

Report to: Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 17 July 2007

Author: City Solicitor

Title: Information and Overview Report

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide information about relevant issues affecting the Committee's remit to aid Members to manage their work programmes.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the topics highlighted in the report and either:

- Note the information
- Request a briefing note to provide further details
- Add the item to the Committee's Work Programme

3. Contact Officer:

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4. Suggestions for the Work Programme

There have been no suggestions received this month. A copy of the latest Work Programme is attached for information.

5. Forward Planning

Relevant extracts from the Executive Forward Plan

Anticipated date of decision	Item	Decision Maker
Leisure Services		
July 2007	Heaton Park Partnership Developments and Contract Arrangements	Executive
July 2007	Manchester Leisure Capital Programme Review	Executive

Anticipated date of decision	Item	Decision Maker
Engineering Services		
July 2007	Review of highway Services Fees and Charges	Chief Officer/Executive Member
July 2007	Review of Fees and Charges to developers for work carried out on Public Highways under section 38 and section 278 of the Highways Act 1980	Chief Officer/Executive Member
July 2007	Approval of the highways Capital Programme	Chief Officer/Executive Member

6. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
19 June 2007	CN/07/05 Young People's Engagement in the Local Environment	To pass the pupils' recommendations to the relevant Officers in the council to take appropriate action. To respond to the school on action arising from the pupils' contributions	See attached briefing note from the Head of Leisure Services	Eamonn O'Rourke
19 June 2007	CN/07/06 Wythenshawe Park	To request that the Head of Leisure consider how the Brookway pupils' and members' suggestions can be addressed, and to report back to the Committee in July To request information on the number of wedding bookings the Hall has had over recent years be brought back to the Committee.	See attached briefing note from the Head of Leisure Services The following wedding bookings were actioned as detailed: April 2005 to March 2006: 23 April 2006 to March 2007: 27 April 2007 to present: 8	Eamonn O'Rourke
19 June 2007	CN/07/07 Alexandra Park	To request further information updating the committee on operational matters in the July meeting.	See attached briefing note from the Head of Leisure Services	Eamonn O'Rourke
19 June 2007	CN/07/09 Planning for a Sustainable Future - White Paper	To request a report back on the Council's response to the consultation in September.	Added to Work Programme for September	Peter Babb

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
19 June 2007	CN/07/10 Energy White Paper	To express an interest in relation to the consultation on approving the construction of new nuclear power resources and how it might impact on Manchester's nuclear-free policy and to request a further report back to a later meeting.	Added to Work Programme for September	Sarah Davies
23 May 2007	CN/07/01 Overview of the Manchester Partnership	To note the reports on the Thematic Partnerships and to request a further report on member involvement in the Partnership looking at the potential for increasing Councillor involvement and enhanced local accountability in the decision-making processes.	<p>The Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following recommendations at its June meeting:</p> <p>To support the direction of travel and the emerging proposals for core partnerships, and to look further at the best means of overview and scrutiny committees interacting with these Boards.</p> <p>To request that the PSB and Manchester Board give further consideration to the wider involvement of Manchester Airport and Manchester University in all relevant aspects of the Partnership</p> <p>To request that a briefing note on the outcome of the review of ward co-ordination be brought to the Committee upon its completion, preferably to the next meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>To request that the report from the public service board to the Manchester Board recommending the structure of subsidiary boards be circulated to all members of the Committee.</p>	Kate Brown

7. Items for Information Only

Subject: Young People's Engagement in the Local Environment:
Recommendations relating to Wythenshawe Park

Author: Eamonn O'Rourke, Head of Leisure Services
Tel: 0161 953 2494

After reviewing the items raised by the year 7-10 Brookway High School young people, the following courses of action have been actioned;

The following improvements have been ordered with immediate effect.

Bins and Dog Bins

As part of the annual programme of improvement an additional x10 bins and dogs bins have been ordered for the park. A further programme of installation will be undertaken in 2008

Bicycle racks

Two new bicycle racks have been ordered to facilitate improved security for bike users. Additional facilities will be introduced in 2008.

Warden Service

At present there is a seven-day cover for all parks in the Wythenshawe area by wardens, security and management. As the service covers 23 parks in the Wythenshawe area, staff do have to attend other parks to carry out day-to-day activities and park checks. The main office in Wythenshawe Park is open Mon to Fri (9.00am to 4.30pm) we have introduced additional contact telephone numbers in all the information lecturns around all the parks.

The following works have been programmed:

Brook Area

The brook is, as with all areas of Wythenshawe Park, cleaned of litter and debris weekly. In addition to this the warden service also hold clean up days with members of the general public and the junior warden group attending. It is planned to undertake a major clean up programme and removal of inappropriate plant growth as part of the winter works grounds maintenance programme.

Golf facilities

There is a reduced rate for people using the golf facilities within Wythenshawe Park who have their own equipment. This fact will be published in future Wythenshawe Park promotional material, and notices will be placed at the games pavilion.

