

Mansel Park Park Management Plan **(Site Specific Information)**

Updated November/December 2023

This plan is to be read in conjunction with the Green Flag Park Management Principals which can be found in appendix 2.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of the management plan is to set out a framework to guide the development of Mansel Park for the future, ensuring it meets the needs of the whole community, in line with a number of council policies. This management plan should be considered a live working document and will be updated regularly using the plan itself and the action plan. The text is therefore correct at the time of initial publication.
- 1.2. The management plan has been put together by staff working in the park, members of the community who have involvement in the park and involvement from other stakeholders.
- 1.3. The Green Flag Award standard has been adopted as the best way to manage Southampton's parks. This plan will inform the future running of Mansel Park, combining City Council Policy and legal requirements and the views of those who live, work and enjoy the area.
- 1.4. Mansel Park serves a wide range of functions for the local community and draws people in from further afield to use its facilities. It is a vital component to improving access to the natural environment. The overall character of the park should be recognised and enhanced whilst maintaining and improving the individual components that make it unique. There are four broad aims for the management, in partnership, of Mansel Park identified in accordance with the Green Space Strategy and other key city plans:
 - Retain and enhance the distinctive quality of the park.
 - Provide a park that meets and continues to meet user need, both locally and strategically through the objectives of the City Council
 - Interpret and promote the park to ensure the benefits it offers are maximised.
 - Ensure the park is accessible to all elements of the community.
- 1.5. The following key objectives have been derived from the Green Space Strategy, the draft Parks and Open Spaces business plan and customer feedback and provide a focus for the management in 2024/25. Specific actions to address these objectives are identified in the action plan in section 9.2.
 - Increase community involvement in the management and maintenance of the park by continuing to work closely with the Community Campaigns Officer, District Rangers, the Natural Environment Team, and other stakeholders.
 - To maintain and improve the unique character of Mansel Park and enhance and interpret the varied biodiversity.
 - To increase customer satisfaction in Mansel Park.

- 1.5. To provide and promote key events in the park, raising environmental awareness and increasing community involvement



2. Description of the Park

- 2.1. Mansel Park is a 10.7 ha park in the Millbrook area of Southampton. It is the main open space serving a large urban area that includes Millbrook and Redbridge. It is situated between Evenlode Road, Windermere Avenue, Kendal Avenue, Sedbergh Road and Ingleton Road.
- 2.2. Mansel Park has four main entrances, two from Kendal Avenue, one from Evenlode Road and one from Windermere Avenue.
- 2.3. There are information boards installed in the park with contact details on them.
- 2.4. The recreation part of the park contains benches also picnic benches within the play area, as well as paths throughout the park which can be used for dog walking and exercise. There is also a football pitch which is leased to Millbrook Football Club as well as a smaller pitch and a kick about area. There is also a MUGA close to the MP3 building.
- 2.5. Facilities in Mansel Park include:
 - Play Area
 - MUGA
 - Adizone Outdoor Gym

- Large areas of grass for play
- Football pitch for public use
- Large areas of grass for play
- Wildlife areas and pond
- Community Fun Fair which visits once a year

3. Nature, Conservation and Biodiversity in the Park

- 3.1. It is important that the unique characteristics in Mansel Park are maintained, and that the local history is preserved where possible. The park also has a rich and varied wildlife interest that should be preserved.
- 3.2. There are a number of well established trees that are ideal for bat habitats including the mature oak trees which house numerous roosting sites. On a bat walk held in September 2023 which was promoted locally and open to the public to attend a variety of bat species were seen and heard, these include Common Pipistrelle, Serotine and Long Eared Bats
- 3.3. Mansel Park comprises an area of amenity grassland which is currently mown short to facilitate it to be used for sports such as football and leisure purposes. There are a number of mature oak trees in the park which provide valuable habitat for a large range of species, including bats and nesting birds. There are also a number of other tree species including willow, ash, sycamore, maple, and wild cherry. The main grassland area is mown short but there are a few areas within the park that are left longer to help herbaceous species to flower, providing a nectar source for pollinators before setting seed, helping to increase soil humidity which benefits soil invertebrates which helps provide a food source for wildlife such as birds and small mammals. These longer grassy areas include the banks around the park perimeter and in the less formal areas including around the pond and the south-eastern section of the park.
- 3.4. Towards the Ingleton Road end of the park there is a naturally wet area where a pond forms during the wetter times of the year. The pond has recorded use by frogs, which use the pond for breeding when conditions are suitable. The pond has been deepened to allow natural and surface water to sit for a longer period of time. The pond is a seasonal pond that is supposed to dry out in the summer. This is to encourage amphibian species such as newts and frogs to use the pond for breeding. The pond often overflows during the winter into the semi natural grassland to the south. The scrub of willow and other species around the pond is managed on a semi coppice rotation to keep the pond open and encourage marginal species.
- 3.5. Although no targeted species surveys have been carried out, ad-hoc recordings of wildlife in the park include robin, goldcrest, blackbird, blue tit, great tit, goldfinch, and wren (birds) and common pipistrelle (bat). Various invertebrate species are also supported by the diverse range of

habitats within the park including butterflies, moths, hoverflies, shield bugs, beetles along with mammals such as fox and hedgehog.

3.6. Mansel Park's Biodiversity Management Statement can be found in Appendix 1 and is used to undertake regular habitat management at Mansel Park.

3.7. The bunds were created as a protective barrier for the park, making it more difficult for travellers to access the park. The bunds have been planted with wildflower seed and have also been left to be naturally colonised. The bunds are cut regularly on the road side edge to keep sight lines clear, the inside is cut on a rotational cutting regime that lets species overwinter, but also increases biodiversity by taking away and disposing of the cuttings off site.



3.8 Grassland areas, there are main areas of grassland in the park that are managed by the ecology/ranger team. One south of the pond, one adjacent to the diagonal path the third is the grass banks in and around the park and also around the training pitch. The grass area south of the pond will be cut in a four-year mosaic rotation with a scythe, the cuttings will be collected and disposed of offsite. The area by the diagonal path will be cut on a three-year rotation with a scythe again the cuttings being collected and disposed of offsite.

The banks will be managed slightly differently as they are currently species poor. The banks are going to be cut, small areas will have the grass

removed, they will then be scarified and seeded with wildflowers. These banks will then be cut in September every year with the grass removed and disposed of.

4. History/Heritage of the Park

- 4.1 Mansel Park is an important area for those interested in southern Hampshire's history and heritage. The site of Mansel Park was once covered by woodland and many of the oaks found in the park today are hundreds of years old. A tributary of Tanners Brook ran across the South of the Park and would explain its boggy nature and why it can be so wet at times.

The area now known as Mansel Park is located on an old landfill site and was created when Millbrook estate was built in the 1950's. It is named after Owen L. Mansel who was strongly devoted to his work as Millbrook Parish Councillor during 1919-1930. Prior to the estate being built the area now called Mansel Park was farmland, the site of Wimpson Farm.

By the late 20th century Mansel Park had become a run-down area rather than what it should have been, the "heart" of the estate. Instead, it had been described as a "green desert" with only one poorly equipped children's play area and football pitch with predominantly dog walkers using the park.

In the autumn of 1998 Millbrook, Maybush, and Redbridge Community Action Forum carried out a consultation to obtain people's views on local parks and open spaces. Around 300 people gave their views with a wish for ponds, improved play areas and more seating, giving people the option to sit and enjoy their newly improved park.

5. Community Involvement in the Park

- 5.1. The parks team worked closely with the Friends of Mansel Park when it was in existence. The group is unfortunately no longer in existence, but the council along with the Senior Ranger are currently working hard trying to find residents and other possible interested parties such as Millbrook Matters that may be interested in re-forming the group.
- 5.2. There are many different types of user groups that enjoy Mansel Park. Users within the park include local schools, dog walkers, wildlife enthusiasts, football players and supporters, cyclists, users of the Adizone outdoor gym area and children and young adults that use the play equipment play.
- 5.3. There are also volunteers that work in the park alongside SCC staff from time to time carrying out work on areas in the park such as the pond

area. Volunteer days took place in the park during 2023 with work carried out in conjunction with the district team to clear some areas around the pond to make the pond more open, the pond has also been deepened in one section to allow water to remain in the pond longer during dry periods.

- 5.4. There is a wide and inclusive range of people using the park from across Millbrook and surrounding areas as well as other users from further afield who come to Mansel Park.
- 5.5. One of the local schools, Newlands Primary School uses Mansel Park as part of their Geography curriculum to study the local area, this includes a walk around Mansel Park as well as looking at the play park development as changes within the local area. Another local school Mansel Park Primary & Nursery School are looking at using the park in the future to use the space for nature walks linked to their geography and science curriculum.
- 5.6. User Feedback is monitored through the council's website and feedback through the corporate customer relations management system (Lagan).

5.7. Millbrook Football Club

Millbrook Football Club is a local team that lease an area of the park, which is used as their home pitch for some of the teams, Millbrook Football Club was formed when Bush Hill FC the original team that played at Mansel Park merged with another local team Oakwood Youth. This enabled formation of a number of teams from youth to adult level, including a Women's Team. All of the different teams help promote health and wellbeing for all. The age group of members of the teams range from 3yrs of age to 40 years of age.

Millbrook Munchkins which is the younger age groups meet up to 3 times a week with the involvement of parents to promote exercise, there are approximately sixty families involved with the Munchkins, this gets younger people and their parents involved in using the park and being outdoors.

Once the children reach 5 years of age they move from Millbrook Munchkins into the Millbrook Wizards, the idea behind the Wizards team is that it is designed to create a pathway into competitive football for the youngsters when they are ready.

The football club have also started a pan disability team this year Millbrook Meteors, who play in a league. The team is a mixture of all disabilities and include both female and male members. They use a ball with a bell in it for the partially sighted players.

The football club held two fundays in the last year which was well supported by members of the public they are hoping to make these

annual events. The football club have also offered to help out with volunteer days that are organised in the park so that they can get involved in helping support and improve their local park.



