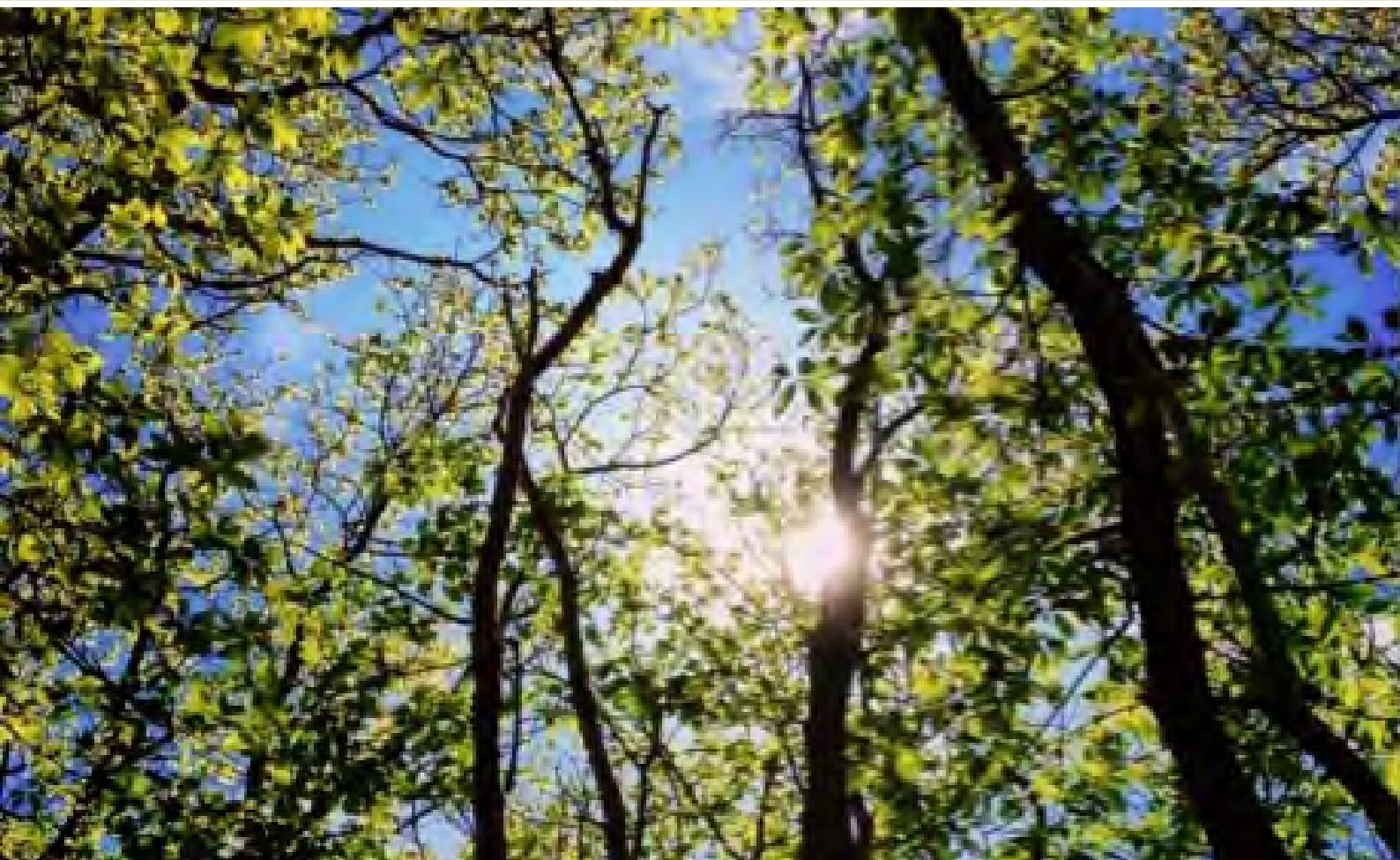


Springfield Hall Park Maintenance and Management Plan

To be read in conjunction with Chelmsford's Green Spaces Strategic Framework Document
which contains details of the city council's policy documents and recording systems.



PROMOTING CITY IMAGE – RAISING THE STANDARD



Foreword

One of the principal aims of the Local Authority is to improve quality of life for its residents. Parks and Green Spaces are key to this, good quality green spaces generate enormous social, economic, environmental and ecological benefits as well as making areas more attractive.

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. We recognize that the quality of our public spaces directly affects the quality of life of our residents.

First and foremost, Springfield Hall Park is a destination park for sports users, the park is home to Springfield Football Club and hosts numerous matches as well as training sessions. It is also popular with dog walkers and has regular Cyclo - Cross events.

Aside for the provision made for sports the park also contains an allotment site and a well-equipped play area and serves as a local park for the community living in The Lawns Ward in Chelmsford. (Population 5402).

The park due to its location is also a 'gateway' to Chelmer Valley with its Local Nature Reserve and the greater riverside walk network making an important contribution to the Cities green infrastructure.

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 Jude Deakin
Cabinet member
for Parks & Green Spaces



Cllr Rose Moore
Deputy Cabinet member
for Parks & Green Spaces



Guidance in reading the management plan

The management plans for City Parks are all about review and improvement to both site facilities and management practices. The route to excellence is paved with continuous improvement, self-assessment, good management practices and the discipline of planning.

This management plan is designed to be used as an easy reference manual that can be understood by all interested parties. The plan deals specifically with matters relating to Springfield Hall Park and needs to be read in conjunction with Chelmsford's Green Spaces Strategic framework document. (The later document contains much of Council's corporate strategy and policy documents as they relate to parks).

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

In drafting the document the Green Flag judging criteria were used as an audit tool. This ensures that we are embracing the criteria necessary to deliver a facility that matches the national standard for parks and that we have embraced the eight key Green Flag objectives.

1. **A well managed Park**
2. **A welcoming Park**
3. **A healthy, safe and secure Park**
4. **A well maintained and clean Park**
5. **A sustainable Park**
6. **A park that addresses conservation and heritage**
7. **A park where community involvement is encouraged**
8. **A well marketed and promoted Park**

Use of the Green Flag criteria provides a standard for systematic and committed approach to maintaining and improving the quality of parks enjoyed by local communities. In addition, it is essential to develop a public based benchmark audited externally by a third party. Green Flag being the recognised National Standard for Parks and Green Spaces.

