

Report of: Leisure and Cultural Services Business Unit Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 3 April 2006

Item No:

Title of Report : STAFFING FOR PARKS



Summary and Recommendations



Purpose of report: To inform Executive Board of the method and programme for the expenditure of the additional budget allocation for a uniformed park ranger presence in parks



Key decision: Yes

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mary Clarkson

Scrutiny Responsibility: Environment



Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by:



emy Thomas (Head of Legal and Democratic Services)
Emma Burson (Group Accountant)



Policy Framework:



Making Oxford a safer city



ports the evolving green spaces strategy

Recommendation(s): The Executive Board is recommended to agree to
1. The programme and allocation of expenditure agreed in the Council's budget for increasing the staffing presence in Parks



Background

1. A number of consultation exercises of users and non-users have been undertaken by the Park Service and one of the main outcomes of the consultation was that the public felt there was a need for a staff presence in Parks because there was a perception that some Parks were unsafe
2. In 2005 the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE Space) launched their national campaign to bring back the Park Keeper.
3. In order to make some improvements in this area, the Park Service was restructured and resources in the Parks Service revenue budget reorganised. As a result, in 2006 a mobile Park Ranger Service was launched to provide a uniformed presence across around 30 of the city's Parks.
4. The current Park Ranger Service comprises one Senior Park Ranger and five Park Rangers and is only able to provide a limited presence across these 30 Parks, despite the demand for a permanent presence in all the city's parks,
5. Subsequently a revenue budget bid was included in the Council's budget bidding process to increase the uniformed park ranger presence in Parks
6. The Full Council approved the budget to increase the staffing presence and allocated monies for the period between 2006-2008.

Strategic Context

7. The draft green spaces strategy proposes to split the Oxford Parks into a hierarchy based on quality, demand and facilities into city, neighbourhood and local parks. The current ranger team is only able to patrol city and neighbourhood parks because of limited resources. (Appendix 1)
8. The draft green spaces strategy also highlights the objective of providing a staff presence in Parks and also the need to work with the community in developing Parks

Proposals

9. The budget allocation would allow the Business Unit to increase its mobile Ranger team by two members of staff in 2006 and an additional two in 2007. However in order to maximise the presence across the

City's Parks instead of employing mobile rangers with this funding, it is proposed to employ a static team who would both operate the Ranger function and assist with grounds maintenance, thereby increasing our ability to improve the perception of safety and the quality of our City Parks. The budget allocation permits the appointment of two staff in 2006/07 with a further 2 appointments in 2007/8. It is proposed to supplement this budget using Park's existing temporary staffing budget that is used to cover additional demands in the summer months to appoint 2 additional staff to supplement this static team. These staff will be permanently based in the City Parks

Cotteslowe Park
Hinksey Park
Florence Park

Blackbird Leys Park
South Park
Court Place Farm

10. These staff will work on a rota basis covering seven days a week and will work flexible hours with the long-term ambition that they will provide a permanent staff presence in the Parks, including the longer hours through the summer months. The rota system cannot be fully implemented until the full complement of staff is appointed in 2007/8. The staff will undertake grounds maintenance operations as well as acting as a point of contact for the users of the Parks, thereby improving our overall capacity to maintain the Parks whilst providing a physical presence.
11. The permanent presence of staff in the City Parks will enable the mobile Park ranger team to provide a greater attendance in the remaining City Parks and also the neighbourhood Parks.

Financial Position

12. Full Council approved the following revenue funding for an increased staffing presence in Parks:

Revenue/£			
Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Expenditure	40,000	80,000	80,000

13. In 2006/07 the two full time staff will be funded from the £40,000 plus the utilisation of the existing revenue budget for temporary staff.
14. In 2007/08 and 2008/09 four full time staff will be funded from the £80,000 plus the utilisation of the revenue budget for temporary staff.

Name and contact details of author:

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Background Papers: None



Appendix 1: Parks Patrolled by Park Ranger Team

City Parks to be visited every day

Cotteslowe Park
South Park
Court Place Farm
Blackbird Leys Park
Florence Park
Hinksey Park

Neighbourhood Parks to be visited three times a week

Five Mile Drive
Sunnymead Street Sports and Skate Park
Aristotle Lane Rec
Court Place Farm
Northway Centre
Foxwell Drive
Dunstan Park
Marston Rec
Headington Hill Park
Margaret Road Rec
Barton Rec
Fetti Place Rec
Risinghurst Rec
Horspath
Gillians Park
Frys Hill Park
Sandy Lane
Rose Hill Park
Cowley Marsh Rec
Donnington
Oxpens Rec
Oatlands Rec
King George's Field
Botley Rec
Wolvercote Bathing Place
Bury Knowle Park