MP3 Building

Youth Options

Youth Options lease this building from the council, there are various user groups that use the facility including The Golden Ring Boxing Club. The building is due to be closed from January 2024 until June 2024 after Youth Options had a funding grant awarded to them to carry out refurbishments in the building. The refurbishments include:

- The bio-mass wood pellet burner is to be removed, this burner was highlighted 20 years ago as an environmentally and efficient heating source but apparently never worked efficiently as it was over sized for the building. This is due to be replaced by an air source heat pump.
- There is planned to be an increase in youth provision for the area.
- A community café is to be opened at the MP3 building with the hope of running family activities from within.
- The Golden Ring Boxing Club hope to expand their gym to allow the club to continue to grow.

There have been Play and Youth sessions held every Thursday on the park by Youth Options which provide open access to all young people in the area.

Southampton Detached use the MP3, this is a team of youth workers who work remotely with children and young people. The team target hotspots as highlighted by the Police or linked services the work across the whole area of Millbrook as well as the park.

The aim of Southampton Detached is to provide positive engagement, talking to the young people about staying safe, highlighting relevant topics such as substances, alcohol, and safe sex etc. they provide hot drinks in the winter and cold drinks in the summer. They are someone that the young people can seek out if they have questions or need support.

The team also try to direct the young people to other positive services such as youth clubs and activity groups to try and get them off the streets and into something positive.

6. Staff Resources and Involvement in the Park

6.1. The management and maintenance of Mansel Park is the responsibility of the Parks and Street Cleansing team, which is part of City Services, under the Place Directorate. The service also includes Waste, Transport and Commercial and Service Development. The Parks and Street Cleansing team combines street cleansing and parks and open spaces.

6.2. Managers within the section undertake management by walking about which includes visits to Mansel Park. The Team Leader is the main link between staff on the ground and operations management. The action plan in section 10 will be reviewed on a regular basis (generally quarterly) by the park management team to ensure progress.

6.3. The day-to-day management and maintenance of Mansel Park is undertaken principally by the West District Team within the City Services section. Richard Smith-Waite is the Team Leader responsible for the park and the team working within it. Supporting Richard is Brian Kneller – Operations Manager, Dave Tyrie – Head of City Services, Nick Yeats – Service Manager – Commercial and Service Development, who assists with policy and strategic development of the park. Currently there are seven permanent full-time staff within the West Team who can be involved in the maintenance of the park at any one time. There is also a Working Supervisor supporting Richard. Generally, two members of the team will carry out maintenance within the park on a daily basis.

6.4. A Senior Ranger started in January 2023, the Senior Ranger is supported by a Ranger who started in April 2023, their roles include forming, speaking to and supporting Friends groups, and volunteer tasks within parks and open space in the west district.

7. Events

7.1. Volunteer work days have taken place in the park over the last year.

7.2. A Bat Walk was held in the park in September 2023.

7.3. Two fundays were run in the park by Mansel Football Club in the summer 2023.

7.4. Play and youth sessions arranged in the park by Youth Options.

8. Marketing

8.1. Mansel Park can be found on the Council website, with basic information being given about what facilities there are there.

8.2. Any events are advertised locally and, on the park notice boards. Events in Mansel Park will be used to promote the park more widely.

9. List of Key Stakeholders in the Park

Local Councillors

Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

The Police

Southampton City Services Team

Millbrook Football Club

MP3 building – Youth Options and Golden Ring Boxing Club

Volunteers

10. Actions and Recommendations

10.1. Action plan for short term (immediate to 3 years), medium term (3 to 5 years) and long term (5 years plus) actions.

10.1.1. This action plan is a dynamic working document that is reviewed and updated regularly. Some proposed actions are inspirational and will depend upon sourcing adequate funding, in collaboration with the Friends of Freemantle Lake Park. Although the plan has been ordered according to Green Flag criteria, several of the actions fall under more than one heading. The actions below are over and above the core maintenance tasks undertaken by the West District Team.

Action	Lead officer	Key partners and consultees	Estimated resource required and source of funding	Target Completion date	Progress/Comments
<i>Welcoming Place</i>					
Install new signage at entrances	District Ranger / Matthew Lovell	SCC	£350 SCC	End 2024	
Update notice boards so that information is relevant	Richard Smith-Waite	SCC	Officer Time	Ongoing	
Update signage at pond	Ranger Team / Sam Munslow	SCC	£350	End 2024	
<i>Healthy, safe and secure</i>					
Install bund around site to prevent traveller access	Matthew Lovell	SCC	£22,000	End 2024	Bunds are complete, awaiting Hydroseeding on the bunds.
Strengthen Play Area Fence	Matthew Lovell	SCC/Brian Kneller	£3,100	End 2023	Completed

Action	Lead officer	Key partners and consultees	Estimated resource required and source of funding	Target Completion date	Progress/Comments
Install soakaway to help drainage from the central path	Mathew Lovell	SCC	N/A	End 2023	Completed
Remove broken/redundant wooden features near the pond	Brian Kneller	Richard Smith-Waite/ District Team	Officer Time	Spring 2024	
<i>Clean and well maintained</i>					
Replace and/or repair damaged seats	Matthew Lovell	SCC	£8,000	March 2023	Complete
Replace and/or repair damaged bins	Matthew Lovell	SCC	N/A	Ongoing	Replaced as necessary
<i>Environmental Management</i>					
Implement Compactor bins	Dave Tyrie	Brian Kneller	£10,000	Winter 2022	2 compactor bins installed one at each end of the main path.
Introduce electric vehicles into the fleet	Alf Mata	SCC Officers	Unknown	Ongoing	Fleet services are continuing to look at introducing electric vehicles into the fleet
<i>Conservation and heritage</i>					
Carry out improvements to the pond area to make the pond more visible and open to improve access.	Sara Tschersich/ Samantha Munslow	Richard Smith-Waite/West District Team	Officer Time	November 2022	Complete
Deepen pond to enable water to stay longer	Sara Tschersich/ Samantha Munslow	Richard Smith-Waite/West District Team	£1,000	End 2023	Complete

Action	Lead officer	Key partners and consultees	Estimated resource required and source of funding	Target Completion date	Progress/Comments
Develop more longer grass areas to aid wildlife	Samantha Munslow/ Brian Kneller	Richard Smith-Waite/ West District Team	Officer Time	End 2022	Complete
Leave longer vegetation linking the boggy area with the original hedge line, longer vegetation under mature trees etc.	Brian Kneller/ Samantha Munslow	West District Team	Officer Time	Ongoing	This is encouraging wildlife by giving more shelter between the boggy area and hedge line, as well as other areas of the park.
Reduce mowing on certain areas of banks to encourage wildflowers to seed and then setting up "coppice style" mowing to maintain diversity	Brian Kneller/ Samantha Munslow	West District Team	Officer Time	Ongoing	To encourage wildflowers to seed and improve diversity
Ensure the council website is kept up to date with Freemantle Lake Park information and event updates	Web Editor	Cliff Brown	Officer time	Ongoing	Includes making use of what is on pages
<i>Community involvement</i>					
Involve local community and volunteers to carry out work within the park	Area Ranger	Sara Tschersich/ SCC	Officer Time	2023 & Ongoing	There were volunteer days during 2023, with more planned in 2024.
Newlands Primary School	Head Teacher	School Staff	Officer Time	Ongoing	School uses the park as part of its geography curriculum
Hold a bat walk in the park	Samantha Munslow	SCC	Officer time	End September 2023	Completed

Action	Lead officer	Key partners and consultees	Estimated resource required and source of funding	Target Completion date	Progress/Comments
Sports Fun Days	Millbrook Football Club	Local Residents	N/A Youth Options	Summer 2023	Completed
Play and Youth	Youth Options	Local Residents	N/A	Every Thursday	Ongoing
Southampton Detached	Youth Options	Local Residents	N/A	Weekly	Ongoing
<i>Marketing</i>					
Ensure the council website is kept up to date with Freemantle Lake Park information and event updates	Council Web Editor	Cliff Brown/ Brian Kneller	Officer Time	Ongoing	
Events held by Millbrook Football Club	Millbrook FC	SCC	Officer Time	Ongoing	Advertised locally by Millbrook FC
<i>Management</i>					
Team Brief and Consultation on Plan	Brian Kneller	District Team	£0 Officer time / Staff time	Ongoing	Management plans are briefed to district teams at team meetings and annually reviewed. Management plans are available in the depots to be viewed by team members

APPENDIX 1

Biodiversity Management Statement

Site name: Mansel Park

Boundary: Between Windermere Avenue/Kendal Avenue and Evenlode Road

Grid Reference: ????????

Area: ??????

Neighbourhood area: West

Designation:

Nationally Protected species: Bats?

Hampshire BAP species:

Species Special in Southampton context / Community favourites:

Other noteworthy species regularly recorded:

Species recorded as occasional visitors/vagrants:

Important habitats

Notes on Public use: This park was until recently a large area of close mown grass with occasional trees and had very limited wildlife interest. A hedgerow in the southwest corner was the only potentially interesting area for biodiversity but has not been surveyed in detail.

In the last few years some works have been carried out that could benefit biodiversity, including creating a “bog” area and the construction of earth mounds around some of the boundaries adjacent to the road.

Community group stakeholders: Millbrook Football Club, Youth Options, Golden Ring Boxing Club

Major concerns for management: There is still some pressure to “tidy up” the park. This results in a general lack of food and shelter for wildlife, particularly during the winter. The disturbed soil created during recent works is very rich and so tends to support aggressive weed species that some members of the public find unacceptable. Careful monitoring of these areas and changes in management to achieve the required species will be needed in the next few years.

Management change opportunities that would benefit Biodiversity:

Leaving more longer vegetation, particularly linking the “bog” area and the hedge to the southwest.

Less vigorous pruning of berry bearing shrubs to allow them to flower and berry and create possible nesting habitat.

