



## PLACES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

**Subject Heading:**

Green Flag Award

**SLT Lead:**

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**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

***The Havering Vision***

*Place Outcome – Havering is a Green Borough*

- *Investing in our parks*
- *Number of parks with Green Flags*

### SUMMARY

*This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information on the Green Flag award which the Parks team apply for annually.*

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

### REPORT DETAIL

#### **Parks – Green Flag Award**

##### **1. Background**

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

## Purpose & aims

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
- To establish standards of good management.
- To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.
- To recognise and reward the hard work of staff and volunteers.

## 2. Havering's Award Winning Sites

Havering achieved the first two awards in 2007 (Upminster and Bedfords) and by 2020 the number of flags reached 16 with Hornchurch Country Park and Spring Farm the latest awards. There is a good coverage across the borough with most areas having at least one Green Flag park (see attached plan).

The most recent awards were made in July this year when all 16 sites were successful.

Sites have been submitted for the award based on its existing and potential standards, as well as the facilities and type of space it is. Some have needed more investment than others to bring the standards up to meet the criteria and this has depended on the Council's priorities.

It is also a condition of the Heritage Lottery Fund to ensure that any park they provide funding for achieves the award. Hence the applications for Raphael Park and Langtons Gardens after their restorations.

Havering has 100 parks and green spaces and not all of them can realistically achieve the required standards. Many sites are intrinsically unsuitable as they may be good quality local spaces but would not meet the required criteria to achieve the award.

It is unlikely that there are more sites that would be suitable for a new application and they would require both additional capital and revenue investment.

## 3. Judging Process

Applications are required annually and this comprises of a desktop assessment using the park's Management Plan and then a site inspection. The total fee for the Green Flag Award process for 2023/24 was £6,069.

For all of our sites given they are existing award winners, a formal site inspection is only required every other year. A mystery shop takes place in-between which does not affect the result but depending on the condition of the park it can influence the formal inspection the following year.

In Havering the following parks are formally judged/mystery shopped in alternative years.

Hornchurch Country Park  
Spring Farm Park  
Langtons Gardens  
Raphael Park  
Central Park  
Rise Park  
Harold Wood Park  
Cottons Park  
Upminster Park  
Bedfords Park

Harrow Lodge Park  
Haynes Park  
St Andrews Park  
Lawns Park  
Hylands Park  
Lodge Farm Park

#### **4. Feedback**

As part of the award each park receives a feedback report. There are two types depending on whether the park has been formally judged or mystery shopped. The former is more detailed with more criteria and the latter uses a traffic light system to check the condition of the park with reduced criteria and some comments.

Flag judges are selected based on their skills and experience and are usually existing or ex-green space professionals. Therefore, the comments and recommendations are valued and mostly practical.

This is a useful process each year which helps us update the Management Plans and then in turn some improvements in the parks.

It may not be feasible for all the judge's recommendations to be considered or indeed feasible for our parks. However it is very worthwhile getting a different perspective and the views of other professionals from not just within the UK but sometimes around the world (Green Flag is global) on what they think we can do to improve the management of our parks.

In previous years, we have implemented new planting schemes and installed different items of play equipment based on previous feedback. Several years ago a Dutch judge recommended new callisthenics equipment that we later used in some parks. This year one of the recommendations from a judge was that we look at alternative ways of surfacing around signage and other infrastructure to reduce maintenance and improve the finish.

Feedback is received from the formally judged sites after the awards are announced in July/August and then after the mystery shops in November. Officers review the comments and recommendations that will then be used as part of the Management Plan revisions during the winter months.

## **Appendix**

### **Green Flag Judging criteria**

#### Desk assessment

1. Presentation
2. Health, safety and security
3. Maintenance of equipment, buildings and landscapes
4. Litter, cleanliness and vandalism
5. Environmental management
6. Biodiversity, landscape and heritage
7. Community involvement
8. Marketing and communication
9. Overall management

#### Field assessment

1. **A welcoming place**- welcome, good and safe access, signage, equal access for all
2. **Health, safety and security**- appropriate level of quality facilities and activities, safe equipment and facilities, personal security, control of dogs/dog fouling
3. **Well maintained and clean**- Litter and waste management, horticultural maintenance, Arboricultural maintenance, building and infrastructure maintenance, equipment maintenance
4. **Environmental Management** – managing environmental impact, waste minimisation, chemical use, peat use, climate change adaptation strategies
5. **Biodiversity, landscape and heritage**- Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora, conservation of landscape features, conservation of buildings and structures
6. **Community involvement**- Community involvement in management and development, appropriate provision for the community
7. **Marketing and communication**- Marketing and promotion, appropriate information channels, appropriate educational and interpretational information
8. **Management**- implementation of management plan

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### **Financial implications and risks:**

There are no implications from this report.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

There are no implications from this report.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are no implications from this report.

### **Equalities implications and risks:**

There are no implications from this report.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no implications from this report.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

None