The project brief was to 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.

STRENGTHS

- Established park providing public open space in a residential area. Primarily a sports park with changing facilities and car parking.
- Has an allotment site in proximity.
- Stands at a Gateway to Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve.
- Good relationship between Council and Community.
- Significant investment in new sports facilities and access improvements in recent years.
- Good partnership working with Leisure & Heritage Services.

WEAKNESSES

- Capital funding is not guaranteed, or likely for this site.
- Section 106 funding is unlikely in this area.
- External funding has been difficult to achieve.
- The Park has a play area in need of investment to update equipment. Most of the current equipment is pre 2005.
- This is a green flag park. The play area is in a poor condition. All surfaces are compacted leaving no fall resistance and equipment has been added to over time up to 2005 and installed ad-hoc with limited consideration for access or play value. The equipment currently on site is from three different manufacturers, one of which is no longer trading making maintenance very difficult

OPPORTUNITIES

- To further investigate external funding sources.
- To develop further understanding of the biodiversity of the site creating wildlife corridors to Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve.
- To reduce the effect of a small minority of dog walkers who are inconsiderate.
- To create a park valued by the community.
- To increase treescape in accordance with the Greening Chelmsford initiative.
- To update and improve the current play site.

THREATS

- Lack of capital investment may have a long-term effect.
- Lack of capital investment in essential infrastructure may result in a missed opportunity to improve service provision.

Following on from this we set about compiling the content required for the plan. To this end we choose to use the Green Flag model to ensure we examined all the key elements that contribute to making a good and vibrant public space that people want to use.

In addition credence has been given to considering recent research concerning parks undertaken both locally and nationally. It is important to be aware of both social and market trends. Particularly pertinent is new thinking derived from our own authority's corporate objectives and from consultation feedback arising from local research.

In these times of austerity Parks are particularly important in delivering health initiatives. Investment in Parks is seen to be prudent as the returns can be enjoyed by both current and future generations.

Green spaces are relevant to a number of national indicators (Nis) below and highlight common health and wellbeing outcomes. This broader, public health approach integrates physical and mental health and the impact of wider social, economic and cultural determinants on mental health and well-being.

Strong Communities

- NI 5: Overall/general satisfaction with local area DCLG DSO
- NI 2: Percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood (PSA 21)
- NI 3: Civic participation in a local area PSA 15
- NI 17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour PSA 23

Children and Young People

- NI 50: Emotional health of children PSA 12
- NI 55: Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year DCSF DSO
- NI 56: Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 DCSF DSO
- NI 57: Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport DCSF DSO
- NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities PSA 14

Adult Health and Well-being

- NI 119: Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing DH DSO
- NI 138: Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood PSA 17

Environmental Sustainability

- NI 185: CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations PSA 27
- NI 186 Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area PSA 27
- NI 188: Adapting to climate change PSA 27
- NI 189: Flood and coastal erosion risk management Defra DSO
- NI 197: Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites PSA 28
- NI 198: Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used DfT DSO Public Service Agreements (PSA) and Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSO)

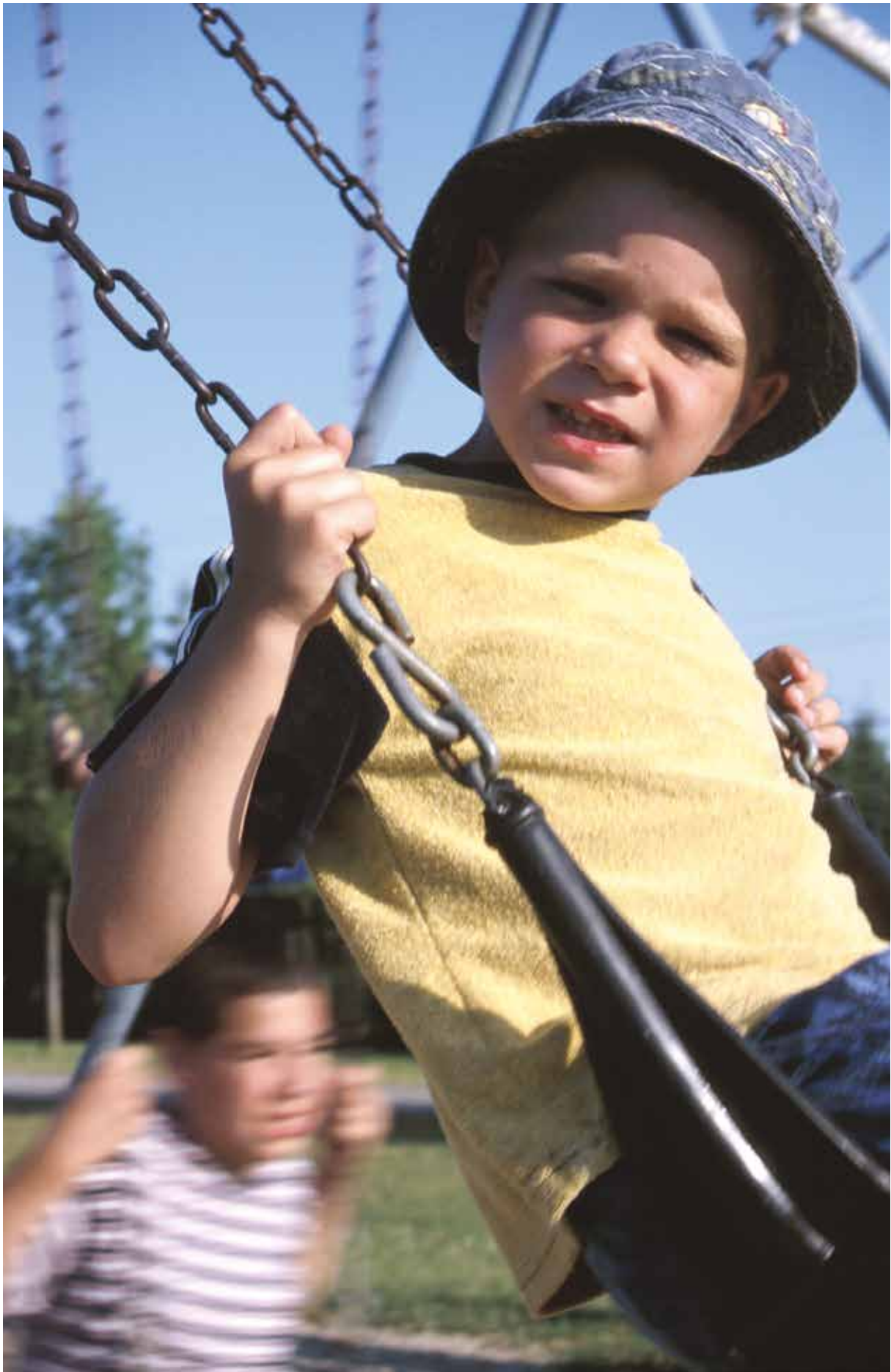
- PSA 12 Improve the health and well-being of children and young people
- PSA 18 Promote better health and well-being for all
- PAS 21 Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities
- PSA 23 Make communities safer
- PSA 27 Lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change
- PSA 28 Secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future
- DCMS DSO Encourage more widespread enjoyment of culture and sport
- DFRA DSO Climate change tackled internationally; and through domestic action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- DEFRA DSO: Economy and society resilient to environmental risk and adapted to the impacts of climate change
- DEFRA DSO: Sustainable patterns of consumption and production
- DEFRA DSO A healthy, resilient, productive and diverse natural environment
- DH DSO Ensure better health and well-being for all
- HO DSO Help people feel secure in their homes and local communities.