Planting more such trees/shrubs e.g. ornamental Rowans away from tree cover to provide winter food for migrant birds.

Similarly interplanting within shrubbeds with beneficial plants such as Evening primrose, Lemon balm and Teasel (these are biennials and need to be left overwinter to provide seed and shelter for wildlife).

Experimental planting of local origin Bluebell and Primrose at base of trees to provide spring flowers (these may get picked/trampled so not too many planted and if conditions suitable they will naturally increase).

Reducing mowing on some bits of existing short turf banks to encourage wildflowers to seed, then setting up “coppice cycle” of mowing to maintain diversity.

Community involvement opportunities:

Helping with removal of willows etc encroaching on “bog” area, sowing seed and thinning seedlings of Teasel etc in shrub beds

Green Flag Management Principles

Produced by the City Services, Parks and Street Cleansing Team of
Southampton City Council

January 2024



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Green Flag Management Principles

This document provides the overarching principles and corporate approach to green flag management in Southampton. It provides a basis of knowledge to enable Managers to understand Council and Citywide protocols and policies.

Introduction

The parks and green spaces in Southampton are managed and maintained by the Parks and Street Cleansing department. This is part of the City Services Division which also includes Waste Services, Fleet Transport, Safety Hub and Commercial & Service Development.

Southampton City Council is currently in the process of increasing the number of Green Flag Award winning parks it manages in the City. The City has a history of winning Green Flag Awards with spaces such as Central Parks and Mayfield Park regularly being awarded Green Flag Status since the early 2000's.

2022 saw existing award winning parks being accepted onto the Green Flag Award's Group Award Scheme. This scheme aligns with our corporate goal to manage all of the 52 parks in Southampton following the Green Flag ethos.

In order to do this each park has a management plan. Many of the parks are unique with their own character and specific management requirements, however, there are elements which read across all of the service.

This document therefore sets out those read across principles, policies and procedures and should be read in conjunction with the specific parks management plans which will contain information pertinent to that site.

Site specific management plans can be found here: [Park management plans \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk/park-management-plans)

Service Facts

Our green spaces are free and open to everyone, all year round. We maintain 52 parks, 148 other green spaces and 75 eco areas for managed wildlife covering 95 hectares. Generally, you are able to walk where you like but there are some areas which may be off limits. These areas include shrub/herbaceous beds and bedding areas or where we are trying to get new shrubs or trees established. There may also be areas sensitive for nature conservation. It will be made clear on site where any excluded areas are.

We encourage and support voluntary park friends groups that are keen to be involved in the maintenance and development of their local park. All groups play an important role in managing and developing the parks, including getting funding to improve park facilities. Most groups start with like-minded people who want to get more involved in improving their local environment.

Overall Management Drivers Corporate Goals

How parks and open spaces management fits with the Council Priorities taken from the [Southampton City Council Corporate Plan \(2022-2030\)](#).



STRONG
FOUNDATIONS
FOR LIFE

Providing safe places for people to improve their health and wellbeing. Being mindful of the full range of users offering opportunities for all age groups to be active in the open air. Being an employer of choice for those wanting to get into land based industries.



A PROUD AND
RESILIENT CITY

Providing spaces for improved cultural offer across the city, encouraging community use and involvement. Maintaining safe, child friendly spaces delivering green initiatives across the city, providing mitigation for climate change.

Specific target under this priority are:

- Ensure our parks and open spaces remain accessible and increase the number of Green Flags in the city from six parks to ten
- Improve the condition of children's play areas within neighbourhoods and work towards introducing more play equipment within neighbourhoods that do not have any



A PROSPEROUS
CITY

Providing green spaces that become destinations for visitors to the city. High quality parks and open spaces have a significant impact on the economic life of urban centres, attracting investment and enhancing land and property prices through increased demand for being close to green space.



A SUCCESSFUL,
SUSTAINABLE
ORGANISATION

Maintain our customer focus and develop friends of groups to help shape future management and maintenance of the green spaces. Working with our customers to provide improved ways of working. Design low maintenance, carbon neutral schemes that reduce reliance on water and increase potential for SUDs and climate change mitigation.

Corporate Policy

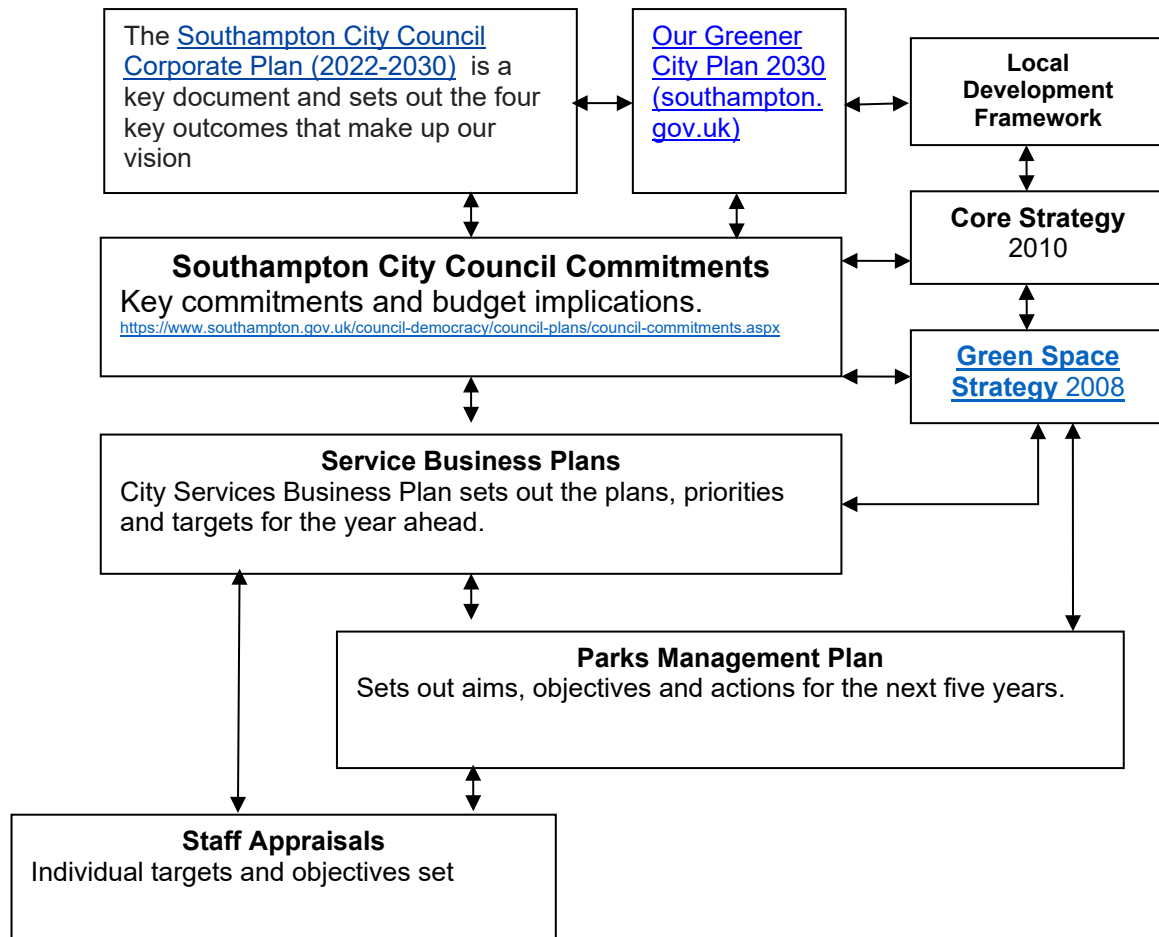
Key Council Policy and Strategy can be found here - [Key strategies, plans and policies \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk)

Southampton City Council's corporate health and safety policy can be found here - [Health and Safety Policy \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk)

Southampton's Green City Charter can be found here [The Green City Charter \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk) this is delivered through the Green City Plan [Green City Plan 2030 \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk)

The following flow diagram shows the golden thread of plans and strategies for Southampton City Council and shows how parks management plans fit into this. Southampton's Green Space Strategy was approved in October 2008 and the full document can be found here:

<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/people-places/parks-open-spaces/parks/park-management/green-space-strategy.aspx>.



The 'golden thread' of performance management

Service Policies

The Southampton City Council City Services Division also has a number of specific policies which govern its operations with regards to parks management. The following list provides the key policy and strategy relevant to the service. Where these are published a link has been provided, otherwise the document can be viewed on request.

Policy	Brief Description	Link
Pesticides	A commitment to the reduction in use of pesticides across Council services. Including designing out the need to weed spray.	In development
Play Policy 15 th December 2003	Outlines how play is to be provided across the city providing statements on quality and quantity	Available on request
Management of Open Water Sites 28 th June 2022	Statement on how the Council will maintain appropriate levels of safety relating to open water use including monitoring and the provision of life preservation equipment	Management of Open Water Sites
Parks Concession Licences	Guidance to prospective vendors on sites, availability and tender process.	Concession licences
Green Space Guide For Southampton's Parks and Green Spaces Green Spaces/Respected Places	Code of conduct for users of parks and green spaces across the city.	A-Z of Parks
Enforcement Policy	Outlines the principles of enforcement that the council will follow and apply	Enforcement Policy
Southampton Tree Operational Risk Management System	Sets out how the Council surveys its tree stock based on a hazard rating for each tree, giving survey frequencies.	STORMS
Managing the Local Environment Policy	Waste management strategy including street cleansing and dog fouling	Available on request
Green Space Strategy 2008	Outlining how the Council will continue to provide good quality parks and open spaces into the future. 5 yearly Quality Audits	Green Space Strategy (southampton.gov.uk)
City Service – Open Spaces Service commitments	Provides operational quality standards for maintaining open space across the city.	Available on request
Infrastructure provision strategy	Outlines approach to a single brand across all Council owned parks and open spaces, including design principles for benches, bins, picnic benches, fencing, paths and signage	In development – individual design documents available on request.

