

Meeting:	Environment and Economy Sub-Committee
Date:	9 March 2006
Subject:	Public Green Spaces Review – Report and Recommendations
Responsible Officer:	Director of People, Policy and Performance
Contact Officer:	Ed Hammond (x5205)
Portfolio Holder:	Environment and Transport Education and Lifelong Learning
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

1. That Members agree the report and recommendations of the Public Green Spaces Review Group.
2. That the report and recommendations be referred to Cabinet.
3. That the plans for future monitoring of these recommendations set out in sections 2.5 – 2.7 be approved.

Reason for report

The Sub-Committee established the Public Green Spaces Review Group at the meeting on 26 September. The Review Group has now finished gathering evidence and is reporting its findings back to the Sub-Committee.

Benefits

The recommendations in the report will contribute to the development of policy in respect of parks, the green belt and the public realm in Harrow.

Cost of Proposals

There is no specific cost associated with the agreement to the content of the scrutiny review report.

The cost of actions taken as a result of the report's recommendations being made will be borne by the service as appropriate; should additional funding be required Member approval will be sought as necessary and in the usual way.

Risks

That the report's recommendations will not be supported or implemented by Cabinet.

That future monitoring of the implementation of the report's recommendations is ineffective.

Implications if recommendations rejected

1. The report's recommendations could not be referred to Cabinet in advance of the local elections in May; the consequent delay might affect the recommendations' relevance to current service provision.
2. Scrutiny would be unable to effectively feed in to an important area of council policy development.

Section 2: Report

Brief History

- 2.1 At its meeting on 10 March 2005 the Environment and Economy Sub-Committee considered its work programme for the coming year and agreed to conduct a review into "Parks and Gardens Maintenance".
- 2.2 At a subsequent meeting on 8 June 2005, the sub-committee agreed the membership and broad focus of the review group, and further agreed that the scope should be submitted to September's meeting of the Sub-Committee for formal approval.

- 2.3 The scope of the review was agreed by the Sub-Committee at the last meeting on 26 September.
- 2.4 The review group spent around four months gathering evidence (having started in early September with some general, preliminary work). It was agreed when the review was commissioned that recommendations would be reported back to the Sub-Committee at this meeting.

Future monitoring arrangements

- 2.5 The following is presented as an option for monitoring the implementation of the report's recommendations.
- 2.6 In previous reviews, a brief update is received six months after completion of the review, with a full update being received six months later. It is recommended that a similar process be adopted. However, given that many of the review's recommendations are relatively long-term (in particular the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan), members of the review group thought it appropriate that a two-year cycle (with updates at six months, one year and two years) be adopted.
- 2.7 It is also recommended that the sub-committee nominate a member who will have specific responsibility for ongoing monitoring of the review. Such a member would be able to liaise with officers in preparing for updates and identifying which recommendations had been implemented effectively.

Budget

- 2.8 No additional money has been spent on the review itself since the Sub-Committee was presented with a progress report, so the sub-total printed below are identical to those received by the Sub-Committee in November. The full total includes money spent on the design and printing of the final report.

Room bookings & refreshments	£100
Minibus hire (external parks visit)	£94.50
Minibus hire (Harrow parks visit)	£67.50
Attendance of witness from London Play, 2 November	£50
SUB-TOTAL	£312

Final report (design)
Final report (printing)

TOTAL

Options considered

Not applicable to this report.

Consultation

Not applicable to this report.

Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications. Decision on the implementation of the report's recommendations rests with Cabinet.

Where financial implications are attached to recommended actions in the report, this is pointed out and the issues examined.

Legal Implications

Planning Policy Guidance 9 now requires Local Authorities to actively promote biodiversity when considering planning proposals. This has been considered as part of the "biodiversity" theme of the review.

Equalities Impact

None relevant to this update.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act implications

The review has considered security issues in parks, which will assist the Council in meeting its obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Report of the Review of Public Green Spaces (with appendices)