It is hoped that through reading the plan the reader will glimpse how the staff team have to balance the priorities, policies and pressures that apply and will see the rationale for establishing time scales for putting objectives into practice. The production of such a document allows the contribution that the site makes to the local community to be measured and progress against key objectives can be monitored by the management team and by visitors alike.

Information of a more generic nature has been drawn out of the site-specific management plan and is now found in a companion guide entitled Strategic Framework for Parks and Green Spaces.

Chelmsford's corporate agenda seeks to deliver quality services and factors in the need to deliver in the areas cited below.

- Promoting health & activity
- Supporting education & learning
- Encouraging diversity & inclusion
- Ensuring safety & security
- Greater community involvement
- Promoting fun & enjoyment
- Making sites accessible & safe
- Achieving quality by design
- Valuing local character & heritage
- Realising economic value
- Minimising climate change
- Sustaining quality in our environment
- Managing for nature & biodiversity
- Making connections for people & wildlife



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1 Introduction & Brief History of the site

Broadly speaking the key management objectives for Springfield Hall Park take account of the 6 principal Corporate Objectives:

- Attracting investment and delivering infrastructure
- Facilitating suitable housing for local needs
- Providing high quality public spaces
- Promoting a more sustainable environment
- Promoting healthier and more active lives
- Enhancing participation in cultural activities



PARK OBJECTIVES

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

Through good and efficient management the Service hopes to secure a Green Flag for the park, and to retain the flag in the ensuing years as testimony to the fact that Chelmsford City Parks are maintained to the National Standard for Parks. Independent credible external accreditation is important to us in evidencing that we provide excellent services to the public. There are few industry accreditations to bench mark with so Green Flag and APSE are important to us and we seek to support these organisations where the opportunity arises.



Springfield Hall Park, Chelmsford

Site Name	Springfield Hall Park, Chelmsford
Site Status	Designated as public open space 1974 (Land purchases on 29 March 1974 and October 1974, with the Council formally registering the land on 3 September 2008)
Total Area of Site	46.37 Hectares, 115 Acres
Component areas	Football Pitches, Sports pavilion, Car park, Children's play areas & allotment site
Surrounding land	The park is in the middle of Chelmer Valley Nature Reserve and takes its name from Springfield Hall Farm which is at the northern end of the reserve and dates as far back as 1839.
Natural Geology	
Significant features / Key issues noted in deed packet	Easements, Public right of way.
Tenure	Freehold
Location	Springfield Hall Park
Nearest bus route	Stand 10 from Rail Station – Number 56 bus
Ward	The Lawns: Population 5402 in 2011 census Land area 176 hectares
District	Chelmsford
County	Essex
Post Code	CM1 7QE
OS grid reference	TL7119408519
Asset register reference	
Asset Value	
Byelaws	None
Opening Hours	Park accessible 24/7
Use	Primarily a sports ground
Essex Police Support	Emergency 999 Non-emergency 101 Via text message 07624800101

Springfield Hall Park is both a neighbourhood park and a sports park serving a wider audience with many visiting clubs visiting to play fixtures. The Park is home to Springfield Football Club

Football in Springfield started long before the present Club. Indeed in the 1898/99 season when the Chelmsford and District League (now the Mid Essex League) was formed at a meeting at the Institute Rooms, Crane Court, Chelmsford, a Springfield Football Club was a founder member - one of five teams that met the requirement of being situated within three miles of the Shire Hall

The Club today are members of:

- The Essex Intermediate Football League
- The Mid-Essex Football League
- The Pope & Smith Chelmsford Sunday Football League
- The Ridleys Essex Veterans League
- The Chelmsford Youth Football League
- The Chelmsford Youth Mini-Soccer Football League

Springfield Hall Park, Chelmsford's Heritage Value & Significance

The park is located in the north east of Chelmsford's urban area characterised by a mix of residential areas, schools and neighbourhood shopping centres. It serves the needs of residents in neighbouring wards as a local park, besides the Lawns Ward. The adjoining allotments site primarily serves the local neighbourhood.

Springfield Hall Park runs down to the River Chelmer, with entrance points at Arun Close and riverside walk which forms part of the wider riverside walk network. The park is in the middle of Chelmer Valley Nature Reserve and takes its name from Springfield Hall Farm which is at the northern end of the reserve and dates as far back as 1839.

Today's Park facilities provide top class facilities for the sports minded visitor along with adequate parking for cars and coaches.

The Park is popular in its location, it serves its local neighbourhood but also has good links to the river corridor and to footpath and cycle networks that connect to the City Center some 2.1 miles away. The main entrance point is off Arun Close. The park has a number of football pitches for the sports minded and a well-equipped play area for the younger user along with a developing conservation area enjoyed by those out for a walk and some gentle exercise.

There is a large car park with blue badge bays and toilets. Parking restrictions apply in accordance with a Traffic Regulation Order and has deterred commuter parking which had become a problem.



Today's Park facilities include:

- Car park (100 plus spaces including 2 disabled spaces) + overflow spaces for 35 vehicles
- Toilets
- Sports pavilion & Toilets
- Football pitches – senior, junior and 5-a-side.
- A children's play area
- An allotment site
- Areas to picnic
- Access to Chelmer Valley LNR
- Natural areas sympathetic to wildlife

Springfield Park covers an area of 4.64 hectares and first opened in 1965.