Policy	Brief Description	Link
Green Grid – Natural Infrastructure Plan	Provides city wide approach to joining up green spaces with sustainable, active and green routes. Outlining future opportunities for habitat generation, tree planting and sustainable travel routes.	In development – expected by 2025 – Currently out to consultation Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy (southampton.gov.uk)
Dog Code	Gives advice and guidance on responsible use of parks and green spaces by dog owners and dog walkers.	Dog code (southampton.gov.uk)
Tree Species Selection Guide for Architects and Designers	Provides guidance on principles of species make up for tree planting schemes, with advice on percentages of native, evergreen and ornamental species to be used	Available on request
Biodiversity strategy	A strategy to enable the improvement of biodiversity across the city by understanding better what is already there and then updating the Biodiversity Action Plan to reflect appropriate actions to deliver increased biodiversity.	Currently out to consultation - Draft Biodiversity Strategy (southampton.gov.uk)

Overall Legislative context

Primary Legislation that impacts on the management of Southampton’s parks and open spaces include but are not limited to the following:

- Environment Act 2021
- Hampshire Act 1983
- Health And Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Localism Act 2011
- Local Government Act 2006
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- The Commons Act 2006
- The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Environment Protection Act 1990
- Pleasure ground Byelaws

Business Planning

Annual business plans are developed focussing on key priorities for the year ahead and identify any areas of savings, investment or income potential. Part of the business planning is to understand what we have and how it requires managing and Operations Managers are encouraged to draw up management plans for the different green spaces they maintain.

Finance

Budgets are set by the full Council in February of the previous financial year and become available on 1st April. Financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March. Budget accounts are closed down each year and started afresh with a new budget in April.

Overall the budget for maintaining parks and green spaces across the city is approximately £900,000, with circa maintenance 30,000 plots this gives a budget of £30 per plot.

There is a Capital Programme for parks and play areas, with 22 projects underway, which does roll over and currently stands at around £1 million.

Parks concessions and other income (including leases of land, horse grazing, moorings, roundabout advertising etc.) is used to provide a basic budget for parks repairs. This budget covers ongoing repairs to parks infrastructure such as benches, bins, fences, paths etc. The income achieved is circa £180,000 per year with expenditure around £50,000 higher than this leaving a gap which was being taken from commuted sums. The commuted sums have now depleted and we are currently looking at other sources of funding to bridge this gap. In the meantime we have had to put in place a policy whereby only the highest priority health and safety works can be undertaken. All other repairs are assessed and either the infrastructure is removed or taken out of public usage.

There are 10 mobile ice cream van plots, 3 café's and 3 kiosks available for the sale of light refreshments across the city's parks. More information on these can be found here [Refreshment concessions \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk/refreshment-concessions). One of the ice cream van plots and one of the kiosks are situated in Mayflower Park and these are let as leases rather than concession licences, they therefore run for a different period of time and are managed by the Council's Estate Surveyors & Valuers department. Otherwise all concession licences run for a period of 7 years with a break at 5 years. They have recently been tendered and are currently due to end in 2027.

Service Structure

The city's parks fall under the management of City Services which is made up of a number of departments including Waste Services, Fleet Transport, Parks & Street Cleansing and Commercial & Service Development.

Parks and Street Cleansing Team

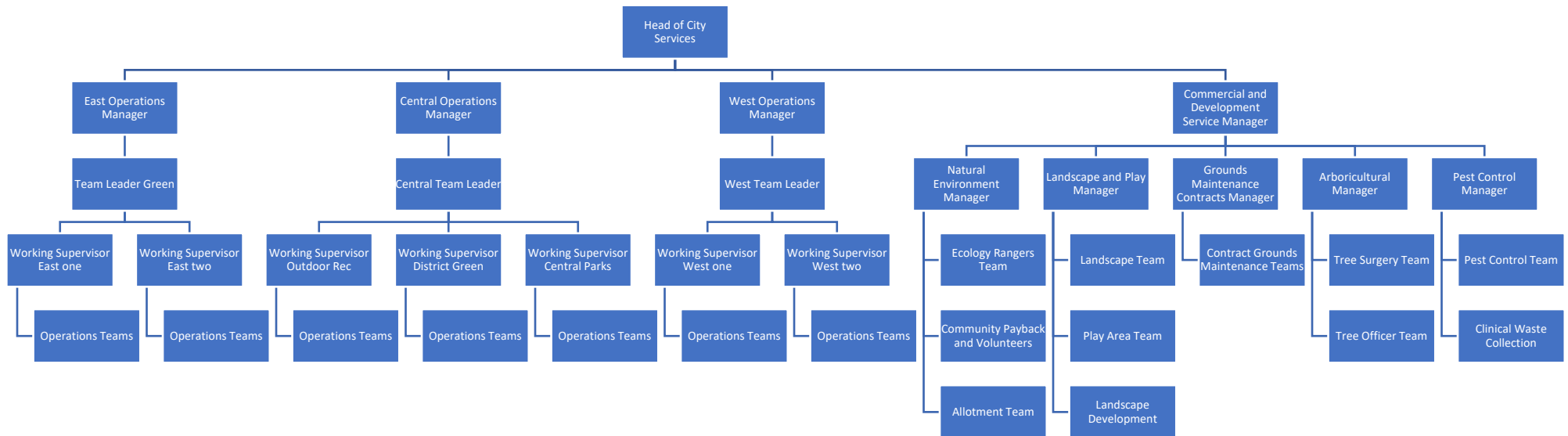
The Parks and Street Cleansing Teams are integrated and provide maintenance to all of the city's green spaces and public realm. The Parks Teams work to a set of service standards which are explained further down this document. The Parks Teams generally work Monday to Friday undertaking grounds maintenance operations. There are 83 staff supplying these services.

Southampton City Council provides a full 7 day week street cleansing service that includes routine and reactive street sweeping, litter picking, the removal of graffiti, dog fouling and fly-tipping, street litter bin provision, upkeep and emptying. The Council delivers services that benefit a range of stakeholders including Highways, Housing Management, Car Parking Operations, City Centre Management and Events. The Council currently employs circa 76 staff providing these services to standards published to customers through our website [Street cleaning \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk). The street cleansing service has consistently demonstrated top quartile results for composite national indicators relating to litter, graffiti and fly-posting over the past ten years. The service currently responds to over 600 cases of graffiti and over 3000 cases of fly-tipping each year.

Commercial and Service Development

The Commercial and Service Development Teams cover a range of services including Natural Environment/ecology, Landscaping, Play area inspection & maintenance, Landscape Design/development, Tree surveying & surgery, Commercial grounds maintenance, Pest Control & specialist cleansing, Parks Concessions and allotments. This team also develops policy, strategy and procedures for the protection, provision and management of the City's green spaces. There are 75 staff altogether providing the services above. Many of the Teams are self-funded through cost recovery and private contract works. The Landscaping Team also raise income to support the budgets within the Parks and Street Cleansing Team.

Organogram of Parks and Commercial/Development Services (Street Cleansing have been excluded to keep the diagram simple), the full team has around 158 staff with circa 83 in Parks and 75 within the Commercial and Development Team.



Health and Safety

The Council has a corporate Health and Safety team who ensure corporate policy and safe working practices are up to date and regularly reviewed for the whole organisation. Within the City Services Division there is a Safety Hub which provides the expertise for the specific range of operational works undertaken by those teams.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are written by the Safety Hub with the help of the operations staff (end users), the management team and the trade union representatives. Once the Risk Assessment has been written the district Managers, Schools Teams and Landscape are sent the RA's to review. Once reviewed edited and agreed they are signed off by all managers.

Risk Assessments are reviewed by the Safety Hub and Managers on a yearly basis, or when there has been an accident/incident or when there are new machines, substances, materials or procedures, which could lead to new hazards.

The Risk Assessments are printed off in colour by the Safety Hub and given to all District/Team managers to circulate to their operatives. The Risk Assessments can also be accessed by City Services personnel online.

Inspection Regimes

Parks Teams have a range of vehicles, equipment, plant and infrastructure items that require regular inspection. The following table summarises the current inspection regimes:

Item	How Often	Who By	Where/How Data Stored
Play	Daily	Litter Pickers	Defects only – paper record
Play	6 weekly	Play supervisor	Play Database
Play	Annually	Independent Play Inspector	Play Database
Benches , bins etc.	Up to 7 times per week when bins are emptied	Bin Operatives	Defects only - Paper records
Paths	Adhoc	Operatives on site	Defects only – paper record
Fences/walls	Adhoc	Operatives on site	Defects only – paper record
Open Water – life preservers	Site Specific	Operatives on site	Paper Record in form of a log
Concession Licences – food hygiene	Annually	Contracts Manager	Electronically
Trees	2 to 5 years dependant on hazard rating	Tree Officers	Asset Management System
Buildings	Annually	Property Services	Asset Management System

Item	How Often	Who By	Where/How Data Stored
Vehicles	Daily	Drivers	Defects only – paper record
Vehicles	6 monthly H&S checks – annual service/MOT	Transport Team	Asset Management System
Machinery/equipment	Daily	Operator	Defects only – paper record
Ride on Mowers	Daily	Operator	Defects only – paper record
Ride On Mowers	Annually	Transport Team	Asset Management System
Plant	Daily as used	Operator	Defects only – paper record
Plant	Annually	Transport Team	Asset management System

The East and West Parks and Street Cleansing Teams have employed two members of their team, each of which work a shift pattern that covers weekends, who are tasked with carrying out inspections of their parks and green spaces identifying any defects or health and safety issues. They also react to any reported defects/incidents. They are then empowered to carry out minor repairs as necessary to prevent ongoing dilapidation and reduce risk under H&S (this is to prevent “broken window” syndrome from occurring). Where they find defects that are too big for them to deal with on their own they are able to join up with the Landscaping Team who also have two members of staff who work the same hours and undertake any larger repairs. For substantial jobs all 6 of the workers can join together to undertake the works. In this way the ambition is to reduce the amount of dilapidations and ensure our parks and green spaces are safe and well maintained.

