

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL	Agenda Item No.
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Report of the Director of City Services

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EXTENSION OF THE GREEN FLAG AWARD TO ADDITIONAL PARKS/OPEN SPACES IN PETERBOROUGH

1. PURPOSE

Verbal representations from various Members have been made to Officers to consider extending the Green Flag Award scheme to other areas in addition to Central and Itter Parks. This report sets out Officers' considerations as to the way forward in this matter.

2. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

This links into Priority 3 of the sustainable community strategy – creating the UK's environmental capital, in particular, making Peterborough cleaner and greener – with attractive neighbourhoods surrounded by beautiful countryside and thriving bio-diversity.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Following the initial success of the Green Flag Award to Central Park, the Council extended its application to include Itter Park, Walton, and in the last two years both Parks have been awarded Green Flag status. Verbal representations have been made by some Members of the Council to include other Parks/Open Space areas into this scheme.

3.2 The Green Flag award is open to any freely accessible park or green spaces, including:-

Town Parks.

Formal Gardens.

Open Spaces.

Woodlands.

Allotments.

Cemetaries and Crematoria.

The applications must be made by the organisation which manages the park or green space, but community groups/individuals having an interest in this area should be encouraged to support and assist the Council in application.

3.3 Set out below is an outline of the key criteria which every park or green space for which an application is made will be judged. It is accepted that some criteria may not be met, in which case proper justification will need to be included in respect of any application.

3.3.1 **A welcoming place** – the overall impression for any member of the community approaching and entering the park/green space should be positive and inviting, with specific reference to good and safe access, good signage to and within the park/green space and equal access for all members of the community.

- 3.3.2 Health, safe and secure** – the park or green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use. Of particular importance are equipment and facilities safe to use, the area must be a secure place for all members of the community to utilise, dog fouling being adequately addressed with suitable Health and Safety policies being in place. Toilets, drinking water, first aid, public telephones and emergency equipment (where relevant) should be available in or near the park/green space and clearly signposted.
- 3.3.3 Clean and well maintained** – litter and other waste management issues must be adequately addressed with the grounds, building, equipment and other features being well maintained. There must also be a policy on dealing with such issues as litter, vandalism and maintenance. This policy should be in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed.
- 3.3.4 Sustainability** – the methods used in maintaining the park/green space and its facilities should be environmentally sound, relying on best practices available accordingly to current knowledge. Management should be aware to the techniques available to them and that informed choices have been made and regularly reviewed. For example, an environmental policy and management strategy should be in place and regularly reviewed. Pesticides should be minimised and justified and high horticultural and arboricultural standards should be demonstrated.
- 3.3.5 Conservation and heritage** – particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of natural features (wildlife and flora), landscape features and building and structural features.
- 3.3.6 Community involvement** – management should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community to represent as many park/green space user groups as possible. It will be necessary to demonstrate knowledge of user community and levels of patterns of use. In addition, it will be necessary to provide evidence of community involvement in management and/or development, together with the appropriate level of provision of recreational facilities for all sectors of the community.
- 3.3.7 Marketing** – A marketing strategy must be in place together with good provision of information to users with particular reference to activities, features and ways to get involved as well as promoting the park/open space as a community resource.
- 3.3.8 Management** – A green flag award application must have a management plan or strategy in place which clearly and adequately addresses all the matters referred to in the above sub-paragraphs together with any other relevant aspects of the park/green space's management. The plan must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed. Financially sound management of the park/green space must also be demonstrated.
- 3.4** As will be appreciated from the above sub-paragraphs a substantial amount of work is required if any application for a green flag award is to be submitted in respect of any other park/green space. In addition no formal review has yet been undertaken as to what other parks/open spaces within Peterborough could be considered and what are implications of proceeding with any such application(s)

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1** The key issues for the council are does it wish officers to carry out a review of potential green flag sites and produce a further report setting out a list of these sites together with an indication of likely requirements to enable an application to be successful. This report will enable Members to decide whether or not any further applications should be processed and, if so, consideration can be given to establishing the priority of any application(s). With the current resources available it is anticipated that it may take at least 12 months to complete this initial task, as priority is being given to completion of the works relating to the play areas for which grants have been awarded under the Big Lottery Fund and the Fair Share scheme. A detailed timetable will be produced if Members indicate that they wish to consider this matter further.

- 4.2 The grounds at the Crematorium, Bretton are not included within paragraph 4.1 as the Operations Directorate has already commenced the process and will be submitting an application for Green Flag status during the early part of 2009. The Head of Culture has indicated that the initial application is predominantly about benchmarking the current standard with a view to being able to obtain the award in the financial year 20010/11.

5. IMPLICATIONS

The Council will have to consider the wider implications in respect of finance and other matters as part of any future report in regard to any recommendations as to the progression of any green flag application. Members will no doubt appreciate that, until such time as an initial assessment has been made in respect of how many sites could be considered for the scheme and an estimate made as to potential costs to reach the minimum standard, together with any future maintenance, it is not possible to give any indicative costings at this stage.

6. CONSULTATION

Formal consultation will take place as part of any progression of a green flag award as this is seen as a necessary component of any scheme being successful.

7. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Scrutiny Panel to consider whether or not it wishes officers to proceed as set out in this report.

8. NEXT STEPS

If required complete the review, over the next 12 months as set out in paragraph 5 above.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Papers and guidance as issued by the Green Flag Award Organisation.

10. APPENDICES

None.

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