In addition to the above facilities, other interesting and important features of the park are areas where biodiversity is encouraged through the sensitive management. Within the site there is an important pond – home to great crested newts. Additionally, the margins of the sports pitches have cover for wildlife, all these elements helping to support the natural environment and ecosystems. The park has pedestrian links to Chelmer Valley Nature Reserve, a major asset with the River Chelmer running through it.

Sports:

Football

Home to Springfield Football Club



Facilities:

- Car parking
- Blue Badge Parking
- Children's play area
- Allotments
- Fully accessible toilets
- Sports pavilion/changing rooms
- Football pitches
- Managed woodland – walks in woodland surroundings.
- Open recreational areas
- Picnicking areas
- Opportunities for volunteers

Buildings and Hard Landscape Fabric

Buildings and Structures

The park has a number of buildings and structures that the Parks Service is required to maintain. City Parks & Green Spaces are the key Service for managing most of the infrastructure on site. Springfield FC is responsible for maintaining its own pavilion.

Boundary Treatments and Entrances

The main vehicular entrance to the Park is via Arun Close.

There are a number of pedestrian access points along the site boundary abutting the housing development and links to Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve.

Road and Path Network

Roadways and car parking at the park are all hard-surfaced tarmac finishes. In addition, the sites are serviced internally with surfaced tarmac paths which in turn link to the path and cycle network leading to the town center.

Sports in the Park

Sport Club in residence

Springfield Football Club <http://www.springfieldfc.org/>



2 Management practices at Springfield Hall Park

General objectives

- Maintain the quality, appearance and facilities 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.
- Build character and heritage value into the park
- Develop new facilities that will attract the non sports users to identify with and make use of the park facilities.

Specific objectives

Water management

The grounds maintenance specification covers a number of water management issues in the City Parks. 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
- Use of mulches.

Sports pitches across the site have comprehensive drainage systems to ensure the pitches are free draining. There are main drains running through the site. In the main the pitches are free draining and localized areas are gravel banded when the occasion necessitates action. Pitch three was gravel banded 2015.

The Council actively monitors water use and seeks to introduce efficiencies where at all possible particularly in publicly accessible buildings such as sports changing rooms and toilets/washrooms.

Gas and Electric usage are monitored centrally as part of Chelmsford City Council's Energy and Water Management Policy set up to drive efficiencies across the council as a whole.

Tree management

The tree stock within the park is plotted on the Treewise database. There is a good structure planting to build upon with plans to plant further trees during the lifetime of this plan.

Tree planting is undertaken carefully selecting the correct species for the site.

Grasslands

Different mowing regimes are employed within the sports ground at Springfield Hall Park taking account of the various playing surfaces. The margins of the site are maintained for the benefit of native flora and fauna with relaxed mowing regimes.

The Park's Soft and hard landscapes

The catchment park is important open space due to it being the primary park serving the 5,402 plus residents residing in The Lawns Ward.

A landscape appraisal for the Park was carried out during the time of preparation of this management plan. The appraisal identified contemporary design issues and opportunities for further improvement. The key issues that emerged were:

- To ensure that the correct balance of landscape design, leisure and development interests are addressed. It is accepted that primarily the park is a sporting venue, but this should not exclude other groups from enjoying the facilities since it is important open space for the catchment it serves.
- To ensure that development accords with the strategic context of the Parks design and layout.
- To exploit opportunities afforded by the development of artificial playing surfaces.
- To preserve and enhance existing appropriate leisure facilities.
- To develop children's play facilities.
- To develop interpretation of the parkland and its immediate environs.
- To protect, enhance and develop horticulture within the park.
- To protect, enhance and interpret ecology and wildlife within the parkland.
- To provide quality playing surfaces.

3 Sustainable management in the Park

The management plan and grounds maintenance specifications reflect the Council's policies listed in the Green Spaces Strategic framework document, as they relate to sustainable land management. The specifications and strategies are important as they guide and empower decision making. Robust written policies in the public realm are a real aid when securing adequate budgets – ensuring council policy is implemented.

Composting & green waste recycling

Within the Park there is a limited production of green waste during the normal day-to-day work, derived from tree management and the removal of arisings when floristic areas are cut and raked. The biodegradable waste is transported to Sandford Mill where the material is shredded and composted for use as a soil improver or mulch material.

Occasionally proprietary brand compost with a known NPK ratio is used when ornamental shrub beds or other horticultural features are renewed or renovated.





4 Open to all – The Park user

Primarily Springfield Hall Park is geared to active sports but does boast a well-equipped play area and an allotment site to boot.

To ensure visitors to parks feel safe and secure we build into every park management plan 'secured by design' principles.

- Natural surveillance, transparency and views in and out of the park are maintained.
- Responsible dog ownership is encouraged
- Hiding places and blind spots are minimised.
- Planting does not crowd footpaths.
- Shrubs and hedges are maintained below eye level where its practical to do so.
- 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.
- Anti social behavior is eliminated.
- Contact with Essex Constabulary and Safer Neighbourhood Teams is maintained.



Access Target Groups

Three main groups have been highlighted with regard to accessibility, over and above the sports user. The needs of these groups are under continual reassessment and are reflected in the action plan within this document.

Older People

Older people are an important user group of the park. This group of people use the Park for informal exercise and relaxation. Some keep active on the allotment plots.

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 a large capital investment has been made in the play areas within the park using imaginative equipment. Picnicking facilities have also been identified as a new opportunity to attract younger families to the park and its immediate environs.

Dog walkers

Dog walkers are welcome provided that they act responsibly and keep their animals under control. Dog walking routes have become established within the park and spill out into the wider Local Nature Reserve abutting the site.



5 Park safety and security

Staff and our interface with the visiting public

Parks Services have two members of staff dedicated to the day to day management at Springfield Park.

The daily inspections of the two parks are undertaken by the parks staff who have responsibilities for the two sites. The inspections incorporate an element of general health and safety review. Damage and faults are recorded, and remedial work actioned. The health and safety of visitors is reviewed via the inspection regime in operation in the Park.

Parks staff are able to report anti-social behaviour to the police and and take details of person's descriptions and car registration numbers.