In addition to the repair operatives there is also an out of hours Duty Supervisor who are able to attend site during non-work hours. They will, wherever possible, repair and broken equipment/infrastructure they find, but if not able to then they will ensure any broken or dangerous equipment is disabled and taken out of public access.

Equipment Checks

All equipment that falls under hand arm vibration regulations is checked at point of purchase and then again annually by the Safety Hub. Records are kept electronically and used to assess the requirements for health monitoring.

Machinery which poses high levels of vibration to the user are replaced, unless the machine is particularly specialist (e.g. agri-baler Allen-scythe, scarifier), trigger times for all machinery are strictly adhered to.

All equipment that falls under noise regulations is checked at point of purchase and then again annually by the Safety Hub. Records are kept electronically and used to assess the requirements for health monitoring. Machinery which poses high levels of noise to the user are replaced, unless the machine is particularly specialist when appropriate noise reducing ear defenders are used as part of

the personal protective clothing, usage times for all machinery are strictly adhered to.

Buildings Inspections

It is the responsibility of the Asset Management service area to ensure robust delivery, monitoring and management of the council's statutory building compliance. The council carry out all statutory compliance to all buildings including parks and open spaces which will include gas, electric & water, in the most basic form each building will have its own list of compliance items Which is kept on the councils data bases, TF technology Forge.

The council's asbestos management system (database) provides up-to-date information on asbestos containing materials within council owned/occupied buildings. It also forms the basis of the council's asbestos management plan. The Council's Asbestos Team undertake routine inspections on asbestos risks and reviews of management plans at suitable intervals.

Southampton Tree Operations Risk Management System (STORMS) policy

The City's trees are primarily managed through the STORMS policy, a proactive inspection and management regime designed to meet the Duty of Care in relation to trees.

Southampton City Council (SCC) has fulfilled its duty of care by adopting STORMS as its management system. STORMS is a comprehensive and detailed system of proactive tree management which requires trained staff to implement. In its current form STORMS fully complies with current best practice as advocated by the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG). Whilst records provide the basis for safety management reviews and proof of reasonable tree care the NTSG state it is not necessary to record every tree inspected; however records of trees presenting a serious risk and requiring treatment are useful, as is a record of how they have been treated. Additionally, having robust, reliable and accurate records are important when dealing with insurance claims as they can support the local authority's defence.

Zoning should be used to define areas of land according to levels of use.

This practice prioritises the most used areas, and in doing so contributes to a cost-effective approach. The NTSG considers that using a minimum of two zones, high and low use, may be sufficient. Trees in areas of high public use require an inspection regime. It is reasonable to inspect trees within falling distance of other well-used areas, such as car parks, public gardens or public open spaces. Trees with structural faults, valued for their amenity or habitat that are retained in frequently-used areas may require specific assessment and management. Trees in well-used natural woodland or woodland surrounding housing or a public park may only warrant an informal ('walk-by') assessment to identify trees warranting closer inspection.

Trees in infrequently-used areas, where the risk is low, should receive no formal inspections or visual check. However, owners may need to respond to any reported problems.

SCC uses two key inspection types: ad hoc and routine.

Ad hoc inspections are in response to reports of concerns from residents or colleagues, or tree issues seem in passing by inspectors. This type of reactive

inspection can be carried out at any time on any tree regardless of any other inspection regime that tree is under.

Routine inspections are carried out at planned intervals unless exceptional circumstances apply – e.g. storm weather events which draw resources away temporarily.

An additional category is post-storm event inspections. This will be a visual drive-by inspection of the key arterial routes with a driver and inspector to check for any obvious evidence of any trees or branches that may have become dislodged in high wind or storm events. Amber or red storm events will be the trigger for such routes. All STORMS inspections are currently carried out by qualified and competent tree officers using handheld tablet PC's to record the inspection data. Currently Tree Team officers have a minimum NVQ 2 level qualification in arboriculture and/or the Lantra Professional Tree Inspection qualification. Independent of STORMS the tree officers are expected to carry out site visits in response to public enquiries & complaints.

Play Area Inspections

The governing body is ROSPA and the frequency and type of play area inspections is laid out in the EN1176 guidance/code of practice

The Play Maintenance Teams will regularly visit all play areas to inspect play surfaces and equipment, and ensure they are safe, hygienic and fit for use.

As part of the inspection any litter present will be removed but the team prioritises work with safety implications, for instance removing broken glass, clearing dog fouling, and ensuring the safety of damaged equipment. Any undesirable graffiti will be removed if possible, or reported for specialist treatment, with offensive or racist graffiti removed within one working day of report.

In the course of our routine maintenance visits, litter and debris will be removed from hard surfaces, with a thorough brush sweep of the entire area taking place on an at least monthly basis. SCC follow the following procedures:

Routine – Visual inspection – recommended max every 7 days – Our litter pickers, working for the area teams undertake these inspections daily and record their findings – this is managed by the East, West & Central operation managers

Operational – Detailed inspection – recommended max every 12 weeks – SCC RPI11 play inspectors undertake these inspections every 6 weeks, findings recorded on our asset management software – currently provided by PIC

Annual – Very detailed inspections, must be carried out by a Suitably qualified external inspector – recommended every 12 months – SCC have both Zurich and PIC undertake these inspections – PIC inspections recorded on our asset management software

Quality Audit

Park development needs and priorities are informed by user consultation and standards set out in Southampton's green space strategy. This promotes audits to be undertaken to assess the parks current status and to give a baseline for future improvement and required investment. A quality audit of all of Southampton's parks was undertaken by an independent consultant in autumn 2009 and then again internally in 2015 and 2022 (held up by the covid crisis).

The data collected was based on Green Flag criteria and indicates park strengths and where quality needs to be improved, it also identifies infrastructure and health and safety improvements required.

[Open Water Policy](#)

Southampton City Council have many open water sites across the city, there are 13 lakes & Ponds, 19 River & Tidal sites, these include Riverside Park and Mayflower Park, 9 public Slipways and 13 Greenways & Streams sites (some included tidal ditches).

The Council's approach to water safety is on the basis that people are responsible for their actions and safety where hazards are considered obvious. The Council will take measures to protect the public where indicated through risk assessment, where hazards are not obvious and/or where there is an increased chance of entry to deep and/or fast flowing water from an adjacent public facility such as a constructed path or viewing area. This may include the provision of barriers and other control measures as appropriate. The Council will ensure that all sites with open water have recorded risk assessments which are thereafter subject to review.

Open water risk assessments will be reviewed:

- if there has been a significant change
- if there is reason to suspect the risk assessment is no longer valid
- if there has been an incident/accident or near-miss
- at a frequency not exceeding four years

Health and Wellbeing

Southampton City Council is a key stakeholder in Southampton's Physical Activity Strategy "[We Can Be Active](#)", which has been adopted by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight region including Southampton and led by Energise Me (the local Active Partnership).

The Council takes part in the Physical Activity Alliance who aim to work collaboratively on the delivery of the HIOW We Can Be Active (Physical Activity) Strategy within Southampton to inspire and support active lifestyles so that all residents can be active in a way that suits them.

The stakeholders work together to enable the most inactive communities, groups and individuals who face the greatest barriers to move more and make being active a normal part of life. This includes women, children & young people, adults over 75+ years, people from Black and South Asian Ethnic groups, people living in the most deprived communities, people living with a long-term health condition or disability, and people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

The function of the group is to:

- Provide a multi-agency network that brings together expertise, knowledge, and capacity around physical activity from across the city
- review, monitor and report on progress towards the HIOW We Can Be Active Strategy for Southampton and the local action plan
- Develop collaborative working across agencies to deliver shared goals and actions from the HIOW We Can Be Active Strategy for Southampton
- work together to find solutions for complex local problems
- Gather and share local insight relating to physical activity to understand local issues and areas of improvement for Southampton
- Identify best practice for physical activity including breaking down barriers, increasing inclusivity, and reaching inactive groups
- support the development of a robust evidence-base across organisations and innovation projects
- Promote and share the opportunities for physical activity and movement in Southampton
- Champion physical activity and movement beyond traditional sport and exercise, encouraging people to be active in a way that suits them
- work collaboratively on joint funding applications



Each member to act as a representative for their own agency, being responsible for sharing good practice and information and embedding the HIOW We Can Be Active Strategy internally

The member organisations include:

Active Nation, Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Carers in Southampton, Energise Me, the HIOW Active Partnership, Go Southampton, Hampshire Football Association, My Journey, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration, No Limits, Rees Leisure, Saints Foundation, Sholing Nature Reserve, Social Care in Action (SCIA), Solent NHS Trust, Solent University, Southampton University, Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG), Southampton City Council, Public Health, Southampton Voluntary Services (SVS), Sustrans, Testlands, University Hospital Southampton (UHS), Wessex Academic Health Science Network (AHSN), Youth Options.

Security

[The Southampton Safe City Partnership](#)

The Safe City Partnership is a statutory partnership that brings together organisation's and commissioners with responsibility for keeping people safe. It is responsible for the delivery of the Safe City Strategy which will be refreshed in 2021 until 2024 using evidence from the Safe City Strategic Assessment, partner engagement and community feedback.

Any issues are raised at Safe City Partnership board meetings where intelligence is shared. This may include advice and delivery of target hardening or targeting hot spots for enforcement.

The public are encouraged to report issues either through the Council's web site [Report an issue in a park or play area \(southampton.gov.uk\)](#), or through the 101 service where appropriate. Using 101 enables the police to see trends and target areas where high numbers of reports are being made.

Our parks staff wear a clear orange uniform with Southampton City Council, City Services logo on it. All staff can be approached by the public and are happy to help with any issues.

City Welfare Wardens

City Welfare Wardens whose primary role is to deal with the street homeless, illegal encampments and associated anti-social behaviour within City regularly work with Parks teams to tackle issues within parks across Southampton.

