

Parks and Green Spaces Service Standard Policy

Service Area: Service Delivery

Head of Service: Sean McBurney



Our Environment | Our People | Our Future

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Version Control

Version	Reason for review (Review date/legislation/process changes)	Author (A) / Reviewer (R)	Effective date
1	Review following restructure	Chris Worman	01.01.23

Approvals

Approved by (Committee/Leadership Team/Head of Service)	Date
Housing and Community Services	

1.0 Content

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2.0 Introduction

The Council is responsible for the management of green spaces including planning advice, adoption of new land, dealing with Section 106 agreements and commuted sums. In relation to the maintenance of open spaces, our services comprise:

- Parks and green spaces including sports grounds
- Biodiversity / Nature areas and local wildlife sites
- Tree and woodland management
- Cemeteries
- Play areas and facilities for young people
- Environmental Education Project
- Rosliston Forestry Centre

Following the restructure of the Cultural and Community Services in 2022 this policy identifies the service standards for new Parks and Green Spaces Team.

3.0 Purpose

To identify the services within the Parks and Green Spaces Team and identify the standards of services that are to be provided.

4.0 Objectives

To provide a clear understanding of the following areas of work;

Parks and Green Spaces including sports grounds.

We manage three large urban parks covering an area of approximately 15 hectares, together with the 30-hectare urban forest park of Swadlincote Woodlands. In addition, we manage over 60 hectares of public open space which includes local nature reserves, wildlife areas, football pitches, eight allotment sites and large areas of common land.

Green Flag Award Status is achieved for Eureka Park, Maurice Lea Memorial Park and Swadlincote Woodlands. Our aim is to add to this with a further 3 green flags over the coming years for Cadley Park, Church Gresley Cemetery and Rosliston Forestry Centre.

During 2022/23 the new Cadley Park has been developed creating an additional 6 hectares of green space within the urban core.



At our premier Green Flag Award winning green spaces the grounds maintenance service we will ensure that;

Green Flag parks at Maurice Lea Memorial Park, Eureka Park and Swadlincote Woodlands have a park keeper presence.

Bowling greens are cut on 76 occasions during the mowing season (March – October)

Amenity grass is mown on 26 occasions during the mowing season (March – October)

Ornamental hedges are cut twice per annum, outside the March to September period if there are nesting birds

Shrub borders are pruned carefully according to the requirements of each species/ cultivar

Seasonal floral features, beds and borders etc. are maintained for optimum display (Spring Bedding planted in October and Summer bedding planted in June)

No chemicals are used for the treatment of weeds with the exception of hard surfaces and designated potential problem areas. These will be treated twice per year with suitable weed control treatment

Litter is collected daily and bins are checked daily and emptied as required

Hard surface areas are swept weekly

Leaves are cleared as part of appropriate routine operational tasks

Full support is given for the Festival of Leisure, Remembrance Sunday and other major events

A wide range of events and activities are delivered which engage local communities

All other sites

Amenity grass is mown on 16 occasions during the mowing season (approx. fortnightly from March – October)

Hedges are cut, as a minimum, annually outside the March to September bird- nesting season

Shrub beds are pruned as required, at least annually

Seasonal floral features, beds and borders etc. are maintained for optimum display through the year (Spring Bedding planted in October and Summer bedding planted in June)



Litter is collected as a minimum twice per week in winter and three times in summer and bins are emptied at the same time and frequency

Hard surface areas are swept weekly

Leaves are cleared as part of appropriate routine operational tasks

Sports pitches are repaired, maintained and marked out as required for each sport

A fair allotments lettings and management service is provided and waste disposal facilities are provided on each site

Biodiversity / Nature areas and local wildlife sites

We manage and deliver the District Council's action plan for nature along with managing and maintaining 27 core sites for nature. Natural open space woodlands and wildlife sites are managed to enhance biodiversity and provide recreational and educational opportunities for all. In addition we seek to ensure biodiversity enhancements are incorporated into all sites.

In 2022 Swadlincote Woods was declared a Local Nature Reserve and we hope to designate more site over the coming years.

The Biodiversity Officer manages the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) process along with the cross cutting Biodiversity working group.

Ensure BNG opportunities are maximised and implemented in line with the new legislation.

The Biodiversity Officer is also responsible for the delivery and development of the 'Action Plan for Nature Work Program' (APN).

The APN was produced with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and defines a baseline for biodiversity within South Derbyshire and the opportunities that are available to the Council to deliver strategic nature recovery.

Example of Biodiversty work from the APN – Before and after at Church Gresley Cemetery



Tree and woodland management

In common with all other local authorities South Derbyshire District Council owns, and therefore is required to properly manage, a large number of trees and woodlands of various types and sizes. These trees are valued for their multi-functional contribution to the quality of life of the district, including place-making, public health, biodiversity, aesthetic value etc. and the Council has put in place policies, systems and resources to protect and manage them effectively.