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



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

Park Watch, an initiative run by the City Council with Police support operates in all parks. The service operates 24 / 7. People can talk direct to the duty officer or send a text to the number. Each call is logged with the information / contact details remaining confidential.

Park Services operates a lost property procedure, including items found or lost in the park.

Currently the sites are not monitored by CCTV cameras, but this is under review along with other sites.

Strong links have been forged with the Community Police and Traffic police who visit the park frequently, both police officers and PCSO. This can be supplemented by the council's mobile CCTV patrol, as necessary.

Accidents

Staff 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 sports are being played. Standard Chelmsford City Council accident forms are completed wherever possible to record details of reported incidents.

The public can report faults to Park and Green Spaces team by contact numbers advertised in the Park.

Safety checks of equipment and facilities

The newly constructed playground is located away from entrance points and access roads. Dogs are excluded 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 playground comprise of rubber tiles and wet-pour rubber surfacing.

The playground 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 playground is also subject to safety inspections on a monthly basis, by the playground inspectors.

Minor faults are rectified at the time of inspection. Any significant damage is reported to the Grounds Maintenance Operations 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:

- Summer period (1 April -30 Sept) call before 2.30: Inspector to attend the same day.
- Winter period (1 Oct -31 March) call after 1 pm or summer period (1 April -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'. 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.

Chelmsford City Council health and safety policy

Health and Safety Policy as it applies to the Park emanates from Chelmsford City Council's general policies. Site specific safety issues are covered by Health and Safety documentation and risk assessments as they relate to the site and to the works undertaken therein. The said documents are held electronically and are accessible to managers.

The Green Spaces Strategic framework document contains all the generic information relating to Health and Safety and should be read alongside site maintenance plans.

Specific health and safety issues within the Park

The national trend of rising anti-social behaviour affects all parks and spates of damage do occur on occasion. Any damage generally occurs during the evenings when the park is least used.

The current approach consists of:

- Regular liaison with local police, and Social Services
- Daily inspections seeking to stop damage through actual intervention, education, and as a visual deterrence.
- Banning individuals and groups from the Park for criminal damage
- All new park furniture is assessed for vandal-resistance before purchase
- Spares kept on site for a range of potentially vulnerable features, i.e. benches, locks, bins, signs, etc., for quick replacement
- Toilets are fitted with anti-vandal features

- Graffiti is removed as soon as possible. Site staff are supplied with graffiti wipes. Major problems are referred to a specialist company.
- Where sustained vandalism occurs, extra engineering solutions are used.
- The daily checklist ensures swift identification of damaged features which are dealt with on a rolling list of maintenance repairs

Vandalism and other criminal damage are noted daily through the inspection regime and by staff working on site. Reinstatement works are carried out under instruction. All incidents reported on the Park Watch telephone number are recorded by the duty officer on report forms which is forwarded to the police as and when the situation dictates.

Graffiti is reported to the Grounds Management Services Manager by the parks staff and once an instruction for removal is issued it is dealt with immediately in accordance with the specification. In areas known to be graffiti hot spots a programme of removal and surface treatments are put in place to deter repetitions of damage.

Control of Dogs and Dog Fouling

Dog fouling is not seen as a significant problem as dog owners who use the site generally do so responsibly recognising that the area is first and foremost dedicated to sports use.

Dog walkers are not permitted to take their dogs into the play areas at either of the parks. Dog-bins are provided at both sites.

Control of drug use

Incidents of drug abuse in the two parks 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.

6 Community involvement and a venue for active sport

Management encourages community involvement. Chelmsford Parks have an active Sports User Group that meet regularly throughout the year. Leisure Services staff engender increased use by the community through sports taster sessions and holiday club activities during school holidays.





7 Marketing information

Marketing of the park as a place for people is undertaken through managers liaising with Parks Services Marketing 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.

Springfield Hall Park is perceived by many as a sports park but it is more than that as it offers important provision of public open space to the resident community.

Communication regarding events and activities at the Park 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.

Springfield Hall Park is well documented on the Councils website with details on pitch bookings and links to the clubs websites that operate from the park.





8 Management Structures and Maintenance Regimes

Parks Management structure

The two divisions of City Parks & Green Spaces - Parks Strategy and Development and Grounds Management both have an input into the management of the park, with administration support from the business support team.

The Parks Strategy Team provides a design service, management direction, a tree management service, community engagement & involvement along with Service promotion and marketing.

Grounds Management oversees 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.

The core objectives of Parks Services can be described in broad terms as helping to make Chelmsford City an attractive and enjoyable place in which to live, work and visit, by;