Designing out ASB

When designing new spaces or redesigning existing spaces the council design team make designing out ASB a priority. Each space is different and the designers use the following proven, overarching principles to guide their designs.

Designs will include:

- Natural surveillance
- Safe pedestrian routes
- Mixed use areas

- Community involvement

CCTV

CCTV is deployed in areas where high crime rates are anticipated. Fortunately this excludes most of the parks in the City, which on the whole remain in a low category for crime. Where it is required CCTV surveillance is used to monitor and collect visual images for the purposes of helping reduce the fear of crime to provide a safe and secure environment for residents of, and visitors to, the areas covered by the scheme and to help deter and detect crime and provide evidential material for court proceedings. As a local authority, we only process data that is necessary for us to carry out our statutory functions., We hold this personal data securely and use it to Undertake health and safety case file audits/investigations and Criminal Proceedings. The use of personal data is compliant with the conditions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA2018). We may share personal information with external organisations, such as the Police, to prevent and detect crime, this would only occur when the law allows us to do so.

CCTV cameras were introduced into Houndwell and Hoglands Parks in 2021 as part of the Hampshire Constabulary Safer Streets Project.

Lighting

The vast majority of our parks and green spaces do not have lighting. Similar to CCTV, lit parks tend to be those which have historically had high footfall and higher crime rates, typically the City Centre Parks and the Southampton Common. Additional lights were installed throughout Central Parks as part of SSEs core investment programme c.2013, using 250 re-cycled, and refurbished Harland lighting columns.

The general policy now is to not light our parks as this is likely to bring the Council under challenge under other primary legislation such as the CROW Act where habitats will be disturbed by introduced lighting. We therefore encourage people not to use our parks after dark, providing safer walking routes around them using public highway pavements and footpaths which are all lit.

Dog Control



All Dog Control Orders under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 have now expired. The Council currently does not enforce dog control, but encourages good dog ownership through its Dogs are Brilliant campaign [Dog code \(southampton.gov.uk\)](http://southampton.gov.uk).

Signage is placed throughout our parks to encourage good dog control.

Where dog, or animal, fouling is reported the Parks and Street Cleansing Team will be notified and attend site within 5 days to remove it unless it is in a more hazardous location, i.e. Play Area, where it will get prioritised to 24 hours. Where hotspots are identified a campaign is raised and Officers will attend site to engage with and educate dog walkers to pick up after their dogs.

Enforcement Officers

Littering is a crime which reduces the quality of life for people who live, work or visit the city. In response to feedback from residents, visitors and businesses, Southampton City Council has appointed a team of environmental enforcement officers to reduce the amount of littering in the city. The environmental enforcement officers can issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to people who are found to be littering. A fixed penalty can be issued to any person who throws down, drops or otherwise deposits litter and leaves it. This could include:

- Throwing away food wrappers or uneaten food,
- Dropping chewing gum on the street,
- Discarding cigarette butts,
- Other forms of litter such as wrapping.

Fly Tipping

The Parks and Street Cleansing team currently deals with nearly 3,000 public reports of fly-tipping on public land each year, with over 75% of cases being actioned within one working day of report. This fly tipped waste is disposed of at the contracted disposal partners sites. The Parks and Street Cleansing Team work closely with specialist colleagues in the regulatory services team to ensure evidence found on site is investigated. They particularly focus on 'rogue trader' waste activities, and local 'hot spots' where fly-tipping frequently recurs. Fly-tipping is a criminal offence with significant penalties available to the courts when the perpetrators are identified. Everyone has a duty of care to ensure that anyone taking their waste away disposes of it correctly.

Southampton City Council has a team of 4 investigation officers, they may take enforcement action against anyone found to be fly tipping on public or private land if the offender can be identified. During 2021/2022 there were over 550 cases either being prosecuted, fined or issued with warning letters.

If a substantial quantity of waste is dumped, offenders could be prosecuted which could lead to a fine of up to £50,000, imprisonment and confiscation of the vehicle used to transport the waste in line with the duty of care regulations.

Waste Management

Litter

Southampton City Council provides over 1,400 litter bins on the streets and parks of the city for members of the public to use.

SCC are committed to moving to solar powered smart bins (Big Belly Bins), these are increased capacity bins and will enable SCC to remove approximately 500 'open bins'. This will enable SCC to improve round/collection/emptying efficiency and reduce vehicle and staff required to service them.

The Solar compactor bins are 'smart' bins, they compact the waste inside the bin and hold between 5 and 10 times the amount of waste as a standard litter bin. There are Circa 200 solar bins already across the city. They are GPS tagged and fill level monitored and automatically create efficient collection rounds by reducing the need to send an operative out to manually check levels of litter in them. They prevent scavengers, animals and rodents from entering the bins and pulling litter out and prevent wind-blown litter.

Solar bins remove the need for physical checks reduces the number of empties, reduces rodent activity, removes the need for as many staff to do this function. 1 solar bin in an area facilitates the removal of at least 5 of our current standard litter bins.

How and what we recycle

Green waste in Southampton City Council is reused, recycled or composted, the recycle rate averages at 28%, we also recycle aluminium cans, plastic bottles, green waste, food tins, mixed glass, paper & cardboard, the figure includes waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting, We recycle, compost or reuse around 27,000 tonnes of waste per year.

What do we do with green waste

All arisings from horticultural works, including; hedge cuttings, shrub pruning, smaller branches, weeds and grass cuttings from cut and collect sites, are taken back to one of our two depots for storage, from there they are collected by a waste collection contractor and taken to approved disposal sites. The current contractor has a site in Petersfield where they take all the green waste back to their yard, where they have a bespoke EA permit for composting. All the green waste gets shredded then placed in windrows. These are monitored daily and turned weekly. After 8 weeks the windrows are screened, and the resulting compost is either sold or used on their fields as soil conditioner. As they have PAS100 status this changes the resulting compost from a waste to a product, which means it is not subject to waste restrictions when moving. Annually the contractors collect around 850 tonnes of green waste which equates to around 400 tonnes of compost being produced from Southampton. The resulting compost is offered back to Southampton at £15 per tonne with no haulage costs.

At the majority of our mowed amenity grass sites fly-cutting is undertaken. Around eight cuts are undertaken each year (weather permitting) which enables grass cuttings to be left in place, the cuttings quickly break down and recycle their nutrients back into the ground. This encourages earthworms and microorganisms that break them down. Leaving the grass clippings on the ground flushes nitrogen back into the soil. Nitrogen encourages green growth, which makes it the most important nutrient for grass. Grass clippings contain about 4 percent nitrogen, and leaving clippings where they lie after mowing can feed the grass with 25 percent of its annual nitrogen needs. This reduces the amount of nitrogen fertilizer required. Clippings can also act as a natural mulch, that's not too thick, which helps conserve soil moisture.

Arisings from tree works are treated in different ways. Large branches and tree trunks are either left in situ for wildlife value, at a size where they are not easily rollable, or removed to the depot for milling where they are turned into rustic seats and informal play equipment. When left on site they are stacked into eco-piles and left to rot down slowly. Where appropriate deadwood, broken branches and dead standing trees are left in situ to provide habitats. Wood not suitable for the mill is stock piled and once an artic lorry load is accumulated a local company either comes and chips it and removes it or will remove it to their own depot and chip it there.

Small branches (under 200mm diameter) are processed through a woodchipper. The chippings are either sprayed back into the undergrowth to break down naturally or taken to the depot for storage. Stored chippings are allowed to compost and some are used to mulch shrub beds within

Southampton Schools and green spaces. When an artic lorry load of chippings has been accumulated it is collected by a local company. Dependant on the market the receipt for this ranges from free removal to £10 per tonne. The market is very turbulent dependant on a range of factors, weather, availability, numbers of tree surgery companies etc.

As the chip is all low grade it tends to be used to fuel boilers which in turn dry higher quality chip and bark, making them suitable for equestrian and more refined boiler usage.

Sawmill

The Council owns a Logosol sawmill. This is used to mill logs into planks, benches and informal play items.

We have drawn up a portfolio of play equipment which can be produced and will be rolling this out in spaces where play can enhance the site, but a formal play area is not required.



Natural Play Equipment
 Citywide Landscape Strategy
 SNo. Proposals
 DATE: 13/10/2022
 DEPT: Landscape Proposals
 REF: 404
"In house skills can modify ideas with traditional play materials to enhance enjoyment"



SCC | City Services | Landscape Development



Natural Play Equipment
 Citywide Landscape Strategy
 4no. Proposals
"With limitless options our team can produce and install ideas as required around the city"



SCC | City Services | Landscape Development

Dead Animals

Dead animals are collected and taken to a local vet for incineration unless there is a legal requirement or guidance to do something different. For example, during bird flu dead birds were recorded and reported to DEFRA, as per their guidance, who arranged collection.

Maintenance

Mowing regimes

Most of Southampton's grass plots and verges are cut by one of five mobile teams; two working on grass cutting programmes to the east of the River Itchen, one in the central district (between the Itchen and Hill Lane) and two to the west. Each team's programme should take no more than 4 weeks to complete and is divided into numbered mowing areas, cut in sequence from 1 – 7. No mowing area should take more than four days to complete, weather permitting. This provides around 8 cuts per year for amenity/leisure grass plots.

SCC aim to provide clean and tidy green spaces, and to achieve this we litter pick the site before cutting and after each grass cutting visit we will leave an area:-

- With **all** grass cut to an even length (except following bulb flowering when we leave clumps for around 6 weeks before cutting)
- Free of shredded litter
- With paths and surrounding areas free of cuttings
- With grass around trees, poles and other obstructions evenly trimmed (this 'follow up' work is completed by a second team and will be completed within 24 hours of the initial cut).

Some areas are maintained to promote a more natural wildlife habitat. We continue to work with residents to develop new sites to encourage biodiversity. Where grass is being managed for meadow habitat programmes will typically reduce to one or two cuts per year. This provides good habitat for wildflowers, bees, and other insects can thrive within the urban landscape. It does require a cut and collect, and the team has a specialist ride on mower with a screw collector, rather than a vacuum collector to enable seed to drop back onto the ground.