Trees and planting

The planting of new trees and shrubs within Wythenshawe Park is part of a continuing programme of improvement. An example of good practice is the partnership working that has been undertaken with local schools over the last 12 months. Local school children have come to the park to work with the wardens and planted some 1000 shrubs to create new hedgerows around the park. New planting schemes are also being developed within the hall walled gardens and we also have the Horticultural Centre that provide gardens for people to relax in and education for schools.

Skateboarding and B.M.X, and Teen Shelters

A new multi sports area with an associated teen shelter was introduced into the park some eighteen months ago at the specific request of the local youths, this facility has proved to be a massive success. The inclusion of a skateboarding/BMX facility would help create a potential teen village sports facility and would be a fantastic asset to the park. Wardens have been tasked with undertaking a consultation exercise with local youths at the start of the new school year, to agree the best mix of facilities (Street course or acrobatics). Once a design has been agreed, officers will seek funding opportunities to deliver the facilities requested.

Lighting

All Manchester's Park close at dusk, which means that during the hours of darkness the Wythenshawe Park is closed to the general public. The exception being programmed supervised events including the use of the floodlit tennis and athletics. Unsupervised public access during the hours of darkness within a park environment carries with it an inherent health and safety risk. Floodlit ball sports areas have been trialed in a number of small parks where the facility is overlooked close to the road and where all users regardless of which entrance they use are not placed at potential risk. A further evaluation will be undertaken regarding the future potential to site additional sports facilities on the perimeter of the park

Provide water features

Water features have been introduced into the park in recent times including the reintroduction of a pond to the hall gardens. The feasibility of introducing a fountain to the hall pond to further improve the facility is under investigation.

To provide more information to schools

At present Manchester City Council is updating its web site. Information on events and activities is sent out to libraries, leisure centres and tourist information offices. This year the service improvement activities (project adventure) will be hand delivered to local schools by the warden service. Future events programmes will be distributed to local schools throughout Wythenshawe

To provide greater resources to improve the local environment

Improving the environment starts with education. At present one of the glass house within the horticultural centre is being developed into a science lab for local schools and visitors. The aim of this is to show how the environment and bio diversity develops and affects our daily lives. This then will be delivered by the warden service during woodland clean up days, not only just to remove litter and rubbish out of our parks, but to plant trees and shrubs and make the woodlands more habitual for wildlife. This type of work is on ongoing process that will be continue to be developed and improved on.

Subject: Interim operational matters relating to Alexandra Park

Report of: Eamonn O'Rourke, Head of Leisure Services
Tel: 0161 953 2494

Litter

In April 2007 Manchester Leisure entered into two new geographic contracts for the delivery of grounds maintenance, one north of the city, one south. Included within the contracts was the litter collection process. As rightly pointed out there have been some issues with the litter collection this has been caused in part by insufficient bins and in part by contractors not complying with the required standard.

Contract and Park management have worked with our contractor to review litter collection in Alexandra Park to achieve a better standard in this aspect of their service delivery. Together with visual inspections and a decrease in complaints, we feel that there has been an improvement and will continue to monitor the situation. Regular monthly meetings between the Park Management Team and Glendales to review performance will continue.

In addition new bins and dog bins are to be introduced throughout the park

Tree Works

Alexandra Park has been the subject of a twelve months observation by arboricultural officers to assess why three of the Lime trees within the Lime Avenue had fallen. The examination of both standing and fallen trees throughout, determined that the tree cover within the park with the exception of a group of Horse chestnuts, that have a canker disease, is healthy. The five lime trees that have been damaged or fallen in total did not suffer from rotten roots or any other form of disease and whilst they are old they are not yet at the end of their natural life. The very occasional ponding of water was not a significant factor in the falling of these trees. It is the opinion of the arboriculturalist that they have fell as part of their natural cycle.

It is planned to replant these trees at the earliest opportunity with a similar species to maintain the integrity of the tree avenue. The existing trees will continue to be monitored.

General works programme

Including health and safety work at Princess Road

A on site meeting was held with Councilor Watson and representatives of the "Friends

Of Alexandra Park " to discuss how best to continue to improve the park to ensure that the visitor experience is a rewarding one.

A small works prioritised development plan has been agreed by all and a two month priority programme of improvement works initiated. Including within it is;

- the introduction of additional street furniture including dog bins and bins to help with the collection of rubbish.
- Replacement tree planting programme
- Additional picnic tables
- The introduction of a barrier system to reduce the risk of accidents on the Princess Parkway near the children's play area, as highlighted by Members.
- New signage and interpretation information
- Path repairs
- Painting programme
- Dressing and visual improvement of lodge and garden
- Arboriculture programme

Fishing

It is planned to undertake a condition survey of the fishing lake and its environs in the winter of 2007. A three-year improvement plan will be prepared based on the outcome of the survey. The improvement plan will take account of the changes to the environment and the effects that this is having across the city on many water bodies especially during bouts of exceptionally warm weather.