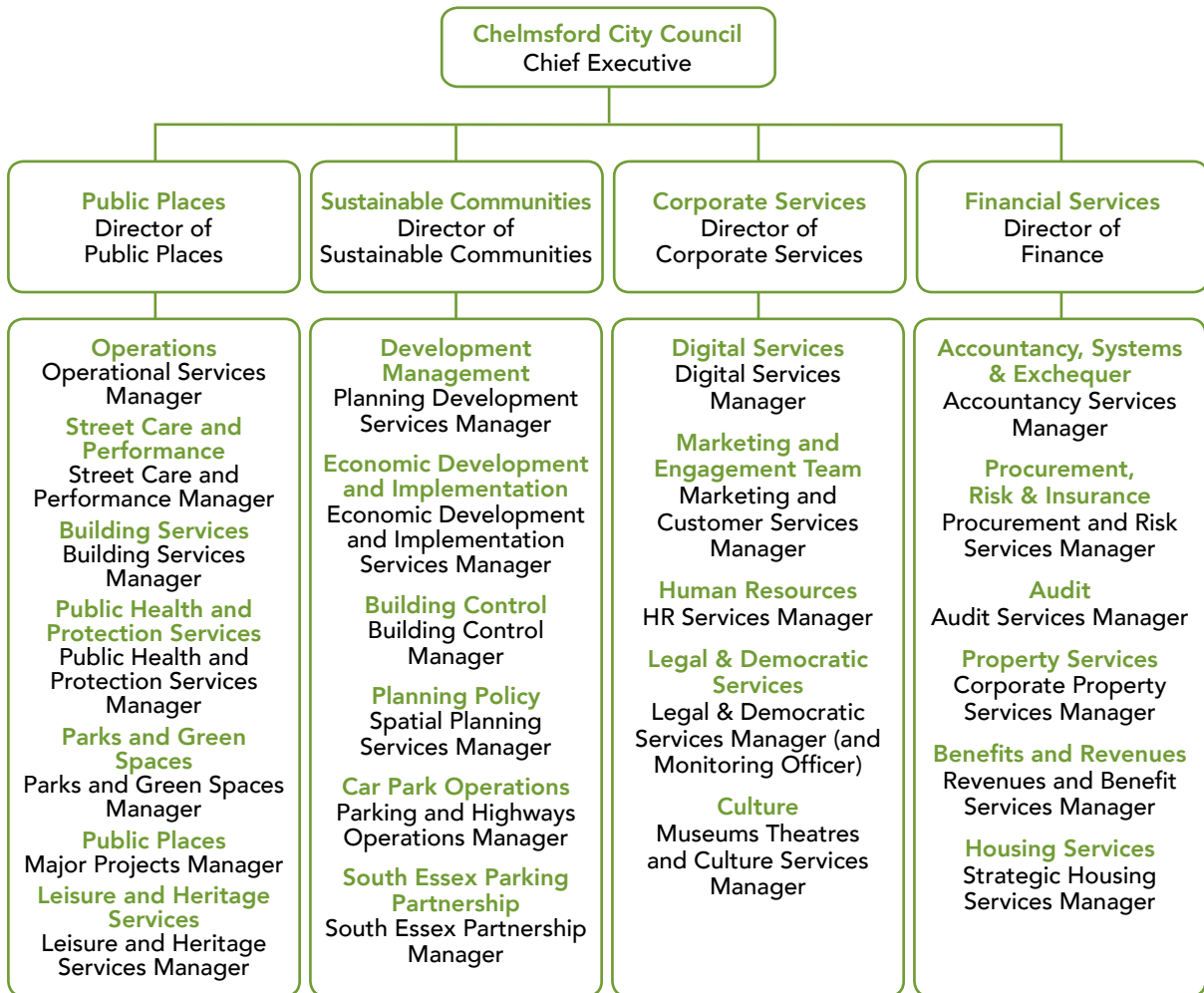
- Developing, supporting and enabling a wide range of sporting, recreational, cultural, social, educational and tourism opportunities which enhance the quality of life, promote healthy, active lifestyles for people in the Borough and, by stimulating attraction for visitors and by helping to create a positive business environment, bring jobs and investment to the local economy.
- Managing Chelmsford's rich and diverse landscapes, parks and green spaces and promoting polices and activities that enhance and protect Chelmsford's built and natural features plus the surrounding countryside and unique heritage.

Parks Services staff

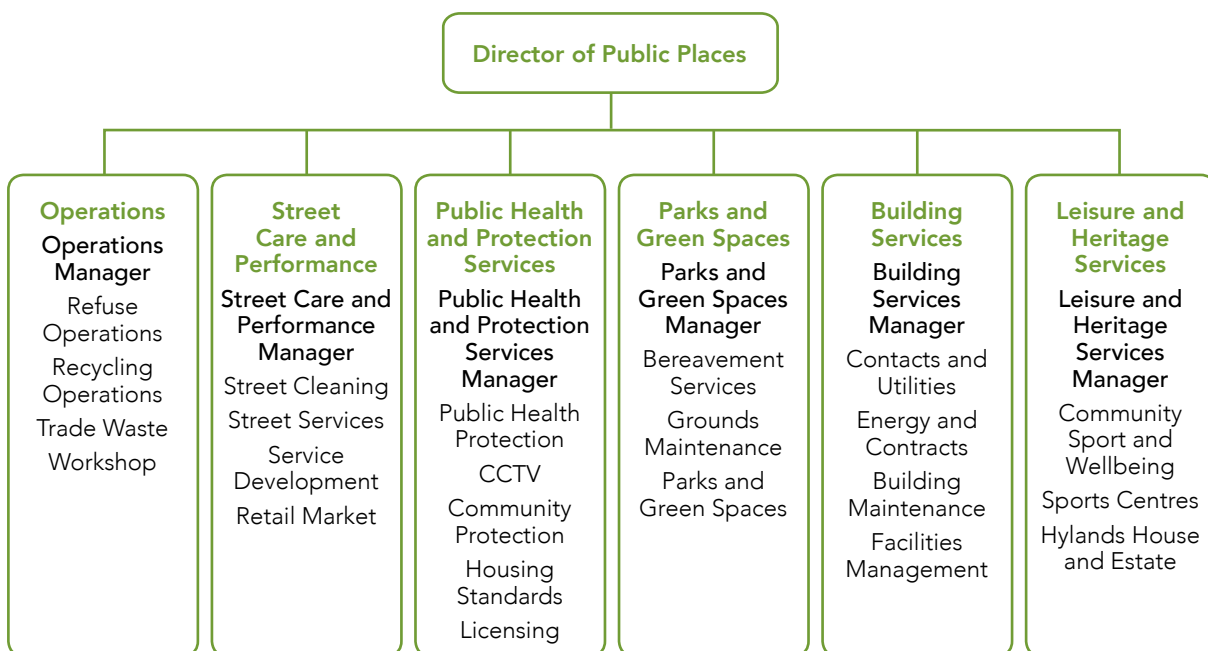
Springfield Hall Park is managed by Chelmsford City Council (CCC) Parks & Green Spaces Team. Specifically, site maintenance is the responsibility of the Grounds Operations Services Manager, who is supported by two trained operatives who look after the day to day maintenance of the park.

The Parks & Green Spaces section of the Public Services Directorate deal with all aspects of customer services within the park, to visitor information and welfare, public relations, marketing, promotion, special event planning.