Shrub and Hedge Pruning regimes.

We aim to keep all of the shrub beds tidy and weed free. Shrubs should be pruned to stop them obstructing paths, roads or signs but at the same time making sure the plant can flower at the right time. We aim to carry out monthly visits to our shrub beds and will do what is needed at that visit to keep the beds up to standard.

Following visits beds should meet the following standards:-

- No more than 5% weed cover
- No vegetation causing an obstruction
- Bed tidy and litter free
- Grass edges trimmed.

We work with the local community to ensure shrub beds are maintained in such a way that they contribute to people's feelings of security in their neighbourhood, and do not provide a shelter for criminal or anti-social behaviour.

Shrubs and hedges provide a valuable 'breathing space' for nature in the urban landscape. Our work is therefore carried out with care and consideration for the welfare of the wildlife these features might support, for instance by pruning to

maximise attractive and nutritious seasonal flowers and berries and taking care not to disturb nesting birds. Leaves and leaf mould provide a valuable habitat for insect life and will only be removed if contaminated with litter. Where possible, shrub prunings are chipped directly back into the bed to form a mulch against weeds, retain moisture, and enrich the soil.

We aim to keep all of the hedges tidily trimmed but plan our work to make sure that we cause the minimum disturbance to nesting birds and other wildlife. We visit hedges as often as is necessary to meet health and safety standards, how often and when we cut depends on the species of plant.

Following visits, hedges should meet the following standards:-

- Weed and litter free at the base of the hedge
- The sides and top of the hedge tidily trimmed to prevent obstruction, all trimmings removed from the area, or chipped back onto hedge base to suppress weeds, retain moisture, and enrich the soil
- Hedge cut with the right equipment to prevent damage to larger leafed plants.

Hedges serve a number of very useful purposes within the local landscape. For example, they can provide natural boundaries or barriers, attractive visual features, visual or acoustic screens from eyesores and traffic noise, pollutant sequestration contributing to cleaner air and refuges and food sources for wildlife. We will work with the local community to ensure hedges are maintained at a height and size appropriate to their primary purpose at each particular location.

Tree Pruning

The council has its own in house tree surgery team who carry out all reasonable pruning works where there is a safety concern. Safety concerns include:

- Large sections of deadwood (branches or whole trees) present over a garden or other target area. 'Large' is defined as over 50mm average in diameter and over 50cms in length, or large enough to cause harm to a person, or dent a car roof if it were to fall. Most deadwood will crumble away and become lighter as it is degraded by bugs and fungi that colonise it, but sometimes several sections form on a maturing tree and pose an unacceptable threat to persons or property. Small, twiggy shedding is often a natural, seasonal feature of some species such as birch and does not constitute a hazard.
- Trees that are clearly declining in health to a point of no return
- Uprooted or newly leaning trees - perhaps as a result of extreme weather or vehicle impact - may pose a threat. Trees growing towards light or suppressed by larger trees may lean naturally and are not necessarily dangerous.
- Dead trees where there is a target below, such as a footpath, garden or play area. Dead trees in the centres of woodlands or in very low-use areas are often retained for their habitat value and low risk potential.
- Branches low over paths and driveways.

We will also prune where there is a foreseeable risk of direct damage being caused by the tree in the near future (the same year) or where branches or stems are actually in contact with structures such as a roof, windows, gutters, sheds, fences or other built, permanent features.

The council has a [pollarding and epicormic removal schedule](#) for several trees across the city, including some of the parks.

The Tree Surgery Team is currently working towards Arboricultural Association Approved contractor status.

Planting

Bedding has reduced considerably over the past 15 years with only Mayfield, Queens and Central Parks still hosting seasonal flower beds up to Summer 2024. The Council has recently taken the decision that bedding is no longer sustainable and cannot continue to use revenue to support it. Sponsorship has been sort but with little



interest. We are therefore moving over to a display of bulbs growing through a wildflower meadow mix. This will provide an interesting display with some longevity of season and still be a nod to the historic flower beds. The move to the new system will provide savings and reduce maintenance.

Trees and shrubs - Council Policy dictates that for every tree felled in the city they must be replaced in the following planting season. The tree planting programme therefore develops across the year with suitable sites identified from March onwards, with appropriate trees reserved throughout the year. Trees are ordered in September/October and arrive at the depot in November. Tree planting commences immediately and runs on to March with the majority of trees being planted before Christmas.

The Council is keen to primarily encourage planting of native trees as they offer the widest support for native wildlife which has evolved alongside them. It also emphasises Southampton's wider sense of place. With the South Downs to the east and the New Forest to the West. At least 50% of the trees in any scheme should be native.

All flowering trees and shrubs are specified with single flowers to improve their wildlife value by enabling insect pollinators and nectar feeders to use them. Where specific development projects are identified, shrub beds are designed and delivered over the planting season (November to March) in order to aid establishment and reduce the need for watering. Where shrubs die, are vandalised or removed from parks shrub beds they are replaced during the next planting season where funds allow.

Weed Control

Wherever possible we design out the need for herbicide use. All new areas of hard surfacing are designed to have continuous cover, such as tarmac, or where paving is specified it is laid with grouted joints to reduce the opportunity for weeds to grow. New shrub beds are designed to be planted through weed suppressant membrane. Where funding allows wildflower is laid using turf rolls which reduce incursion of pernicious weeds such as dock and thistle.

Trials have been undertaken using hot foam, electric shock, and steam, none of these have proven to be effective or any more environmentally friendly.

Street Cleansing mechanical sweepers have been fitted with weed removal brushes and these can be use in the parks where space allows.

Herbicides are only used where necessary in places such as under benches situated on historic surfacing that allows weeds to grow and in areas which are difficult to hand weed such as adjacent to walls or fences or in deep fissures in surfacing. When required as part of habitat management glyphosate plugs are used to kill off/stop regrowth of unwanted tree stumps. Glyphosate plugs and spray are also used to control Japanese knotweed. Where spray is used controlled droplet applicator lances are used to minimise the amount of herbicide applied and reduce drift.

Where weeds are adjacent to a water source, such as a river or stream, or a sensitive area for wildlife no spray herbicides are used. No herbicide is used in line marking paint for any of the outdoor recreation provided.

Peat use

Peat use is kept to a minimum and is only present in the bedding plants as delivered by the supplier. Wherever possible when new shrubs and trees are bought for the parks are sourced to be supplied peat free but ultimately this is tied to the availability of peat free compost in the marketplace. With the advent of the Council no longer requiring bedding plants peat use will decrease to practically zero levels. When new shrubs and herbaceous plants are procured SCC endeavour to source these peat free. However, peat-free market availability remains limited.

Litter collection

Litter is picked from site by hand during the bin emptying run. It is also picked before and after each grass mowing operation. The Service promotes a one council approach so where litter is found, all staff are encouraged to pick up the litter and deposit it in a nearby bin.

Graffiti removal

The Council has a proactive approach to the removal of graffiti and fly posters on land it manages. The Street Cleansing operatives have equipment that enables them to remove graffiti and fly posters at short notice. Within the Central District there is also the specialist Go Southampton Bid Team, The Reactive Team (early shift) and citywide Task Team (late shift) ready to respond to graffiti problems, prioritising 'hate-crime' or offensive material. Protective coatings are applied to features regularly targeted, facilitating rapid removal and training and equipment can be issued to any partner organisations and volunteers to enable them to tackle graffiti quickly, safely and effectively. Any offensive material is removed within 24 hours of being reported.

We have the most up-to-date equipment and materials to remove graffiti effectively and with minimum impact on the environment.

Our area-based street cleansing teams are also equipped with environmentally friendly graffiti wipes to deal with small-scale graffiti they find while carrying out their routine work. Graffiti wipes are also used by the council's Neighbourhood Wardens to deal with easily removable graffiti they come across during their patrols.

Graffiti is a criminal offence punishable with possible imprisonment and fines that reflect the real cost of the damage caused and can run into thousands of pounds. In the event of prosecution, serial 'taggers' can be fined a sum that takes into account all incidences for which they are proven responsible, not just the offence for which they were initially apprehended.

We always specify signage which has a protective finish which is resistant to graffiti removal cleaning products without defacing the sign. Where possible in sites especially vulnerable to graffiti, we commission street art, which can have controlled content and which tend to be respected and rarely drawn over.

Sustainability

Vehicle and equipment usage

The [Carbon Reduction Policy](#) outlines the Council's commitment to meet the Government's target to reduce CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050. It also delivers against many of the Sustainability Principles that the Council have adopted. We want to be Carbon Neutral by 2030. We will make the best use of our resources and reduce our energy consumption. We will use energy that is generated from renewable sources and support the generation of sustainable energy that does not compromise local air quality.

By Applying the energy hierarchy which sets the direction for sustainable energy use within the Council and in priority order, we will strive to:

- Eliminate or reduce the need for energy,
- Maximise the efficiency of the remaining energy uses,
- Supply energy from renewable sources where feasible.

The Council will Establish procedures for efficient operation of plant and equipment and Improve performance of plant and equipment already in use within the Council to Include life cycle (energy & maintenance) costs into the decision making process when procuring new plant and projects. 90% of our council fleet will be zero-emission by 2030. SCC will develop an Alternative Fuels Plan to pursue low emission options for SCC heavy fleet vehicles and support other city stakeholders.

The Parks and street Cleansing employ a number of battery operated vehicles and equipment, including mechanical sweepers, leaf blowers, hedge cutters, chainsaws and strimmers. Replacing existing petrol/diesel operated machinery as it comes to the end of its safe useful life. However, there are a number of challenges relating to electrification of the fleet and equipment and these include:

- Cost of capital outlay to buy EV vehicles which are substantially more expensive than equivalent diesel
- The travel range of vehicles is still much smaller than diesel equivalents.
- The ability to tow trailers is often not available on electric vehicles
- The electric hand tools have been found to be under powered, for example when chain-sawing logs.
- Batteries in hand tools last a comparatively short time (as little as two hours in a day) and do not have a quick recharge so are not equivalent to refuelling - spare batteries are supplied to help

- The work depots will require upgrading as they currently do not have enough electricity feeding to them to enable all vehicles and equipment to be recharged.