The Council manages around twenty-five thousand individual trees and over 50 hectares of woodland throughout the district, with a total of over 170,000 trees and more being adopted each year.

We will ensure that:

There is programme to map and add all our trees to the Council's tree stock inventory

Trees are regularly inspected according to the 2022 Tree Management and Maintenance Policy

All necessary work to make safe all trees is identified on a programme of work according to the 2022 Tree Management and Maintenance Policy on the following basis-

The Council will use its Risk Management and the Tolerability of Risk Framework for tree risk-benefit assessment and management. It will manage the risk from trees and branches falling and other tree problems using four easy to understand 'traffic light signal' coloured risk ratings.

Red - High / intolerable risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level as soon as possible

Amber - Medium / action required risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level, within a scheduled work programme

Yellow - Tolerable / incipient risks will not be reduced but will require an increased frequency of assessment than green - Acceptable risks

Green - Acceptable risks will not be reduced unless the identified work is in line with policy conditions and is within council budgets and resources

The tree work programme is completed to the required standard within the set timescales



Cemeteries and closed churchyards

We provide cemeteries at Aston-on-Trent, Church Gresley, Etwall, Findern, Marston-on-Dove and Newhall. Most of our cemeteries have consecrated (blessed as sacred) and unconsecrated areas where graves can be bought. SDDC will maintain the site without charge to the grave owner.

We also facilitate the grounds maintenance of a number of closed churchyards. We will ensure that-

The register and records for all cemeteries are properly maintained and updated

Dignified and respectful bereavement services are delivered, including grave digging, health and safety supervision and providing public witness duties

Amenity grass is mown on 16 occasions during the mowing season (approx. fortnightly from March – October)

Hedges are cut, as a minimum, annually outside the March to September bird-nesting season

Shrub beds are pruned as required, at least annually

Seasonal floral features, beds and borders etc. are maintained for optimum display through the year. (Spring Bedding planted in October and Summer bedding planted in June)

Memorials are inspected for safety on a five-year rolling programme in accordance with our Memorial Headstone testing policy.

At Church Gresley and Newall Cemeteries:

Litter is collected as a minimum twice per week in winter and three times in summer and bins are emptied at the same time and frequency

Hard surface areas are swept weekly

Leaves are cleared as part of appropriate routine operational tasks

Other cemeteries have their own maintenance arrangements

Play areas and facilities for young people

We have more than 30 play areas, catering for a wide range of age groups. Our playgrounds strike a balance between providing a stimulating learning environment and



meeting safety requirements. We also manage and maintain three skate parks, in Peacraft Lane, Hilton, at Newhall Park and on Common Road, Swadlincote. We also have outdoor green gym equipment at Maurice Lea Memorial Park, Eureka Park and Newhall Park.

We will ensure that-

All new facilities are designed for optimum play value and are installed correctly to conform with EN 1176

All play inspections will conform to industry best practice and staff will be trained to RPI standard.

Play equipment, skate parks, youth facilities, artificial sports areas are regularly inspected, repaired, maintained and kept clean and fit for purpose

Full records are kept of inspection and maintenance programmes via a computerised inspection app.

Environmental Education Project

Our Environmental Education Project team develops and runs school and public events and activities across the District and The National Forest.

Based at Rosliston Forestry Centre, it holds the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge and works with partners such as the National Forest Company, Rolls-Royce PLC, Forestry England, The Woodland Trust and Sainsbury's to provide interesting and engaging opportunities locally and nationally.

The aim is to enable people to learn about the environment whilst having fun. We also promote the built environment and the District's unique cultural and industrial heritage.

We work with individuals, schools, families, local environmental groups and businesses on a varied programme of activities including paid-for sessions and volunteering activities.

Events and activities include free tree giveaways, gardening drop-ins, science discovery days and family fun 'Wildlife Watch' sessions like pond-dipping. We also run Rosliston Rangers volunteer group, South Derbyshire Environmental Forum network group, and organised corporate environmental team building days. We also have free self-guided trails for Rosliston and Swadlincote focussing on general heritage and points of interest eg Tree Trail, Japanese Trail, Swadlincote Heritage Trails, and five WW1 Commemorative local walks.

For schools, we deliver sessions linked to the curriculum subjects, including science, geography, history, music, literacy, technology, maths, art and design.



Our sessions are designed to appeal to all pupils, whatever their ability or preferred learning style. They include titles like 'Working the Woods - past, present and future' (where you develop your own trail routes), as well as more traditional environmental education.

More hands-on experiences include bushcraft, fire-lighting/campfire cooking and 'Forest School' taster days.

Rosliston Forestry Centre

Rosliston Forestry Centre is a 154 acre site and located at the heart of The National Forest and is a mix of woodland and meadow, ponds and play areas for visitors of all ages to enjoy. The centre provides visitor information, toilets, shop, education centre, café, soft play, falconry centre and wheelchair hire.