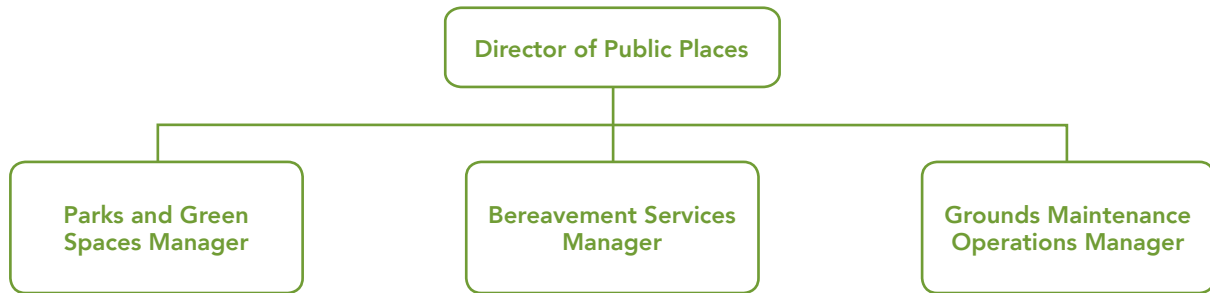
Chelmsford City Council Corporate Structure



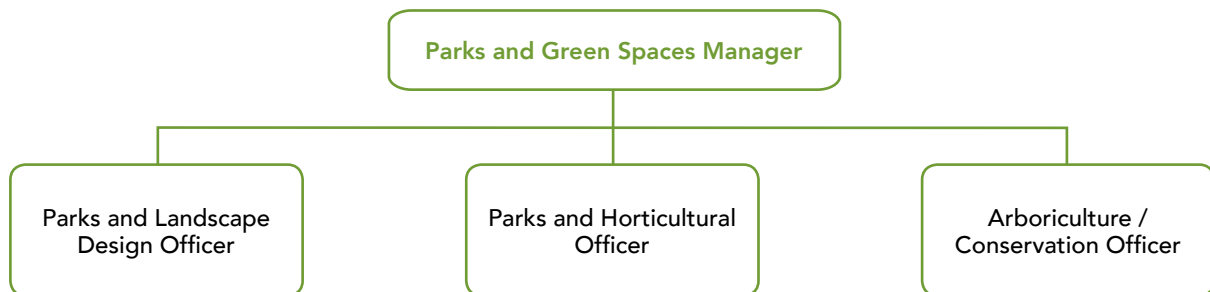
Public Places Management Structure



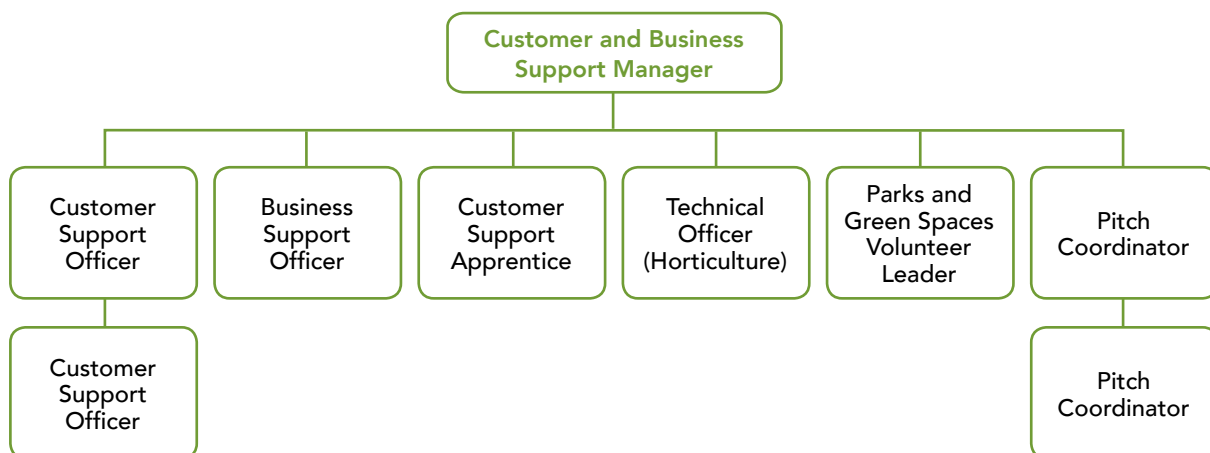
Public Places Parks and Green Spaces Management Structure