The City Service team are working through the challenges and some are being resolved by industry who recognise the need for longer usage time for example. Other issues such as upgrades to the depots will only be resolved with funding input and this will need to be identified for the Council to meet its goals.

Solar Power

The Council is committed to installing solar on any appropriate building it owns. Council depots will therefore receive solar panels over the coming years to increase the use of sustainable energy.

Lighting in parks

Where lighting is provided in parks it is done so through the Councils PFI with Enerveo, who maintain and repair this infrastructure. Wherever possible and safe lighting is provided at its lowest lumens to ensure minimum energy is used on it. Light levels are also adjusted to ensure any CCTV visibility is maximised.

Baffles are fitted to lighting in parks to reduce light spill onto the green space behind the paths to enable use by wildlife. There are also lighting gaps on paths in some parks to enable nocturnal wildlife to travel across paths without entering a light pool.

Irrigation

All irrigation has ceased except for exceptional circumstances for Seasonal Bedding, newly planted beds and the Cricket Squares in extreme long hot dry spells. Automated irrigation is no longer used. There is also a focus on using varieties of plants that require less watering.

SUDs

Parks provide sustainable urban drainage for a number of housing areas in Southampton helping to alleviate flash flooding caused by both surface water and groundwater. Helping to the city to adapt to and mitigate the ongoing consequences of climate change.

New green spaces or areas within existing green space are designed following the principles set out in the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs guide The SuDS Manual. This ensures that wherever possible the land continues to provide important flood alleviation as part of the overall natural drainage system for the city.

Habitats and Wildlife

Management of ecologically important flora and fauna across the city is undertaken following the principle that by ensuring habitats are optimally maintained that the associated species will inhabit them. The advent of the new Ranger Team has meant that the Council is embarking on a number of surveys across the city to identify what species we already have and how this is indicating what condition our habitats are currently in. Action plans for city wide biodiversity improvement will be drawn up and integrated into Parks management of individual green spaces.

The Council is currently renewing its grant aid under the Countryside Stewardship higher tier scheme. This will ensure that important habitats across the city are funded into the future and therefore able to be maintained in good condition.

Southampton is one of the members of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) who are a partnership of twelve local authorities around the Solent that aim to improve the environmental, cultural and economic performance of the South Hampshire area. The partnership has been in place since 2003 and has helped to develop green infrastructure plans for the Solent region. Most recently they have been instrumental in the new Bird Aware Solent team [Bird Aware Solent - Partnership for South Hampshire \(push.gov.uk\)](https://www.push.gov.uk) who raise awareness of the ducks, geese and wading birds that spend the winter on our special coastline.

The Council works closely with the Environment Agency on a number of projects including: Pond/lake improvements across the city and the improvement of the River Itchen, particularly the fresh water SSSI chalk stream running through Riverside Park from Woodmill. Rid licence funding is being used to improve fishing swims for local anglers.

Landscape Management

Existing landscapes are managed as appropriate to their purpose, topography and historic use. The Landscape Design Team work sympathetically with existing landscape features and look to incorporate these into any new designs. Where featureless sites exist we look to develop the landscape structurally to

provide interest and aesthetically pleasing green spaces. We often use landscape structure to provide improved ecosystem services and get more out of the space than flat mown grass.

Heritage

Southampton has a number of parks which specifically are identified as heritage sites, it also has many more sites that are either scheduled monuments themselves or have scheduled monuments within them.

[Parks and gardens of special historic interest \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk)

The Culture and Tourism Team are responsible for the upkeep of the various monuments and commemorations across the city. They are currently consulting on the draft Memorials Policy [Memorials Policy \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk). The policy focuses on the creation, installation, management and maintenance of memorials on land owned by Southampton City Council.

The aim of the policy, and the procedures that accompany it, is for Southampton to have a fair, transparent and systematic approach to making informed decisions:

- (1) about proposals for new memorials and their long-term management and maintenance
- (2) for the proposed removal or replacement of existing memorials and potential additions to provide more contextual interpretation
- (3) that will enable communities and stakeholders to be involved and engaged in the process of co-creating Southampton's public spaces to create a greater sense of pride, belonging, identity and shape the look, feel and experience of the city

This policy has been developed in response to:

- (1) the rising number of requests to different parts of the Council for monuments, memorials, public art and other markers
- (2) the government's 2021 legislative requirement that historic monuments should be 'retained and explained'
- (3) the Council's Full Council Motion in March 2021 that committed to 'never arbitrarily extract or displace any monument, memorial or statue and to subject the decision to appropriate levels of resident consultation'

Friends and Volunteers

We encourage and support voluntary park friends groups that are keen to be involved in the maintenance and development of their local park.

All groups play an important role in managing and developing the parks, including getting funding to improve park facilities. Most groups start with like-minded people who want to get more involved in improving their local environment.

Volunteers make an important contribution to keeping our parks and open spaces green and tidy for everyone to enjoy.

Our volunteer programme aims to increase the ways in which people can get involved and contribute to maintaining and improving our green open spaces as well as supporting local communities. Volunteering also helps people gain skills and increase confidence.

We supply or loan equipment and offer training or advice in areas like managing health and safety or safe use of tools as well as guidance in conservation management and undertaking wildlife surveys.

[Volunteering in our Parks \(southampton.gov.uk\)](https://www.southampton.gov.uk)

The Friends and Volunteers are supported by the Ranger Team who work with residents and interested parks user on a number of ecologically related surveys and tasks. The Rangers are split into three teams of two across the city and work closely with the Operations Teams to ensure that all volunteer works are appropriate and meeting management aims.

There are a number of city wide groups interested in parks and green spaces, one of these is the Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society ([SCAPPS](#)). The Society brings together a cross section of citizens committed to the well-being of our City's green public spaces. They lobby for park improvement and support good green space management across the city.

Others include City of Southampton Society ([COSS](#)), The Hampshire Garden Trust ([HGT](#)) and the Open Spaces Society ([OSS](#))

Promotion of the Parks

Events

From small scale community events, promotional and brand experiences to large one-off national and international events, Southampton really is the ideal city for events and activities. The city boasts many parks and green spaces and some of these are located right in the heart of the city centre.

The Council Events Team sit in the Culture and Tourism Division and are responsible for the:

- Organisation of large-scale city events
- Co-ordination and monitoring of events on council land and property
- Co-ordination of promotional space including the Bargate and Guildhall Square
- Co-ordination of the city centre markets

They are also the first point of contact for filming requests and permissions and keeping everyone up to date with our vibrant events calendar.

Further information on how the events work can be found here:

[Information For Event Organisers | Visit Southampton](#)

We are keen to encourage film and television companies to film in the city and will provide help and assistance where possible. Some Southampton locations that you are interested in using may belong to the council, be part of the highway or privately owned. The events team can advise on possible suitable locations, liaise with other council departments on your behalf and pass on contacts of some private locations to assist in the smooth organisation of your shoot. Find out more about [Filming in Southampton | Visit Southampton](#)

The Parks Teams are working with the Events Team to reduce the impact of events in parks. There is a balance to be met as events can cause more damage both physically and reputationally than the benefit they provide to getting people active in the parks. Currently ongoing use of parks space is causing excessive compaction of the ground which is leading to increased flooding, poor health of trees and worn areas of grass which are slow to recover.

There is a proposal that where parks are used throughout the year for events that in autumn they are de-compacted using a compressed air de-compactor. This is currently under consideration as it will need to be funded. The Events Team are considering if a proportioned fee to event's organisers would be feasible.

Notice boards

Notice boards can be a useful marketing tool, but can also provide a poor experience of the park if they are not kept up to date, for this reason they are only being installed where there is an active friends of group or alternatively the Ranger Team has agreed to maintain the contents posted in them. By doing this we are able to provide current news on the Friends, events and activities.

Social Media

The Council encourages contact through social media and runs several platforms to enable customers to post their enquiries or comments. There are simple rules for the use of social media by the public and these can be found here:

[Social media house rules \(southampton.gov.uk\)](#)

Southampton has a dedicated [Play Area Facebook](#) page, where we post up to date consultations and updates to play area across the city.

Otherwise we use the [Council's Facebook](#) page to promote the parks and all the benefits they provide to the city.

Council Communications Team

The Council's communications are coordinated through a dedicated Communications Team. Within that Team there are a number of Officers who work closely with the Parks Team to ensure that regular messages, notifications and engagements are put out to the public. This is done through a number of avenues including social media, letter drops and on site activities.

Wherever possible we celebrate successes and cover major national initiatives such as Tree Week and Love Parks week.

The aim of our communications are always to keep people informed and enable communities and individuals to get involved in their local green spaces.

Getting People Involved

The Council Natural Environment Ranger Team take the lead with regards to community engagement within green spaces. They work with a number of other Council departments including Housing, Education, Adult Social Care and Public Health to provide a programme of activities and tasks for volunteers. They work closely with the Parks Operations Managers and Ops Teams to ensure that a sympathetic and contiguous approach is undertaken that compliments the works already being done by the in-house teams.

Getting to and around our parks

Some of our parks do have dedicated free to use car parking, however, the Council encourages more sustainable travel with our partners My Journey [Home | My Journey Southampton](#). This site provides a range of journey planners and news about how to walk, ride and use public transport to traverse the city. There are a number of suggested routes that take in our larger parks and the journey planner enables people to find their way to our less well known spaces.

Once at a park or green space we try, wherever reasonably possible to ensure a wider equality of access as we are able. We are working through our spaces to assess those that require better access and where this is not achievable for a whole site, focusing on making sure there are places within that site that people can get to and enjoy the green space.