find supplier Check design Order Plan publicity Involve FOCP	Parks Consultant	March 2008	£2,000.00 Parks budget R
Install directional signs in the park	Directional signs strategically placed indicating key facilities	Design Find supplier Order Involve FOCP	Parks Consultant	June 2007	£2000.00 Parks budget R
Install location map sign in the park	Location map strategically placed indicating key facilities	Design Find supplier Order Involve FOCP	Parks Consultant	October 2007	£800 Parks budget R
Create disabled persons parking	Disabled people able to gain access/ park near facilities	Design Mark spaces	Liaise Disability Access Surveyor	April 2006	£100 R

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Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Refurbish toilet to meet DDA standards	Toilet accessible for disabled people	Design Tender Select contractor Build	Liaise Disability Access Surveyor	July 2007	£3,500.00 R
Create 2 access ramps to pavilion (at back & front of pavilion)	Disabled people able to gain access to pavilion	Design Tender Select contractor Build	Liaise Disability Access Surveyor	April 2006 April 2007	£16,300 C
Replace railings along Stafford Road frontage & from along side border with Leisure Centre c	New railings providing barrier between main road & park	Design Specify design Tender Select contractor Install	Culture & Major Projects Officer	April 2008	£85,000 C
Create new entrance point on Stafford Road	Increased visibility & status	Design Specify design Tender Select contractor Install	Culture & Major Projects Officer	April 2008	£17,000.00 C

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Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Street furniture standardised in the park	Park has good quality furniture and own identity	Explore suppliers Sustainability & durability & cost Source products	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	April 2009	£6,000.00 R
Refurbish/replace street furniture (Over 10 years)	All street furniture, fit for purpose	Refurbish/replace Liaise Team Leader Parks FOCP re location of new furniture	Parks & Open Spaces Manager Technical Services Officer	March 2006 March 2007 March 2008 March 2009 March 2010 March 2011 March 2012 March 2013 March 2014 March 2015	£2000.00 Per year R
Create recycling area for green waste	Improved parks conservation/recycling	Identify site Liaise Glendale	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	Dec 2007	R (Council owned)

Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Segregation of waste	Recycling opportunities maximised	Liaise Waste Management & Glendale Provision of collecting points	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	January 2008	R (Contractor time)
Implement arboriculture plan	Good Management and planning of trees	See Arboricultural plan	Urban Forestry Officer	Sept 2006	Schedule of rates R
Annual tree survey	Trees monitors and tree works planned	See Arboricultural plan	Urban Forestry Officer	Annually	£21,000.00 R
Tree works (Over 10 years)	Management & maintenance of all trees in accordance with the Arboricultural Plan	See Arboricultural plan	Urban Forestry Officer	Annually See Arboricultural plan	See Arboricultural plan R
Create bedding	Colourful horticultural display	Involve FOCF Design Order plants Remove grass Prepare bed Plant out Maintain	Parks Team Leader Grounds Maintenance Supervisor	June 2007	£2000 R Parks budget

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Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Community bedding design & planting	Colourful horticultural display to community design	Involve FOCP Design Order plants Plant out	Parks Consultant Parks Team Leader Grounds Maintenance	June 2008	Parks budget as above
Police patrols	Increased safety & security	Liaise Police Investigate security service	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	Dec 2006	Officer time
Radio link direct with Police	Increased safety & security via an immediate contact response	Liaise Police Purchase Storenet radio	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	Dec 2005	£325 R
Water conservation in changing rooms	Water conserved but service to users not reduced	Install percussion showers	Property Services Manager	March 2006	£2000.00 R

Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Implement refurbishment of pathways (over 10 years)	Pathways renewed and replaced providing safe pathways		Landscape Officer, Parks & Open Spaces Manager	April 2006	£2000 PER ANNUM R
				April 2007	
				April 2008	
				April 2009	
				April 2010	
				April 2011	
				April 2012	
				April 2013	
Refurbish Play area (space net)	Replacement of popular play equipment to meet the needs of children	Explore suppliers Sustainability & durability & cost Source products Install Replace safety surface around space net	Parks & Open Spaces Manager Landscape Officer	January 2008	£30,000 C

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Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Renew play area surface	New safety surface meeting safety guidelines	Explore suppliers Sustainability & durability & cost Tender Select contractor Install	Parks & Open Spaces Manager Landscape Officer Technical Services Officer	August 2011	£140,000 C
Install Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	MUGA providing wide range of opportunities for ball games, Reduction of ball games on other hard surface areas	Liaise young people Explore suppliers Sustainability & durability & cost Tender Select contractor Install	Landscape Officer Technical Services Officer	August 2011	£70,000 C

Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Refurbish static sports equipment	Provision of static sports equipment that is fit for purpose & meets the needs of users	Liaise young people, users Explore suppliers Sustainability & durability & cost Tender Select contractor Install	Parks & Open Spaces Manager Landscape Officer Technical Services Officer	March 2012	Delete equipment when MUGA is installed C
Introduce conservation area	Increased bio-diversity	Amend grounds maintenance specification	Countryside Team Leader	July 2008	£1000.00 R
Introduce bat & bird boxes	Increased bio-diversity	Explore suppliers Sustainability & durability & cost Order Install	Countryside Team Leader	June 2008	£250 R
Mobility scooter hire	Disabled and elderly people able travel around park	Liaise shop mobility & Disability Access Surveyor	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	April 2008	Officer time

Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Introduce Parks Watch	Improved safety & security through community & police partnerships	Liaise Police FOCP	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	June 2009	Officer time
Responsible dog ownership education	Decrease in dog fouling, increase usage of dog bins by 50%	Liaise Environmental Health & local dog clubs, FOCP	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	July 2008	Officer time
Introduce art sculpture on miners theme as part of park heritage	Recognition of generosity of Miners Publicity of parks heritage Public aware of heritage of Cannock Park	Liaise Arts Development Museum Service, FOCP Involve local schools	Arts Development Officer/Museum Officer	August 2009	£3000 R
Management of notice board	Parks publicity up to date & relevant, public knowledge increased	Liaise parks staff/FOCP	Parks Staff FOCP	June 2007	Staff/volunteer time
Develop events programme	Community participation in parks events	Liaise Arts Development Sports & County Council, Voluntary Sector	Parks & Open Spaces Manager, Marketing Manager	April 2008	Officer time

Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Engage with young people in Parks	DVD produced by young people Greater understanding of parks by young people	Develop brief Liaise College Work with young people Interview park users Explore park consultation findings Produce DVD	Parks & Open Spaces Manager Arts Development Officer	Dec 2007	£1000.00 R
Create information point	Central point for public enquiries, leaflet collection	Liaise marketing, FOCF, Glendale	Parks & Open Spaces Manager, Marketing Manager	April 2009	£800 R Parks budget
Develop Cannock Park leaflet	Public awareness of Cannock Park increased		Parks & Open Spaces Manager, Marketing Manager	March 2009	£1000 R Parks budget
Develop Landscape Refurbishment Plan	Planned approach Horticultural features regeneration	Assess ground Conditions Liaise stakeholders Collate findings	Parks & Open Spaces Manager Landscape Officer	March 2008	Officer time

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Task	Outcome	Action	Officer	Completion Date	Finance
Implement Landscape Development Plan	Horticultural features regenerated leading to Horticultural excellence	Develop plan Implement to time scale	Parks & Open Spaces Manager Landscape Officer	March 2012	£25000 C
Monitor & Review Action Plan	Action Plan targets monitored Targets achieved	Review targets Re-set date as necessary Incorporate new Government initiatives & opportunities as appropriate	Parks & Open Spaces Manager	Annually in March	Staff time