In addition, we provide 6 fully equipped self-catering lodges, and The Glade which is licensed for weddings and music events.

A range of activities can be enjoyed including walking, fishing, nature trails, volunteering, star gazing, orienteering, and a range of family events.

5.0 Performance and Monitoring

Throughout our work, we set clear targets and measure our achievement through a suite of key performance indicators as part of an integrated performance management framework.

We do this through:

- Quality monitoring of service delivery and 'mystery shopping' of key sites
- External quality assessment via the Green Flag Award
- The development of site management plans and improvement action plans
- The effective management of open spaces including infrastructure, trees, grounds maintenance and community involvement
- Regular review meetings with our partner organisations.
- Evaluation of education events and activities.

6.0 Definitions

- Green Flag Award – the international standard for parks and green spaces



- EN 1176 – The British and European safety standard for play equipment and safety surfaces.
- RPI – Register of Play Inspectors

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Responsible:** Service area who performs an activity or does the work.
- **Accountable:** Service area which is ultimately accountable for the service being provided
- **Consulted:** Services who need to be engaged and contribute to the policy
- **Informed:** Services or stakeholders that needs to be informed of the policy

Responsible	Accountable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Green Spaces Manager / Parks and Green Spaces Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To review the policy ○ Ensure the policy is implemented and maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Cultural and Community Services / Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Parks and Green Spaces Team sit with the Cultural and Community Services department.
Consulted	Informed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Operational Services / Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Grounds Maintenance is delivered in house by our operational services department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To understand and comply to policy

8.0 Sustainability Impact Assessment

Our Environment	Potentially positive impact (Y/N)	Potentially negative impact (Y/N)	No disproportionate impact (Y/N)	Sustainable Assessments findings <i>(Please utilise the guidance provided for assessment findings.)</i>
Improve the Environment of the District	Y			The provision of parks and green spaces to support communities to live health sustainable lifestyles. Increase biodiversity/ ecology / Supports the Climate Emergency declaration



Tackle Climate Change	Y			<i>The provision of parks and green spaces has a positive impact on tackling climate change through carbon sustration, mitregation flood risk, reduces the heat island effect, reduces air polution and therefore supports decarbonising the council by 2030 Engagement programmes such as volunteering and community tree planting help educate our communities on the impacts of climate change.</i>
Enhance the attractiveness of South Derbyshire	Y			<i>Supoprts with creating green tourism Improve public spaces to enjoy the environment</i>
Our People				
Engage with Communities	Y			<i>Provides volunteering opportunities across a range of parks and green spaces ?</i> <i>Undertaking communitiy consylations for park developments.</i> <i>Helps tackle anti-social behaviour and crime – by providing diversonary facilities for young people.</i>
Supporting and Safeguarding the most vulnerable	Y			<i>Provision of free to access green spaces to promote wellbeing and supports all members of our communities to live healthy sustainable lifestyles.</i>
Deliver Excellent Services	Y			<i>Improve customer service and information. Invest, in our workforce.</i>
Our Future				



Develop Skills and careers	Y			<i>Help attract and retain skilled jobs. Supports local workers. Supports apprenticeships. Supports green skills.</i>
Support economic growth and infrastructure	Y			<i>The provision of a quality environment helps to attract both new visitors and businesses to the area to support economic growth</i>
Transforming the Council	Y			<i>Supports the councils aims and objectives / best practice and ISO 14001</i>

9.0 Policy Review

The Standards are to be reviewed in 3 years.

10.0 References

Include external references for example legislation to ensure a clear evidence base.

11.0 Associated Documentation

Description of Documentation
2022 Tree Management and Maintenance Policy

12.0 Appendices

12.1 Equality Impact Assessment Form

The outcome of the assessment should be included in the supporting Committee Report which is seeking approval for a new or amended policy.

12.2 Policy Briefing Form

See appendix below



Appendix.12.2

Policy Briefing Form

Introduction

This form is to provide a brief update to summarise the changes/amendments to an existing policy or to provide a summary for a new policy. This form should be used for the consultation, approval and communication of all adopted policies.

Policy update

A summary of the policy is detailed below

Policy Name: Parks and Green Spaces

Policy Date: May 2023

Version Number: 1.0

Summary of Policy: *(this can be copied from section 3. Purpose)*

To identify the services within the Parks and Green Spaces Team and identify the standards of services that are to be provided

Summary of key changes made to an existing policy.

Section	Amendment
<i>Overall</i>	Renamed Park and Green Spaces policy following the 2021 restructure
<i>4.0</i>	Addition of Rosliston Forestry Centre and the Environmental Education Team
<i>4.0</i>	Addition of the new tree management policy
<i>4.0</i>	Addition of Biodiversity / Nature areas and local wildlife sites

Following final adoption of the policy, this form will be used by the communication team to be included in Core Brief as part of the communication plan.

Further information can be found in the 'My Policies' section in Connect.