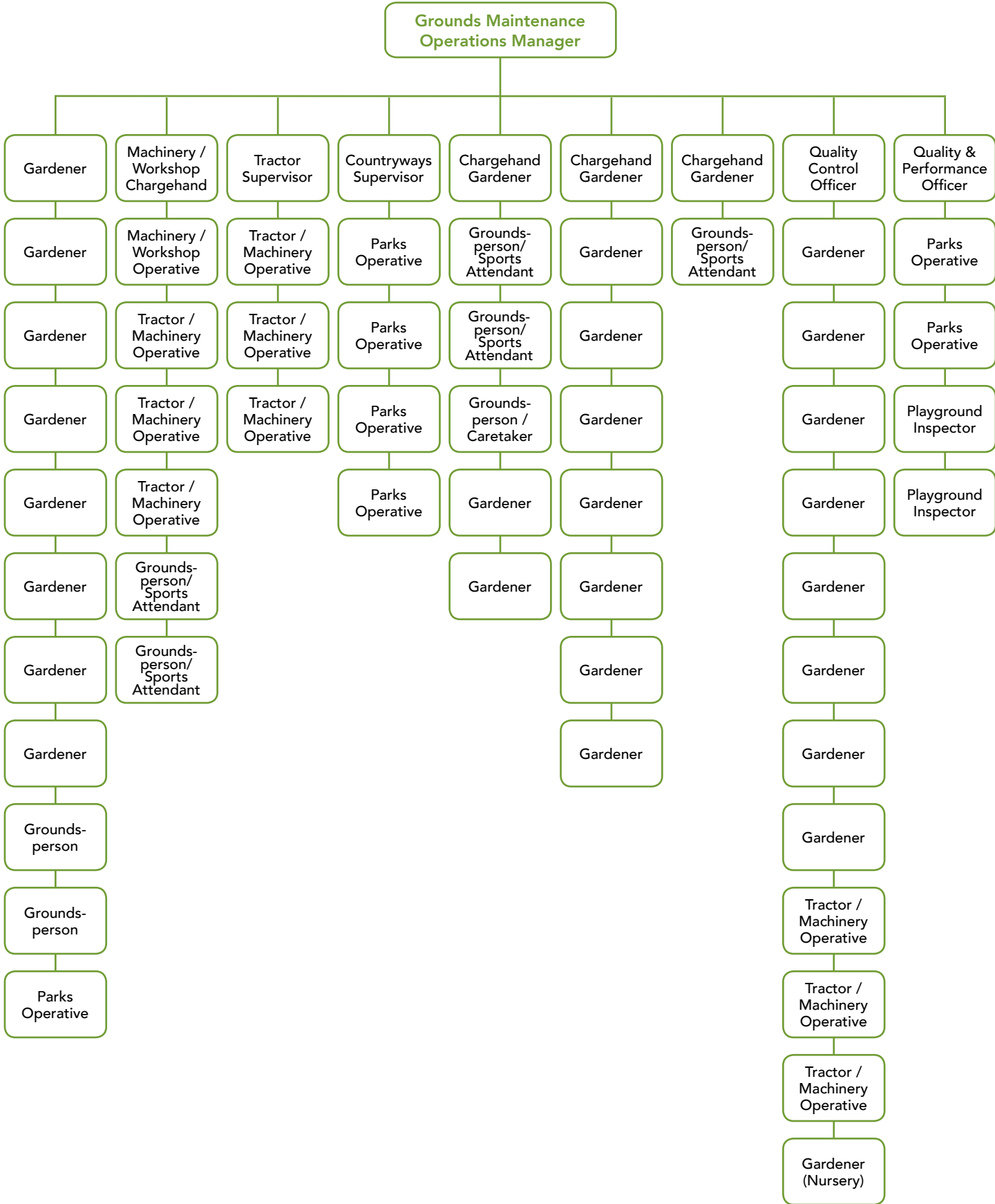
Parks and Green Spaces Structure



Parks and Green Spaces Customer Services



Grounds Maintenance



The Grounds Operations Service undertakes the grounds maintenance work that is required on site. The works 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, shrub beds, trees, hedges), grass sports pitches, tennis courts and hard landscape including furniture, litter collection and cleaning duties, and locking/ unlocking duties.

Grounds Maintenance operation

The sports pavilion at the Park is subject to annual safety audit reports undertaken by Facilities Management. 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 Grounds Management Service Division of Parks and Heritage Services undertake the grounds maintenance at both of the Parks.

The landscape elements within the parks have been categorised as follows.

Landscape Type	Minimum expected frequency of operations/ year. (Guide only performance specification)
Grass <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity • Fine • Natural 	Min. 15 cuts Min. 25 cuts Min. 1 cuts
Sports turf	As per type
Shrub Beds	Min. 9 visits
Herbaceous Border	Min. 9 visits
Paving	Min 15 occasions
Miscellaneous Detail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedges • Trees • Native species plantation • Site furniture 	Min 2 Occasions Min 3 Occasions Min 9 visits Min 10 Occasions Min 2 Occasions
Landscape Features	April – Sept min 2 visits Oct – March min 1 visit

The specifics of each landscape type is further defined in the work schedules and related where relevant to computer generated work identification sheets that summarises specific operations, the full details of which are contained within the specification.

Inspections and monitoring

All services carried out are subject to regular quality inspections by the Parks Quality Performance Officer.

Grounds

The area supervisors inspect their sites on a weekly basis. The park staff inspect 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.

Play areas

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



9 Landscape improvements (2020-2024) 5 year Action Plan

The five-year Action Plan is set out in the tables in the following pages. The plan sets out a series of targets, which respond to the park issues and reflect the park vision and key objectives.

The action plan is subject to annual review and update by the Parks and Horticultural Officer to ensure a continued programme of park improvement.



Action Plan for Springfield Hall Park:

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

No	Objective	Time frame	Cost implication
Objective 1	Promote the park as a venue for both community and sporting events.	1-5	Within existing budgets
Objective 2	To promote the use of the site by local schools to encourage children to consider the park theirs and to feel respect for it.	1-5	Within existing budgets
Objective 3	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 existing budgets
Objective 4	To increase the perception of safety amongst park users by empowering park users to become involved.	1-5	Within existing budgets
Objective 5	To increase length of time spent in the park through better signposting of the features within the park and through attractive additional facilities/features as they are developed and enhanced.	1-5	£15,000
Objective 6	To make biodiversity a key element of the park, carrying out regular monitoring and ensuring that the maintenance is supportive of bio diversity within sporting constraints.	1-5	£2,000
Objective 7	Encourage more use by the community by creating activities and interests that deliberately draw an audience through the park.	1-5	Within existing budgets

Notwithstanding the longer-term development proposals there are a number of minor improvements and maintenance related strategies (separate to the rolling maintenance programme) that are potentially achievable within current budgets and undertaken in the short to medium term, i.e. within the life of this Plan. The recommendations from a biodiversity enhancement assessment of the Park also form Part of the 5-year landscape improvement plan.

Short to medium term objectives (2-3 years)

No	Objective	Time frame	Cost implication
Objective 1	Provide site interpretation boards to promote conservation & biodiversity	2-3	£2,000
Objective 3	To promote the park to a wider audience by bringing in new demographics	2-3	Within existing budgets
Objective 5	Undertake regular wildlife surveys	1	£1,000
Objective 6	Provide areas for families to picnic	2	£3,000
Objective 7	Provide people counters at key entry points	2	£4,000
Objective 8	Monitor water bills, check for leaks and encourage adoption of water saving devices	2-3	Within existing budgets
Objective 9	To build a consensus on the direction that the park should take by building upon existing forums and through dialogue with stakeholders.	2-3	Within existing budgets
Objective 10	Build new play area meeting today's needs	1-2	£97,000
Objective 11	Provide park signs to identify site to road users	1-2	£2,000

The Landscape Management Strategy for the park 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.

The overall aims and objectives of the strategy 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.
- Work with the sports clubs on site to establish a programme of events particularly targeting young people.
- Seek to ensure the best possible service by continuously reviewing policy and procedures.

In working through the costed action plan we will be building out on what has been achieved to date to keep both parks relevant to those using the facilities.



10 Monitoring and Review

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

- **Publish achievements** – achievements will be publicised using press releases and the Chelmsford City Council website.
- **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 Surveys, records of complaints, advice from Sports User Group and other stakeholders will be analysed
- **Consultation** – results of consultations with stakeholders especially the ‘hard to reach’ will be analysed.
- **Audits and surveys** – Results of DDA audits and other surveys, the Equality Impact Assessment, stakeholder mapping exercises, independent inspections 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 Green Flag Award and the Fields in Trust 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.
- **Commissioned survey reports** – Place Survey - (two years).
– Market and Opinion Research International (Mori)
- **Field in Trust** – the outcomes of these awards will mark our standards of provision for outside sports and will help use to benchmark against other Authorities regionally, through the Essex Playing Fields Association.
- **Annual review** – It is emphasised that 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.

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.

Author: Mike Keen
Parks & Horticultural Officer: Parks & Green Spaces





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